

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PEAK AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR RATING SCALE

The Peak Aggressive Behavior Rating Scale is a semi-structured interview for violence among adolescents. Its validity is shown in: Crowley TJ, Mikulich SK, Ehlers KM, Whitmore EA, & Macdonald MJ. Validity of structured clinical evaluations in adolescents with conduct and substance problems. *J. Amer. Acad. Child Adol. Psychiatry* 40(3): 265-273, 2001. That group developed the instrument, modifying it extensively from the following: Lewis DO, Pincus JH, Shanok SS, & Glaser GH. Psychomotor epilepsy and violence in a group of incarcerated adolescent boys. *Am J Psychiatry* 139(7): 882-887, 1982. Both articles are attached.

I. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. OVERVIEW

The Peak Aggressive Behavior Rating Scale consists of a total of 3 pages; two pages of interview questions titled “Aggression Scale Questions” and a one page Scoring Sheet titled “Aggression Scale Score Sheet”.

Administration time is approximately 5-10 minutes.

The interview consists of 13 primary stem questions, with secondary questions that may be asked depending on what a subject reports on the stem questions. Secondary questions are always indented under the main question and marked with an arrow.

For example,

5) Did you ever use a weapon on somebody? **(PRIMARY STEM QUESTION)**

➤ If yes, list weapons used, ... **(SECONDARY QUESTION)**

Interviewers should ask each question as written and ask secondary questions and obtain other additional information as necessary.

B. QUESTION-BY-QUESTION SPECIFICATIONS

Question 1: Physical fight refers to fights involving violence or threats of violence, i.e. fist fights, pushing, shoving, etc.

Question 2: The subject should report the total number of physical fights they have been in during their lifetime.

Question 3: The subject should report how often they were fighting during the time in their life when they were fighting the most, i.e., every day, once a week, once a month, etc.

Question 4: If a subject reports that they have caused injuries requiring medical attention the interviewer asks for additional information as noted in the secondary question marked with an arrow.

Question 5: If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary questions. As noted on the interview be sure to ask for additional information specific to the type of weapon used.

Question 6: This question refers to intentional fire setting, not to incidents like lighting a fire in a fireplace, campfire, or candle. If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary question.

Question 7: If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary question marked with an arrow below it. Be sure to find out the weapon involved and if they actually used it.

Question 8: If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary question marked with an arrow below it. Be sure to ask if a weapon was used in the sexual assault.

Question 9: If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary question marked with an arrow below it.

Question 10: If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary question marked with an arrow below it. Be sure to ask how long the person was hospitalized and get a complete description of injuries.

Question 11: If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary questions marked with an arrow below it. Be sure to ask how long the person was unconscious, asking for a best estimate if the subject is unsure. It is especially important to ask if the subject hit/kicked/etc. the person when they were unconscious.

Question 12: If the subject says “yes” to this question ask the secondary question marked with an arrow below it. Be sure to note if the subject actually killed someone or if they just tried.

Question 13: Be sure to get a complete description of the incident.

II. PROBING RESPONSES

For each incident reported the interviewer must probe for additional information about injuries. As indicated next to the interview questions, inquiries about injuries should include the following queries: 1) What was done to cause the injuries, 2) Description of the injuries, 3) What, if any, medical attention was required, 4) Where on the body the injuries occurred, 5) How many times the other person was hit, shot stabbed, etc., 6) If the other person was hospitalized and for how long, 7) If the other person was unconscious, if so for how long, 8) If the subject hit/kicked/etc. the other person when they were down on the ground or unconscious, and 9) If the other person suffered any permanent damage or impairment or death. This list is presented in its entirety on question 4. For all subsequent questions where the interviewer must obtain information about injuries it is noted next to the interview question by **Inquire about injuries*.

It is essential that interviewers obtain this additional information because without it accurate scoring will not be possible.

III. SCORING

The score on the Peak Aggressive Behavior Rating Scale ranges from 0 to 9, with a score of 9 being the most severe. Each score is also divided up into categories A-C. A score is obtained by considering all the subject’s responses on the interview and rate these behaviors according to the criteria on the Score Sheet. Each row on the Score Sheet corresponds to a score between 0 and 9 and the associated criteria. Working from the bottom of the score sheet the interviewer reviews the reported behaviors according to the criteria listed for each score. Once the interviewer has done this review they assign a score. **The subject’s score equals the highest score for which criteria A, or B, or C are met.**

IV. SCORING EXAMPLES

Let's consider several examples of actual interviews from the training videotape:

EXAMPLE #1:

The subject reported having been in 3 fights, most often every couple of months. The most aggressive incident reported was hitting someone one time. There were no injuries reported. (See hard copy of Aggression Scale Questions and Score Sheet, Subject #1 on Training Tape)

- Using the Score Sheet the interviewer would first look at the scoring criteria for a score of 0. Since our subject reported three fights they would not qualify for a score of 0 because it's criteria specifies 0-1 fights.
- The interviewer would next look at the criteria for a score of 1. The subject does meet criteria for this score reporting 3 fights fists only.
- The interviewer would next check criteria for a score of 2; since this criteria specifies 4 or more fights the subject would not meet criteria.
- Therefore, the subject would receive a score of 1A. The interviewer underlines the criteria met and circles both 1 and A. The subject's score is recorded as 1A.

EXAMPLE #2:

The subject reported 4 physical fights, most often once every couple of months. There were no reports of fight-related injuries. The subject did report threatening someone with a knife one time. (See hard copy of Aggression Scale Questions and Score Sheet, Subject #2 on Training Tape)

- This subject would receive a score of 5A because 4 or more fights and menacing with weapons were reported.

EXAMPLE #3:

The subject reported 15 physical fights, most often about twice a week. The subject also reported three instances of fight-related injuries (two are reported in question 4, one is reported in question 13). (See hard copy of Aggression Scale Questions and Score Sheet, Subject #3 on Training Tape)

- The subject would receive a score of 6A because 3 fight-related injuries to others were reported.

EXAMPLE #4:

The subject reported 3 physical fights, most often about once a year. The subject also reported one fight-related injury (a broken elbow), and one weapon fight with injuries. (See hard copy of Aggression Scale Questions and Score Sheet, Subject #4 on Training Tape)

- The subject would receive a score of 6A and C because 1 fight-related injury was reported (6A), and 1 knife fight with injury (6C) was reported.

EXAMPLE #5:

The subject reported 15 physical fights, most often 6-7 times per month. The subject also reported one weapon fight with no reported injuries, and threatening someone with a gun. (See hard copy of Aggression Scale Questions and Score Sheet, Subject #5 on Training Tape)

- The subject would receive a score of 6C because 1 blunt weapon fight without injury was reported.