

Background to the Functional Dimensions of Coping (FDC) Scale

This scale is designed to assess not just what people do when attempting to cope with a stressful encounter (behaviour), but also what the goals (functions) of their coping choices are. The functions describe what individuals believe the coping behaviour is designed to achieve for them.

There are four functions assessed by this FDC scale.

1. **Approach** – behaviours that the person believes will allow them to deal directly with the problem.
2. **Avoidance** – behaviours that the person believes will allow them to ignore the existence of the problem.
3. **Emotional regulation** – behaviours that the person believes will allow them to deal with the emotional consequences of the stressful encounter.
4. **Reappraisal** – behaviours that the person believes will allow them to readdress and reinterpret the meaning of the stressful encounter.

The FDC can be used to describe events recalled retrospectively or more concurrent ones. The retrospective version is given below. To change the focus of the FDC scale, just change the initial instructions to target the time window of any specific event of interest.

If you think that this measure would be of use to you in your research please feel free to download it and use it. Use is free and there are no restrictions.

Some Supporting References

Cox, T & Ferguson, E (1991). Individual difference, stress and coping. In Cooper , C and Payne, L (Eds) *Personality and stress: individual differences in the stress process*. Wiley & Sons: Chichester (pp 7-29)

Ferguson, E. & Cox, T. (1997). The functional dimensions of coping scale: theory, reliability and validity. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 2 109-129

Ferguson, E. (2001). Personality and coping traits: A joint factor analysis. *British Journal of Health Psychology*,6, 311-325

Reporting a Stressful Event

In the space provided, please describe briefly **the most stressful event** that you experienced in the last three months.

Functional Dimensions of Coping (FDC) Scale

This section concerns the behaviours you adopted in attempting to deal with the major stressor you described above. There are many different ways of dealing with stress. In the space provided below I would like you to give a brief description of those activities and/or thoughts you used in attempting to deal with the event described above.

We would now like you to provide ratings of these activities and/or thoughts by circling the appropriate number on the following scales.

To what extent did this/these activities

	Not at all						Very much so	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1) Allow you to directly deal with the problem?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2) Help you to find meaning and understand from the situation?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3) Allow you to manage the distress and upset caused by the event?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4) Allow you to grow and develop as a person?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5) Help you to divert your attention away from the problem?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6) Allow you to handle any anxiety caused by the event?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7) Provide you with information useful in solving the problem?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8) Allow you to deny that anything was wrong?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
9) Enable you to deal with any emotional upset caused by the event?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

To what extent did this/these activities

	Not at all					Very much so	
10) Allow you to understand something of the nature of the problem, from which you could attempt to deal directly with it?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11) Allow you to avoid having to dealing directly with the situation?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12) Allow you to learn more about yourself and others?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
13) Distract you from thinking about the problem?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
14) Help you to think about the problem in a new and useful way?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
15) Allow you a more optimistic outlook on the future?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
16) Allow you to step back and look at the problem, in a different way, such that it seemed better?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank you for your time and co-operation

Scoring for the FDC scale

Approach = 1 + 7 + 10 + 14

Avoidance = 5 + 8 + 11 + 13

Emotional regulation = 3 + 6 + 9

Reappraisal = 2 + 4 + 12 + 15 + 16