

Kessler psychological distress scale (K10)

Name _____ Date _____

For all questions, please circle the answer most commonly related to you. Questions 3 and 6 automatically receive a score of one if the proceeding question was 'none of the time'.

In the past four weeks:	None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1. About how often did you feel tired out for no good reason?	1	2	3	4	5
2. About how often did you feel nervous?	1	2	3	4	5
3. About how often did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down?	1	2	3	4	5
4. About how often did you feel hopeless?	1	2	3	4	5
5. About how often did you feel restless or fidgety?	1	2	3	4	5
6. About how often did you feel so restless you could not sit still?	1	2	3	4	5
7. About how often did you feel depressed?	1	2	3	4	5
8. About how often did you feel that everything is an effort?	1	2	3	4	5
9. About how often did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?	1	2	3	4	5
10. About how often did you feel did you feel worthless?	1	2	3	4	5
Total:					

Test: Kessler, R.C. (1996). Kessler's 10 Psychological Distress Scale. Boston, MA: Harvard Medical School
Normative data: National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being, Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997

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The Kessler psychological distress scale (K10) (Kessler 1996) is a widely used, simple self-report measure of psychological distress which can be used to identify those in need of further assessment for anxiety and depression. This measure was designed for use in the general population; however, it may also serve as a useful clinical tool. The K10 comprises 10 questions that are answered using a five-point scale (where 5 = all of the time, and 1 = none of the time). For all questions, the client circles the answer truest for them in the past four weeks. Scores are then summed with the maximum score of 50 indicating severe distress, and the minimum score of 10 indicating no distress. A guide to interpreting K10 scores is provided in Table 1.

A number of studies have been conducted to test the reliability and validity of the K10, and its brief version, the K6. Good reliability and validity have been found when these measures have been used with individuals with AOD use disorders (Arnaud, et al., 2010; Hides, et al., 2007; Rush, et al., 2013).

Table 1: Severity of psychological distress according to K10 score

K10 score	Level of psychological distress
10-15	Low
16-21	Moderate
22-29	High
30-50	Very high

Adapted from Andrews and Slade (2001).

Extract from Marel C, Mills KL, Kingston R, Gournay K, Deady M, Kay-Lambkin F, Baker A, Teesson M (2016). *Guidelines on the management of co-occurring alcohol and other drug and mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings* (2nd edition). Sydney, Australia: Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use, NDARC UNSW.

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