

Teen Distress Inventory

This exploratory questionnaire, completed by the adolescent, covers the main areas of distress at this age: mood, stress and academic pressure, self-image and body image, friends and bullying, family, school, screens, and sleep. It supports the first interview by identifying the difficulties to address first, including those the adolescent does not bring up on their own.

Number of questions	28 questions
Estimated duration	7 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Teen Distress Inventory
Target audience	Adolescents 12 to 17
Category	Depression, Adolescent care, Anxiety

Preview of the 28 questions

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I feel sad or down.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I stress out about grades, tests, or exams.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I think I'm ugly.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I end up by myself at lunch or during breaks at school.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I argue with my parents.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Administer your questionnaires online

Send your patient a link: they answer from their phone or computer, and you receive the scored results by email.

View the questionnaire on mentaal.org ›

Scoring & interpretation

Scoring

Each statement is scored from 0 (never) to 4 (very often) based on its frequency over the past month. Each domain combines 4 statements spread throughout the questionnaire, giving a score from 0 to 16.

Reading the profile

There is no total score. Domains are ranked from most to least elevated, each with a description of what it covers and points to explore in the interview. The profile distinguishes the distress the adolescent feels (mood, stress, self-image) from the settings in which it plays out (friends, family, school) and from lifestyle habits (screens and sleep). An elevated "Friends and bullying" domain calls for looking into ongoing bullying; an elevated "School" domain, for distinguishing anxiety-driven school refusal from disengagement.

Clinical cautions

The questionnaire contains no questions about suicidal thoughts, self-harm, or substance use: these should be asked about directly in the interview, especially when the "Mood," "Self-image and body image," or "Friends and bullying" domains are elevated. It is best for the adolescent to complete it alone, without a parent nearby. Abuse at home or at school calls for child protection measures.

Limitations

This exploratory questionnaire has not undergone psychometric validation and has no cutoffs. It supports the clinical interview and does not provide a diagnosis.

Scoring example

Scoring

Stress and worries 10 / 16

Worries, felt pressure to succeed, and physical signs of stress.

Areas to explore: the sources of pressure (grades, exams, choices about future studies, expectations from parents or from oneself), physical complaints before tests, any panic attacks.

See also: SCARED, MASC-2.

Screens and sleep 10 / 16

Screen time that is hard to limit, screens late at night, difficulty falling asleep, and daytime fatigue.

Areas to explore: types of use (social media, games, videos) and what they bring, bedtimes and wake times, the phone in the bedroom at night, family conflict over screens.

See also: IGDS9-SF.

Friends and bullying 8 / 16

Isolation among peers, teasing, exclusion, violence, and cyberbullying.

Areas to explore: current friendships, where and by whom the abuse takes place (class, on the way to and from school, online), since when, whom the adolescent has told and what was done.

See also: OBVQ-R.

School 8 / 16

Loss of motivation, difficulty keeping up, absences, and anxiety about going to school.

Areas to explore: grades and how they have changed, the number of and reasons for absences, what happens in the morning before school, a possible learning or attention difficulty, bullying behind the avoidance.

See also: SCREEN, SBI.

Mood 7 / 16

Sadness, urges to cry, irritability, and boredom, even during enjoyable activities; in adolescents, depressed mood can take the form of irritability.

Areas to explore: when the mood changed, activities given up, how the irritability shows at home and at school, thoughts of death, which should be asked about directly.

See also: RCADS-25, CDI-2.

Family 6 / 16

Arguments, a tense atmosphere, the feeling of not being understood, and harsh words at home.

Areas to explore: who makes up the family and where the adolescent lives, conflicts and how intense they are, a parental separation, how the adolescent is treated, also seeing the adolescent alone.

Self-image and body image 3 / 16

A devaluing view of oneself and one's body, comparison with others, especially online, and behaviors aimed at controlling weight.

Areas to explore: what the adolescent criticizes about themselves or their body, the role of social media, teasing about appearance, restriction, binge eating, or vomiting.

See also: RSES, EAT-26.

No validated clinical or psychometric cutoffs have been established for this test yet. The results should therefore be considered exploratory indicators, meant to support the clinical interview, not diagnostic findings.

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 Emily T. - Online CBT Psychologist