

The Coping Strategies Scale; adapted for alcoholism treatment

The Coping Strategies Scale (CSS) was adapted from the Processes of Change Questionnaire, originally developed to assess ten key change processes used in modifying smoking behavior. These processes included Consciousness Raising, Stimulus Control, Self-Reevaluation, Reinforcement Management and others (Prochaska, Velicer, DiClemente & Fava, 1988). The 40 items were adapted for use with alcohol dependent patients (i.e., items referring to smoking were reworded to refer to drinking alcohol), and 19 additional items were added to reflect specific skills that would be taught in coping skills treatment, such as “Ask people not to offer me drinks” and “Just wait and know that the urge to drink will go away.” The development and reliability analyses, detailed here, were first documented in Litt et al. (2003).

Subjects rate the frequency on a 4-point scale from “Never” to “Frequently” with which they have used each of the 59 strategies to help them not drink over the previous 6 months. Total coping is measured by taking the mean across all 59 items (internal reliability $\alpha = .95$ in Litt et al., 2003). In addition, two independent raters sorted the CSS items into four rationally-derived subscales based on two dimensions of coping actions suggested by Moos (1992), and as operationalized by Moser & Annis (1996). The two dimensions are active v. avoidant, and behavioral v. cognitive. The four subscales are thus: Active-behavioral; active-cognitive; avoidant-behavioral; and avoidant-cognitive. The interrater reliability of the subscale sorting process was $\kappa = .76$. Subscale scores were computed by taking the mean of the items.

The active-behavioral coping subscale is made up of items that reflected a proactive behavioral approach to staying sober (e.g., “I reward myself for not giving in to the urge to drink,” “Be with people who reward me for not drinking;” internal reliability $\alpha = .88$; Litt et al., 2003). The active-cognitive subscale is made up of items reflecting active planning or problem solving (e.g., “Before doing something I think about whether it will lead to drinking;” internal reliability $\alpha = .92$). The avoidant-behavioral subscale includes items such as, “I avoid people associated with my drinking,” (internal reliability $\alpha = .90$). The avoidant-cognitive subscale includes items such as, “I try to think about other things when I begin to think about drinking,” (internal reliability $\alpha = .82$).

Means across the cognitive and behavioral items were computed and used as summary measures of active (internal reliability $\alpha = .94$) and avoidant coping (internal reliability $\alpha = .92$). The behavioral v. cognitive coping distinction was also computed, but the correlation between these two subscales was so high, $r = .82$, that the distinction is probably meaningless. The active and avoidant subscales were also highly correlated ($r = .71$), but were retained for analysis because of their theoretical distinctiveness.

One additional dimension was also extracted from the items based on work by Lazarus (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984): Emotion-focused v. problem-focused. Interrater agreement was 86.4%. Items were classified as problem-focused if the strategy listed was directed toward altering a problem situation (e.g., “I avoid people associated with my drinking;” internal reliability $\alpha = .93$). Emotion-focused items were those intended to stabilize affective responses (e.g., “I calm myself when I get the urge to drink;” internal reliability $\alpha = .92$). These subscales were also highly correlated with each other ($r = .70$).

Scoring syntax for SPSS appears at the end of this document for all of the dimensions and subscales discussed.

Somewhat briefer versions of the subscales and Total Coping score are also given here, at the end of the document. Items for these were chosen on the basis of their contributions to internal reliability.

The CSS is useful for the number of strategies assessed. However, all items listed are adaptive; there are no items describing undesirable or maladaptive responses. The result is likely to be inflated scores, and some loss of variability.

DiClemente, C. C., & Prochaska, J. O. (1998). Toward a comprehensive, transtheoretical model of change: Stages of change and addictive behaviors. In W.R. Miller & N. Heather (Eds.) Treating Addictive Behavior, 2, New York: Plenum Press, 3-20.

Lazarus, R.S. & Folkman, S. (1984). Stress, Appraisal and Coping. New York: Springer

Litt, M.D., Kadden, R.M., Cooney, N.L., & Kabela, E. (2003). Coping skills and treatment outcomes in cognitive-behavioral and interactional group therapy for alcoholism. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71, 118-128

Prochaska, J. O., Velicer, W. F., DiClemente, C. C., & Fava, J. (1988). Measuring processes of change: Application to the cessation of smoking. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 56(4), 520-528.

CSS

F/UP

___ DE ___ V

CID ___/___/___/___/___

CRU ___/___

DATE ___/___/___/___/___/___

SESSION ___

(2)=4-month

(3)=9-month

Each statement below describes a strategy or thought that a person might use to help them not drink alcohol. Please circle the number that best describes how often you made use of each strategy or thought in the past 3 months to help you to not drink.

