TEST REVIEW:
Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents
Simone Lambert, M.S., N.C.C.
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

1. Title: Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents (SIPA).

2. Authors: Peter L. Sheras & Richard R. Abidin

3. Publisher: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. (PAR), P.O. Box 998, Odessa, FL 33556. 1-800-331-TEST.

4. Form: groups to which applicable: The SIPA can be used with biological, adoptive or foster parents of adolescents of either gender, ages 11 to 19 years, to detect stressful sectors of parent-adolescent interactions.

5. Practical features: There are 112 items. Respondents indicate adolescent’s behaviors and parental attitudes in order to identify the relationship of parenting stress and adolescent attributes, parent attributes, the qualitative nature of parent-adolescent interactions, and stressful life circumstances. The first 90 items are answered using a five-point response format with the following descriptors: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The remaining 22 items, comprising the Life Stressors Scale, are completed by circling "Yes" or "No" as to whether certain events have occurred in the past year.


7. Date of publication: 1998


9. Scoring services available and cost: Not available.

10. Time required to score: Approximately 5-10 minutes.

11. Purpose for which evaluated: Inventory used to assess stressors for use with parents of adolescents.

12. Description of test, items, and scoring: The SIPA measures adolescent attributes, the Adolescent Domain (AD), with four subscales comprised of ten items each: Moodiness/Emotional Lability (MEL), Social Isolation/Withdrawal (ISO), Delinquency/Antisocial (DEL), and Failure to Achieve or Persevere (ACH). The Parent
Domain (PD) also has four subscales ranging from seven to ten items: Life Restrictions (LFR), Relationship with Spouse/Partner (REL), Social Alienation (SOC), and Incompetence/Guilt (INC). Sixteen items regarding interaction qualities are grouped in the Adolescent-Parent Relationship Domain (APRD). The last twenty-two items of the test focus on Life Stressors (LS). The authors have included a composite score called Index of Total Parenting Stress (TS). Parent responses automatically transfer to the scoring sheet. The authors have included an area to combine subscale scores and a graph to plot the scores. The SIPA Profile form allows for interpretation of scores as normal, borderline, clinically significant, and clinically severe. The SIPA Profile Form translates raw scores into percentile ranks.

13. Author's purpose and basis for selecting items: Items were developed to assess stress regarding parent-adolescent interactions as observed by parents. This inventory was designed for independent use as an assessment and diagnostic tool. The SIPA was developed as an upward extension of the Parenting Stress Index for the purpose of assessing the parent's process of dealing with changes in their child's development as they move into adolescence. In addition, the items in this instrument can assist clinicians in identifying typical and atypical levels of stress and chart how this stress level changes over time.

14. Adequacy of directions and training required to administer: The instructions are explicit, and an example is included for further simplification. In terms of administration, PAR identifies the SIPA as a level B instrument. The authors suggest that interpretation of the inventory should be conducted by someone with graduate training in counseling or a related field.

15. Mental functions or traits represented in each score: Each item on the SIPA assesses the stress in parent-adolescent interactions in one or more categories exhibited by adolescents and observed by parents. The categories are: Moodiness/Emotional Lability (MEL), Social Isolation/Withdrawal (ISO), Delinquency/Antisocial (DEL), and Failure to Achieve or Persevere (ACH). The Parent Domain (PD) also is categorized into the following: Life Restrictions (LFR), Relationship with spouse/partner (REQ, Social Alienation (SOC), and Incompetence/Guilt (INC).

16. Comments regarding design of test: Instructions are clear and concise. Response indicators seem applicable for items. The items themselves are unambiguous and understandable for those with a reading level of fifth grade.

17. Validation against criteria: Factorial validity for two subscales (Parent Domains, Adolescent Domains) was tested from two approaches: principal component and maximum likelihood factor analysis with varimax rotation. The SIPA's Adolescent Domain, Parent Domain, Adolescent Parent Relationship Domain, and Index of Total Parenting Stress correlated -.42, -.65, -.63, and -.67, respectively, with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. These same SIPA scales correlated -.33, -.49, -.57, and -.53, respectively, with the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales-III. Additionally, the SIPA scales
correlated -.50, -.71, -.79, and -.74, respectively, with the Index of Total Parenting Stress and the Parenting Alliance Inventory.

