

Brief Resiliency Checklist (Inventory)

(Vance and Sanchez, 1995)

This checklist is based on the Brief Resiliency Checklist (see references), and documents most of the known risk and protective factors for youths at risk for mental health, substance abuse, or delinquent involvement. It is designed to serve as a guide for caseworkers to come to an efficient, but complete understanding of the crucial factors involved in each youth's case. Like any case assessment, it requires review of agency records, interview with the youth and family, contact with school personnel, and any other community contacts known to the case. At the completion of the interviews and checklist, ample information will be known for initial case planning and intervention.

Conducting the interviews

In most cases, a youth and his/her family are interviewed as part of any initial intake process. This is the best time to ask and answer the questions about **Early developmental risks, Childhood problems, Family stresses, Traumatic experiences, Early developmental strengths, Family strengths, Involvement and supports, Social skills, and Positive perceptions and outlooks**. Agency records may contain some of this information, especially for some of the **Early developmental risks, Childhood problems, Family stresses, and Traumatic experiences**, but rarely contain enough information to document all the required risk and protective factors. In other words, it is important to review with family members the relevant areas that they would know about.

It will be necessary to interview the youth alone also, since some information such as **Traumatic experiences, Family stresses and strengths, Involvement and supports, Positive perceptions and outlooks, and Youth Current Behavioral Ratings**, rely on confidential information and viewpoints that the youth may not want to share with their family.

Finally, school personnel will need to be contacted to address the information in **Educational strengths, and Youth Current Behavioral Ratings**, since they will have the best view of the youth in the school setting. School personnel may also have a valuable perspective on **Social skills**. It is usually sufficient to have a phone contact with the person at school most familiar with the student. Sometimes other people in the community such as employers, neighbors, extended family, or friends will add important information to the assessment process.

Examples of structured questions for administering the assessments can be found in the **Prompting Questionnaire (below)**.

Scoring

For the **Brief Resiliency Checklist**, each item has a box for noting the presence or absence of the factor. After completion, total the column of risk factors for the **Total Risk Score**, and likewise for the **Total Protective Factors**. The **Net Resiliency Score** is the subtraction of total risk factors from total protective factors. So a youth with more risk factors than protective factors will have a **negative Net Resiliency Score** (thankfully, this is rare!).

Prompting Questionnaire for the Brief Resiliency Checklist (Inventory)

Introduction:

In order to prepare and plan for the needs of your child, we need to review some past history of his/her early life and family history, as well as ask about recent functioning, strengths, and positive factors for your child and the family.

Early developmental risks and strengths: These first questions go back to the early part of his/her childhood. (The following questions are for **the parents or other relatives** and observers who knew about the early childhood of the youth, and the early history of the family.)

- First, was he/she the first-born child []?
- Was there any extreme hardship or stress on the mother during the pregnancy [], serious substance abuse during the pregnancy [], or medical complications of the pregnancy or delivery []?
- What sort of temperament or personality did he/she have as a baby: difficult, fussy and irritable [], easy, happy and cheerful [], or somewhat in between?
- Any problems with being shy, clingy, or overly fearful as a young child []?
- Would you say that the mother-to-infant relationship was mostly positive, warm, and easy [], mostly frustrating and negative [], or somewhat in between?
- Were there any long absences of the mother from the baby in the first two years of life []?
- Were there any major delays in his/her development, such as walking, talking, or relating to others []?

Childhood problems: These next questions concern any major problems that the child has had while growing up. (These are also questions **best asked of parents** or close relatives, though some answers may be in the records.)

- Did he/she ever have legal charges at 12 years old or younger []?
- Did he/she have frequent problems with aggression or fighting with others before the age of 7 years old []?
- Did he/she ever have diagnosed neurological problems, a serious head injury, or concussion []?
- Has he/she had serious medical problems needing long hospitalizations or frequent medical care []?
- Has he/she ever been diagnosed or treated for a psychiatric, behavioral, or emotional disorder []?
- Has he/she been tested as having very low IQ or mental retardation []?
- Has he/she had serious problems with school, such as failing grades, severe learning or speech problems, or major behavioral problems []?
- Have you been concerned that he/she spends time with mostly negative peers or friends with problems []?
- Have you ever been concerned about his/her drug or alcohol use []?
- Has she/he run away from court-ordered placements []?

Family Strengths and Stresses: These next questions are about the family history of the youth, including questions about the strengths of the family, the stresses the family has been through, and any serious traumas in the history of the youth. (These should be asked of the parents and confirmed or also asked of the youth.)

- In the home, have there been pretty consistent rules, routines, curfew times, and expected chores [], or has it been more loose and unstructured?
- When the child has been in trouble, has there usually been fair discipline, with discussion [] or mostly yelling and harsh punishment, or physical abuse []?
- Has the child had a mostly warm and positive relationship with either parent []?
- Does one or the other parent usually monitor the child's activities and friends or peer relationships []?
- Have there been adults, friends or relatives outside the family to help the parents when they need it on occasion []?
- Has the family maintained contact or consistent involvement with a church or religious organization []?
- Has one or the other parent maintained steady employment for most of the child's life []?
- Have either or both parents completed their high school education []?
- Has the family struggled with low income, poverty, needing public assistance, or public housing []?
- Have there been long periods of single parenting, divorce, or separation []?
- Is it a big family, with five or more children in the family []?
- Does the youth have brothers or sisters born less than two years apart from him/her []?
- Have there been many moves of the family during the youth's childhood []?
- Has either parent had struggles with drugs or alcohol []?
- Has either parent been treated for emotional or mental problems []?
- Does either parent have a history of incarceration or conviction of crimes []?
- Has the child had a mostly negative or conflicted relationship with either []?
- Was the youth exposed to frequent arguing, fighting, or violence in the home, while growing up []?
- Was he/she ever physically abused or seriously hurt by a family member []?
- Was there ever a report to the state for child neglect against the family []?
- Has the youth ever been sexually abused or molested, in or outside the family []?
- Has the youth ever been removed from the home by the state []?

