

Psychopathy Screening Device

Grade 7/Year 8

FAST Track Project Technical Report Suzanne Doyle & Cari McCarty February 2001

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Citation

Instrument

Frick, P.J. & Hare, R.D. (in press). Psychopathy Screening Device. Toronto: Multi-Health.

Report

Doyle, S.R. & McCarty, C.A. (2000). Psychopathy Screening Device (Technical Report) [On-line]. Available: <http://www.fasttrackproject.org>

Data Sources

Raw: p8aa

Scored: psd8

I. Scale Description

The Psychopathy Screening Device is a measure designed to identify dimensions integral to the description of childhood psychopathy. This instrument was developed as an extension of the adult Psychopathy Checklist – Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 1991) for use in children, with each of the 20-items of the PCL-R being developed into an analogous item applicable to children. The items are on a 3-point scale, with 0 indicating “Not at All True, 1 “Sometimes True” and 2 as “Definitely True”. It was administered to the primary caregiver of the child in each family at grade 7. It is designed to assess three dimensions of psychopathy - a callous and unemotional interpersonal style, poor impulse control and narcissism.

II. Report Sample

This technical report is based upon Year 8, Cohort 1 data, including both High-Risk Control and Normative samples. With missing cases excluded, the total N (including overlap) was 390, with 322 Normative and 133 High-Risk Control youth. The Normative sample consists of 158 (49.07%) males, with an ethnic breakdown of 138 (42.86%) Black, 172 (53.42%) White and 12 (3.42%) other races. The High-Risk Control sample consists of 95 (71.43%) males, with an ethnic breakdown of 59 (44.36%) Black, 72 (54.14%) White and 2 (1.50%) other races. The total sample had almost an equal percentage of respondents from the four different sites: Durham (28.72%), Nashville (21.03%), Pennsylvania (27.95%) and Seattle (22.31%).

III. Scaling

Scales for the Psychopathy Screening Device were obtained from confirmatory factor analyses conducted on responses from the Normative and High Risk Control samples. Items 2 and 6 were excluded from the scaling. The results indicated 3 factors or scales for the 18 items, consistent with previous factor analytic results reported by Frick, Bodin and Barry (2000). The 3 factor solution revealed the dimensions of “Callous-unemotional Traits”, “Narcissism” and “Problems of Impulse Control”. Each scale score was calculated by taking an average of items comprising the scale if 50% or more of the item responses were available. The resulting scales, associated reliability estimates and descriptive indices for the Normative (Norm) and High Risk Control (HRC) samples are provided below. A more detailed discussion of the scaling procedure can be found in the addendum.

Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha

Scales	Normative (n=322)	High Risk Control (n=133)
Callous-unemotional Traits (Items 3r,7r,12r,18r,19,20r)*	.618	.575
Narcissism (Items 5,8,10,11,14,15,16)	.811	.812
Problems of Impulse Control (Items 1,4,9,13,17)	.669	.659

* r – item scale reversed

IV. Differences Between Groups

A series of independent t-tests were conducted to assess differences on the scale scores between the Normative and High Risk Control samples. For these analyses, the Normative sample consisted of only Low Risk respondents, excluding 65 High Risk subjects previously included in the Normative sample. Results indicated statistically significant higher mean scores for the High Risk Control sample on all three scale scores:

Low-Risk Normatives (n=257) vs High Risk Controls (n=133)

Scale	<u>t-test</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p-value</u>	Means	
				<u>Low-Risk Normative</u>	<u>High-Risk Control</u>
Callous-unemotional Traits	-6.09	388	<.0001	0.5036	0.7261
Narcissism	-6.04	338	<.0001	0.4603	0.7240
Problems of Impulse Control	-7.08	388	<.0001	0.6809	0.9778

V. Recommendations for Use

The Psychopathy Screening Device is a measure of the primary caregiver’s perception of antisocial behaviors demonstrated by his or her child. It can be used to identify three or two dimensions fundamental to the description of childhood psychopathy. Specifically, the Psychopathy Screening device can be used as a general measure of the child’s potential for a lack of empathy and a callous and unemotional interpersonal style, problems with impulsivity and narcissism.

VI. Item and Scale Means and Standard Deviations (Std)

Descriptive indices for the 18 items, and the scale scores for “Callous-unemotional Traits”, “Narcissism” and “Problems of Impulse Control” are presented below. Note that the data from the Normative sample reported below includes the 65 High-Risk subjects excluded from the group analyses reported above.

	Normative (n=322)		High Risk Control (n=133)		
	Mean	Std	Mean	Std	
<i>Average Scale Score of Callous-Unemotional Traits</i>					
3r. Is concerned about how well he/she does at school or work.	0.555	0.355	0.726	0.335	
7r. Is good at keeping promises.	0.630	0.588	0.902	0.520	
12r. Feels bad or guilty when he/she does something wrong.	0.758	0.639	0.857	0.579	
18r. Is concerned about the feelings of others.		0.522	0.592	0.752	0.596
19. Does not show feelings or emotions.	0.329	0.527	0.496	0.585	
20r. Keeps the same friends.	0.497	0.628	0.669	0.671	
<i>Average Scale Score of Narcissism</i>					
5. His/her emotions seem shallow and not genuine.	0.509	0.412	0.724	0.447	
8. Brags excessively about his/her abilities, accomplishments, etc	0.280*	0.490	0.489	0.598	
10. Uses or “cons” other people to get what he/she wants.	0.520*	0.685	0.767	0.768	
11. Teases or makes fun of other people.	0.463	0.612	0.707	0.672	
14. Can be charming at times, but in insincere or superficial ways.	0.615	0.597	0.835	0.630	
15. Becomes angry when corrected or punished.	0.460	0.591	0.729	0.641	
16. Seems to think that he/she is better than other people.	0.888	0.670	1.128	0.656	
	0.342	0.559	0.414	0.592	
<i>Average Scale Score of Problems of Impulse Control</i>					
1. Blames others for his/her mistakes.	0.729	0.401	0.979	0.424	
4. Acts without thinking of the consequences.	0.665	0.606	0.962	0.633	
9. Gets bored easily.	0.788*	0.636	1.121**	0.618	
13. Engages in risky or dangerous activities.	1.019	0.679	1.233	0.684	
17. Does not plan ahead or leaves things until the “last minute”.	0.189	0.423	0.398	0.590	
		0.985	0.677	1.173	0.734

* n=321 and ** n=132

VII. Scale Correlations

Normative sample (n=322) above diagonal, High Risk Control sample (n=133) below diagonal.

	Callous-unemotional Traits	Narcissism	Problems of Impulse Control
Callous-unemotional Traits	-	.385	.285

Narcissism	.255	-	.628
Problems of Impulse Control	.082	.618	-

VIII. References

Frick, P.J. & Hare, R.D. (in press). The Psychopathy Screening Device. Toronto: Multi-Health Systems.

Frick, P.J., Bodin, S.D. & Barry, C.T. (2000). Psychopathic traits and conduct problems in community and clinic-referred samples in children: Further development of the Psychopathy Screening Device. Psychological Assessment, 12, 382-393.

Hare, R.D. (1991). The Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised. Toronto: Multi-Health Systems.