18. Other empirical evidence indicating what the test measures: SIPA developers explored content, convergent, and discriminant validity. Validity of the SIPA was assessed using parents with adolescents in a clinical, as well as normative, sample. Results indicated that the SIPA Index of Total Parenting Stress can be utilized as an effective screening measure to identify parents and adolescents with relationship stressors, including an adolescent's DSM-IV diagnosis.

19. Comments regarding fairness: A rational analysis indicated items appear far across age, gender and culture.

20. Comments regarding validity for particular purposes: The Index of Total Parenting Stress effectively identifies the impact of adolescents’ behaviors and attitudes on their parents’ level of stress. The SIPA offers good factorial validity (Adolescent and Parent Domains). Content, convergent, and discriminant validity information is available for the subscales of the SIPA.

21. Generalizability: Norms are not age and gender dependent. Directions ask parents or guardians to give their overall impression on their functioning as a parent and the adolescent’s well-being. In addition, life stressors are gathered based on the past twelve months. The SIPA is not generalizable for other populations than biological, adoptive or foster parents of adolescents of either gender ages 11 to 19 years. In addition to scores being used for screening and diagnostic purposes, the SIPA could also be a valuable research tool.

22. Long-term stability: Internal consistency of the SIPA was tested with the subscale reliability coefficient median of .875. The Adolescent, Parent, and Adolescent-Parent Relationship Domains have internal consistency coefficients of .95, .94, and .91, respectively. The Index of Total Parenting Stress has an internal consistency coefficient of .97. Test-retest reliability, using an interval of 4 weeks, produced a subscale coefficient median of .84. The Adolescent, Parent, and Adolescent-Parent Relationship Domains have test-retest reliability coefficients of .92, .87, and .91, respectively. The Index of Total Parenting Stress has test-retest reliability of .93.

23. Norms: Data was collected from 778 parents of adolescents from all over the United States. Normative data attempted to meet the 1997 U.S. census projections for many population characteristics, yet this sample was not representative for race and socioeconomic status (SES). There was an oversampling of mothers and respondents from higher strata of SES. Seventy-nine percent of parents classified themselves as Caucasian. Most participants received a nominal payment for participating in the study.

24. Comments regarding adequacy of above for particular purpose: The SIPA is adequate for the purposes of screening and monitoring parent-adolescent interactions, in general, and for clinical populations, specifically. It is of some concern that more data
has not been gathered for fathers of adolescents, lower SES, and varying racial backgrounds.

25. Aids to user: The SIPA can be applied in research, screening, or monitoring treatment effects over time. It can also be used to aid in identifying adolescents with such mental diagnoses as Conduct Disorder, Dysthymia, and Adjustment Disorder. The SIPA may be useful in settings such as schools, residential treatment centers, community mental health agencies, and private practices. By identifying the relationship of parenting stress to adolescent characteristics, parent characteristics, stressful life events, and adolescent-parent interaction, SIPA subscale scores can assist clinicians to decide which area to address in treatment. The clinician can monitor effectiveness of treatment interventions using the SIPA.

26. Comments of reviewers: Due to the SIPA's recent publication, no published comments were obtainable.

27. General evaluation: The SIPA can provide valuable information regarding stressful areas of parent-adolescent interactions, as observed by an adolescent's parent or guardian. The SIPA is easy to administer, score, and interpret. Instructions are clear and concise. The items themselves are written clearly and are understandable for those with a fifth grade reading level. Hand-scored answer sheets allow for easy scoring and interpretation, and a profile form is included. SIPA scores are converted to percentiles. The professional manual provides detailed information in a user-friendly manner. Validity data for the SIPA is comprehensive with content, construct, and convergent, and discriminant data provided. Correlations with other established screening tests, such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, FACES-111, and the Parenting Alliance Inventory are provided. SIPA subscales, domains, and Index of Total Parenting Stress for the standardization sample indicate a high degree of internal consistency. Additionally, test-retest coefficients for the SIPA subscales, domains and total scale scores indicate that parents' responses to these items are stable over time. Norms for the SIPA are mostly representative based on 1997 US census data, but over-sample of mothers and higher SES.

REFERENCE


Edited by Bradley T. Erford, Ph.D., Chair of AACE’s Screening Assessment Instruments Committee.