

Individualized Measures for Measurement-Based Care

What Are Individualized Measures?

Individualized measures are tools used to track a client's unique progress, helping tailor treatment and enhance engagement. These measures focus on tracking concerns or goals that hold personal importance for the client rather than relying on standardized scales that often track symptoms. Individualized measures may ask a client to rate enjoyment of a specific activity, report how often they argued with a family member in the past week, or evaluate their progress toward a personal goal.



WHY USE INDIVIDUALIZED MEASURES?

- Individualized measures are flexible, more relevant to client goals, and usually cost-free.¹
- Individualized measures can be tailored to a client's personal situation, and they support client-clinician collaboration and shared decision-making over the course of treatment.²
- Evidence suggests that individualized measures are preferred by clinicians for their utility and ability to engage clients.¹
- Individualized measures provide accessibility to the practice by expanding progress measurement beyond symptoms to other areas such as social function and goals.³

Using standardized and individualized tools together offer both a person-level and a system-level understanding of progress that results in more responsive, effective, and person-centered care.⁴

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Individualized measures might need to be changed or updated over time, based on client progress and priorities.
- Some individuals may need support to identify their own goals in individualized measures.
- Aggregating data to make population-level decisions is not applicable to self-reported measures like these.

GETTING STARTED:

Step 1: Set one to three treatment goals with the client in their own words.

Step 2: Pick one individualized measure that matches the client's goals.

Step 3: Pick one standardized measure that also matches the goals, diagnosis, or other treatment focus.

TIP: It is best practice to use one individualized measure AND one standardized measure for every client.

Examples of Individualized Measures

GOAL ATTAINMENT SCALING

The [goal attainment scale](#) is an individualized outcome measure involving goal selection and goal scaling that is standardized to calculate the extent to which an individual's goals are met.⁵ An individual identifies a goal and expected outcome then tracks goal achievement on a 5-point scale, ranging from -2 (much less than expected) to +2 (much more than expected), with 0 representing the expected level of achievement.

Example: “I want to improve daily functioning by getting out of bed on time every day.” -2 = unable to get out of bed on time most days (0 days/week); 0 = gets out of bed on time some days (3 times/week); +2 = consistently gets out of bed on time (5-7 days/week).

Goal-Based Outcomes: The [goal-based outcomes](#) tool evaluates progress towards goals in clinical work with children, young people, and their families or caregivers. It measures the extent to which a young person feels they have moved toward achieving a goal they identified at the start of an intervention, using a simple 0–10 scale.⁶

Example: “I want to attend school more regularly without feeling anxious.” 0 = Not working toward this goal at all; 10 = Goal fully achieved.

Youth Top Problems: The [youth top problems](#) tool allows a child, adolescent, or caregiver to identify, rate, and rank three concerns they most want to address. The youth (or caregiver) rates how much of a concern (i.e., severity) each one is on a scale from 0 (not a problem) to 4 (a very big problem) and ranks the concerns from 1 (biggest problem) to 3 (least big problem). Severity ratings are tracked over time to monitor progress.⁷

Example: “I stay in my room and don’t hang out with friends.” Initial severity rating is 4 out of 4; four weeks later severity rating is 2 out of 4.

Visit the CMHIS [Measurement-Based Care Dashboard](#) for access to a repository of standardized Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMS) for youth and adults.

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