

Screening Tools Help Guide:

Mental Health Screening Form- III

Background:

The Mental Health Screening Form-III (MHSF-III) was initially designed as a rough screening device for clients seeking admission to substance abuse treatment programs. The 17-item yes/no supplement can be used to identify current and past symptoms of schizophrenia, depressive disorders, phobias, and more.

Scoring:

Each MHSF-III question is answered either “yes” or “no.” All questions reflect the respondent’s entire life history; therefore all questions begin with the phrase “Have you ever...” The preferred mode of administration is for staff members to read each item to the respondent and get their “yes” and “no” responses. Then, after completing all 18 questions (question 6 has two parts), the staff member should inquire about any “yes” response by asking “When did this problem first develop?”; “How long did it last?”; “Did the problem develop before, during, or after you started using substances?”; and, “What was happening in your life at that time?” This information can be written below each item in the space provided. There is additional space for staff member comments at the bottom of the form. The MHSF-III can also be given directly to clients for them to complete, providing they have sufficient reading skills. If there is any doubt about someone’s reading ability, have the client read the MHSF-II instructions and question number one to the staff member monitoring this process. If the client can not read and/or comprehend the questions, the questions must be read and/or explained to him/her. Whether the MHSF-III is read to a client or s/he reads the questions and responds on his/her own, the completed

MHSF-III should be carefully reviewed by a staff member to determine how best to use the information. It is strongly recommended that a qualified mental health specialist be consulted about any “yes” response to questions 3 through 17. The mental health specialist will determine whether or not a followup, face-to-face interview is needed for a diagnosis and/or treatment recommendation. The MHSF-III features a “Total Score” line to reflect the total number of “yes” responses. The maximum score on the MHSF-III is 18 (question 6 has two parts). This feature will permit programs to do research and program evaluation on the mental health-chemical dependence interface for their clients. The first four questions on the MHSF-III are not unique to any particular diagnosis; however, questions 5 through 17 reflect symptoms associated with the following diagnoses/diagnostic categories: Q5, Schizophrenia; Q6, Depressive Disorders; Q7, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; Q8, Phobias; Q9, Intermittent Explosive Disorder; Q10, Delusional Disorder; Q11, Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders; Q12, Eating Disorders (Anorexia, Bulimia); Q13, Manic Episode; Q14, Panic Disorder; Q15, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder; Q16, Pathological Gambling; Q17, Learning Disorder and Mental Retardation. The relationship between the diagnoses/diagnostic categories and the above cited questions was investigated by having four mental health specialists independently “select the one MHSF-III question that best matched a list of diagnoses/diagnostic categories.” All of the mental health specialists matched the questions and diagnoses/diagnostic categories in the same manner, that is, as we have noted in the preceding paragraph. A “yes” response to any of questions 5 through 17 does not, by itself, insure that a mental health problem exists at this time. A “yes” response raises only the possibility of a current problem, which is why a consult with a mental health specialist is strongly recommended.

References:

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