Youth Protective Factors: Next are some questions about the youth's community involvement, social support network, perceptions, and outlooks. (These should be asked **directly of the youth**, but parents can confirm.)

- What is your best skill or talent, one activity that you are good at []?
- Are you involved in any structured, weekly activities, like sports teams, clubs, recreation center, or other regular hobbies, (taught or monitored by adults) []?
- Do you have a job, or do any regular volunteer work []?
- Are you definitely planning to finish high school and go on to college []?
- Do you have some ideas, plans, or hopes for your future []?
- Do you usually feel that you have control over what will happen in you life [], or do you think it's mostly out of your hands, a matter of good or bad luck ?
- Do you think the problems you've been through in the past, and recently, are going to affect your life in the long run []?
- Do you live in a neighborhood where some of the adults monitor and look out for the children in the neighborhood []?
- Do you usually have the feeling that your parents truly care about you []?
- Do you spend much time with good friends that support and care about you []?
- Is there any adult outside your immediate family that you see as a friend or support for you []?
- Are you involved with any religious youth groups []?
- Do you ever pray, or turn to God in hard times []?

School Skills and Supports: Next are some questions related to school functioning, which should be **answered by the person who knows the youth best at school.**

- Has the youth shown the ability to function as a capable student; completed assignments, behaving in the classroom, etc []?
- Does he/she read at or above his/her grade level []?
- Does he/she seem to be a good problem solver, either academically or socially []?
- Has he/she had IQ testing scored >100 []?
- Is there any adult at school that the youth feels connected to, or supported by []?

Social Skills: Next are some questions about the youth's personality and social skills. (These should be answered by **school personnel, parents, or other adults who know him/her well in social situations.**)

- Does he/she have a good ability to get along with other children []?
- Does he/she get along with most adults outside the family []?
- Do most people seem to like him/her []?
- Do most people think he/she has a good sense of humor []?
- Has he/she shown the ability to care about others, take care of others, shown empathy []?
- Is he/she able to make apologies when he/she makes mistakes or hurts others []?

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Name: _____

DOB: _____ Date _____

Assessor: _____

RISK FACTORS

Early developmental risks	
High stress pregnancy	
Substance abuse in pregnancy	
Complications of pregnancy/birth	
"difficult"/irritable infant temperament	
Extreme shyness or clingy temperament	
Poor/negative attachment with mother	
Long absences of mother	
Delays in developmental milestones	

+ _____

Childhood problems	
*First legal charges 12 years old or younger	
Aggressive behavior 6 years old or younger	
Neurological disorder/ serious head injury	
Serious medical problems	
Diagnosed psychiatric disorder	
Mental retardation	
Serious school behavior/ educational problems	
*Mostly negative friends/ peers	
*Drug or alcohol abuse	
*Runaways from mandated placements	

+ _____

Family stresses	
Poverty/public assistance	
Single parent/ divorce/ separation	
Five or more children in the home	
Siblings born within 2 years	
Frequent family moves	
Parental substance abuse	
Parental emotional or mental disorder	
Parental criminal background	

+ _____

Traumatic experiences	
Highly conflicted parent/ child relationship	
Exposure to violence/high conflict in the home	
Child neglect referral	
Physical abuse/ harsh punishment in the home	
Sexual abuse or molestation	
Removal from home	

+ _____

Total Risk Factors _____

* Applies to older children

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Early developmental strengths	
First born child	
"easy"/ happy infant temperament	
Warm/ secure attachment to mother	

+ _____

Family strengths	
Consistent employment of parent	
High school educated parent	
Parental monitoring of youth's activities/ peers	
Rules, routines, curfews, chores in the home	
Fair discipline with discussion	
Mostly warm/ positive relationship with a parent	
Adult supports/ friends for parent	
Family church/ faith involvement	

+ _____

Educational strengths	
Ability to function as a good student	
*Reading abilities at or above grade level	
Good problem-solving and reasoning skills	
*IQ tested above 100	
Relationship with supportive adult at school	
*Youth commitment to finish HS or college	

+ _____

Involvement and supports	
Neighborhood monitors and supports youth	
Structured activity/ organized hobby weekly	
*Regular work at a job or volunteering	
Adult mentor/ friend outside family	
*Support from positive peers	
*Faith-based youth group involvement	

+ _____

Social skills	
Gets along with other children	
Gets along with adults outside the family	
Is likeable to most people	
Good sense of humor	
Shows empathy/ caring to others	
Able to apologize/ make amends	

+ _____

Positive perceptions and outlooks	
*At least some perceived competency	
*Perception that parents care	
*Belief in self-control over life/ destiny	
*Realistic hopes and plans for the future	
*Use of inner faith or prayer	
*Acceptance of past and present problems	

+ _____

Total Protective Factors _____

Net Resiliency Score:

Protective minus Risk = _____