	Never	Seldom	Occasion-ally	Fre-quently
1. I try to keep things around me that remind me not to drink	1	2	3	4
2. I engage in some physical activity when I get the urge to drink.	1	2	3	4
3. I think about bad experiences caused by drinking.	1	2	3	4
4. I take a medication that help me to keep from drinking (e.g., Revia, Antabuse)	1	2	3	4
5. I avoid people associated with my drinking.	1	2	3	4
6. I stop to think about how my drinking is hurting people around me.	1	2	3	4
7. I consider that feeling good about myself includes changing my drinking behavior.	1	2	3	4
8. I remove things from my home or work that remind me of drinking.	1	2	3	4
9. I calm myself when I get the urge to drink.	1	2	3	4
10. I reward myself when I don't give in to my urge to drink.	1	2	3	4
11. I find someone to talk with who understands my problems and my drinking.	1	2	3	4
12. I use willpower to keep from drinking.	1	2	3	4
13. I ask people not to offer me a drink.	1	2	3	4
14. I consider how people would be better off if I didn't drink	1	2	3	4
15. I ask for someone else's opinion about how they think drinking is affecting me.	1	2	3	4
16. I try to think about other things when I begin to think about drinking.	1	2	3	4

Each statement below describes a strategy or thought that a person might use to help them not drink. Please circle the number that best describes how often you made use of each strategy or thought in the past 3 months to help you not drink.

	Never	Seldom	Occasion-ally	Fre-quenty
17. I encourage people to keep after me about my drinking.	1	2	3	4
18. I seek out someone who listens when I want to talk about my drinking.	1	2	3	4
19. I remind myself that I can choose to overcome my drinking if I want to.	1	2	3	4
20. I avoid people who are heavy drinkers	1	2	3	4
21. I consider how my drinking has hurt the people I care about.	1	2	3	4
22. I use reminders to help me not to drink.	1	2	3	4
23. I do something else instead of drinking when I need to deal with tension.	1	2	3	4
24. I tell myself that if I try hard enough I can keep from drinking.	1	2	3	4
25. I leave places where people are drinking.	1	2	3	4
26. I seek out social situations where it is OK not to drink.	1	2	3	4
27. I seek out groups of people who can increase my awareness about the problems of drinking.	1	2	3	4
28. I stay away from places or situations associated with my drinking.	1	2	3	4
29. I find that doing things is a good substitute for drinking.	1	2	3	4
30. I spend time with people who reward me for not drinking.	1	2	3	4
31. I go to someone who tries to make me feel good when I don't drink	1	2	3	4
32. I attend AA meetings (or similar meetings)	1	2	3	4
33. I make commitments to myself not to drink.	1	2	3	4
34. I go to places where drinking is not acceptable	1	2	3	4
35. I stop and think that drinking and driving can cause many problems for other people.	1	2	3	4

Each statement below describes a strategy or thought that a person might use to help them not drink. Please circle the number that best describes how often you made use of each strategy or thought in the past 3 months to help you not drink.

	Never	Seldom	Occasion-ally	Fre-quent-ly
36. I think about the physical problems that are related to alcohol.	1	2	3	4
37. I try to express emotions without relying on alcohol.	1	2	3	4
38. When I feel angry, I try first to calm myself down.	1	2	3	4
39. I talk about things that make me angry.	1	2	3	4
40. I try to understand my relationships to others who are important to me	1	2	3	4
41. I try to find satisfaction (enjoyment) with other people without drinking.	1	2	3	4
42. If someone offers me a drink, I say "no" immediately.	1	2	3	4
43. If someone offers me a drink or suggests drinking, I suggest something else to do instead of drinking.	1	2	3	4
44. I engage in some enjoyable or relaxing activity each day.	1	2	3	4
45. I adopt a positive outlook that helps me not drink.	1	2	3	4
46. I try to remind myself of the good things I have accomplished.	1	2	3	4
47. When I am bothered by other people, I tell them about it directly.	1	2	3	4
48. I try to tolerate frustration without depending on drinking.	1	2	3	4
49. When I feel upset, I try to stop or challenge my negative things I tell myself.	1	2	3	4
50. I tell others what is on my mind.	1	2	3	4
51. I show interest in what other people have to say and the feelings they express.	1	2	3	4
52. I express appreciation when someone does something for me.	1	2	3	4
53. When someone criticizes me, I try to find some way to deal with it without drinking.	1	2	3	4
54. I think of the difficulties in my life as problems to be solved.	1	2	3	4

Each statement below describes a strategy or thought that a person might use to help them not drink. Please circle the number that best describes how often you made use of each strategy or thought in the past 3 months to help you not drink.

