Drinking Context Scale (DCS)

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

The DCS measures the self-reported likelihood of drinking excessively in three contexts: convivial circumstances, intimate circumstances, and coping with negative emotion. The original version has 23 items; there is also a 9-item version.

**TARGET POPULATION**

- Adults
- Adolescents (over 16 years)

**Groups for which this instrument might be especially helpful?**

Designed for college students (18 to 25), but may also be suitable for non-college cohorts.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

- Number of items: 23 (original) or 9
- Number of subscales: 3
- Format(s): ☒ Pencil-and-paper self-administered
  - ☒ Interview
  - ☐ Observation
  - ☐ Computer self-administered
  - ☐ Other
- Time required for administration: 5 to 10 minutes
- Administered by: Any professional
- Training required for administration? ☐ yes ☒ no

**SCORING**

- Time required to score/interpret: Immediately
- Scored by: Respondent or professional
- Scoring key? ☐ yes ☒ no
- Computerized scoring or interpretation available? ☐ yes ☒ no
- Norms available? ☐ yes ☒ no
- Instrument normed on subgroups? ☐ yes ☒ no
- Comments: Used with college students. Subscale means can provide a benchmark for comparison. See O’Hare 1997 for subscales.

PSYCHOMETRICS

Have reliability studies been done? □ yes ☑ no
What measure(s) of reliability was used?
☐ Test-retest
☐ Split half
☒ Internal consistency

Have validity studies been done? □ yes ☑ no
What measures of validity have been derived?
☐ Content
☒ Criterion (predictive, concurrent, “postdictive”)
☒ Construct

CLINICAL UTILITY OF INSTRUMENT

The DCS can be used as an initial screen to estimate the likelihood of young persons drinking excessively in certain circumstances, an important consideration since the consequences of youthful problem drinking are highly dependent on context.

RESEARCH APPLICABILITY

The DCS is suitable for testing hypotheses about drinking behavior and drinking context. As part of a survey or evaluation instrument battery, the DCS-23 and DCS-9 both provide a brief, valid, reliable, and useful way to capture high-risk drinking in college-age young people.

SOURCE, COST AND COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Copyright: □ yes ☑ no
Cost: None
Source: Thomas O’Hare, Ph.D.
Boston College GSSW
202 McGuinn Hall
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167-3807
E-mail: oharet@bc.edu

SOURCE REFERENCE


SUPPORTING REFERENCES