	Never	Seldom	Occasion- ally	Fre- quently
55. I try to think of a number of ways to solve my problems before I take action.	1	2	3	4
56. I try to stop any thoughts I have about drinking.	1	2	3	4
57. I have a plan to deal with drinking urges, if they occur.	1	2	3	4
58. If I have the urge to drink, I tell myself that it will go away if I just wait awhile.	1	2	3	4
59. Before doing something, I think about whether it will lead to drinking.	1	2	3	4

SPSS Scoring syntax for CSS scales and subscales.

```
Compute cssaccga=mean.8(cssaq1, cssaq3, cssaq6, cssaq7, cssaq9, cssaq12,  
cssaq14, cssaq19, cssaq21, cssaq22, cssaq24, cssaq33, cssaq35, cssaq36,  
cssaq37, cssaq38, cssaq40, cssaq41, cssaq48, cssaq49,  
cssaq53, cssaq54, cssaq55, cssaq57, cssaq59).
```

```
Compute cssacbea=mean.8(cssaq2, cssaq4, cssaq10, cssaq11, cssaq15, cssaq17,  
cssaq18, cssaq26, cssaq27, cssaq30, cssaq31, cssaq32, cssaq47,  
cssaq50, cssaq51, cssaq52).
```

```
Compute cssavcga=mean.5(cssaq8, cssaq16, cssaq44, cssaq45, cssaq46, cssaq56, cssaq58).
```

```
Compute cssavbea=mean.8(cssaq5, cssaq13, cssaq20, cssaq23, cssaq25, cssaq28,  
cssaq29, cssaq34, cssaq42, cssaq43).
```

```
compute csstota=mean(cssacbea, cssaccga, cssavbea, cssavcga).  
compute cssacta=mean(cssacbea, cssaccga).  
compute cssavda=mean(cssavbea, cssavcga).
```

```
compute cssprba=mean(cssaq1, cssaq4, cssaq5, cssaq8, cssaq10,  
cssaq13, cssaq15, cssaq17, cssaq20, cssaq22,  
cssaq25, cssaq26, cssaq28, cssaq29, cssaq30,  
cssaq33, cssaq34, cssaq36, cssaq41, cssaq42,  
cssaq43, cssaq47, cssaq50, cssaq54, cssaq55,  
cssaq57, cssaq59).
```

```
compute cssemoa=mean(cssaq2, cssaq3, cssaq6, cssaq7, cssaq9,  
cssaq11, cssaq12, cssaq14, cssaq16, cssaq18,  
cssaq19, cssaq21, cssaq23, cssaq24, cssaq27,  
cssaq31, cssaq32, cssaq35, cssaq37, cssaq38,  
cssaq39, cssaq40, cssaq44, cssaq45, cssaq46,  
cssaq48, cssaq49, cssaq51, cssaq52, cssaq53,  
cssaq56, cssaq58).
```

```
var labels cssacbea 'Coping Active-Behav BL 0-4'  
/cssaccga 'Coping Active-Cognitive BL 0-4'  
/cssavbea 'Coping Avoidant-Behav BL 0-4'  
/cssavcga 'Coping Avoidant-Cog BL 0-4'  
/cssacta 'Active Coping - BL 0-4'  
/cssavda 'Avoidant Coping - BL 0-4'  
/csstota 'Coping Total Score BL 0-4'  
/cssprba 'Coping - Prob Foc BL 0-4'  
/cssemoa 'Coping Emotn Foc BL 0-4'.
```

SPSS Scoring syntax for CSS-Brief scales and subscales.

```
Compute CSSbAct =mean.10(css002, css004,css006, css009, css011, css018, css019,  
css026, css032, css035, css038, css044, css046, css048).
```

```
Compute CSSbAvd= mean.5(css005, css008, css013, css016, css020, css023, css025,  
css028, css034, css043, css058).
```

```
Compute CSSbPrb= mean.6(css002, css004, css005, css008, css011, css018, css026, css009, css023)
```

```
Compute CSSbEmo=mean.3(css016, css023, css038, css046, css058, css044, css009).
```

```
Compute CSSbTot=mean.16(css002, css004,css005, css006, css008, css009, css011, css013, css016, css018, css019, css020,  
css023, css025, css026, css028, css032, css034, css035, css038, css043, css044, css046, css048, css058).
```

```
var labels CSSbAct 'Coping Active 0-4 '  
/CSSbAvd 'Coping Avoidant 0-4'  
/CSSbPrb 'Coping Problem-Focused 0-4'  
/CSSbEmo 'Coping Emotion-focused 0-4'  
/CSSbTot 'Coping Total 0-4'.
```