Problem Solving/Decision Making

**Instrument:** Life Skills Development Scale for Adolescents

**Subscale Name:** Problem Solving/Decision Making


**Developers:** C. A. Darden, E. J. Ginter, and G. M. Gazda. Contact information: C. A. Darden, Learning Disabilities Center, 343 Milledge Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602-5554

**Year:** 1996

**Language other than English available:** No

**Target Audience(s):** Youth ages 13-20

**Type of instrument:** Attitudes and Behavior

**Data collected:** Quantitative

**Data collection format:** Self report – Pre/post

**Reading Level:** Flesch-Kincaid Grade level: 8.9

**Existence of test/technical manuals, user guides, supplemental materials:** Literature reference includes items from the entire instrument, subscales, information on scale development, psychometrics, administration, and scoring information.

**Level of training necessary for administration/scoring/interpretation:** No formal training necessary.

**Widespread Use/Professional Endorsements:** The primary purpose of this instrument is research and to inform intervention design, implementation and evaluation in clinical and educational settings. The inventory is endorsed by CYFERNet, Evaluating the National Outcomes for Children, Youth, Parent/Family, and Community.

**Cost of use:** No cost associated with this instrument; must seek permission from developer to use the scale.
Description:
- The Problem Solving/Decision Making subscale consists of 15 items related to effective problem solving/decision making behaviors and perceptions of competence.
- The subscale is part of the 60 item Life Skills Development Scale for Adolescents developed for use in clinical assessment, research, and evaluation of interventions.
- The larger instrument consists of 4 subscales: 1) Interpersonal Communication/Human Relations, 2) Problem Solving/Decision Making, 3) Physical Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills, and 4) Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skill.

Psychometrics:
Information on reliability and validity are provided below. If information on a particular psychometric was not found, it is indicated as “no information provided.” It should be noted that this is not necessarily an indication of a lack of reliability or validity within a particular scale/instrument, but rather a lack of rigorous testing, for various reasons, by the developers or other researchers.

The Life Skills Development Scale is affected by the social desirability response style. The developers suggest that the instrument is administered along with a measure of social desirability when using the instrument to evaluate educational interventions.

Reliability: A correlation of at least .80 is suggested for at least one type of reliability as evidence; however, standards range from .5 to .9 depending on the intended use and context for the instrument.
- Internal Consistency: .82
- Inter-rater reliability: No information provided
- Test-Retest: No information provided
Validity: The extent to which a measure captures what it is intended to measure.

Content/Face Validity: The Life Skills Development Scale was developed out to the taxonomy proposed by Brooks (1984), which sets forth life-skills descriptors, validated by expert opinion, to be necessary across the life span for successful human development.

Criterion Validity: No information provided

Construct Validity:
- Convergent validity indicated by positive correlation with score obtained on the Problem Solving Inventory (Heppner, 1988). Discriminant validity was not determined. There were significant correlations with instruments purported to not relate to problem solving/decision making skills (e.g., Miller Social Intimacy Scale, The Ego Identity Scale, and The Physical Self-Efficacy Scale). This suggests significant overlap between the constructs.
- No significant differences in scores across race/ethnicity.
- Interscale correlations were significant in the low to moderate range (.13 to .53).
- Factor analysis revealed an underlying general life skills construct; however, the four proposed dimensions were confirmed with a significant amount of uniqueness to be considered useful in defining specific components of life skills. It is thus recommended to use both total scale and subscale scores in comparing pre and post evaluation results.
Problem Solving/Decision Making

Subscale Name: Problem Solving/Decision Making

Instrument: Life Skills Development Scale-Adolescent Form

Developers: C. A. Darden, E. J. Ginter, and G. M. Gazda

Rating Scale:
0 = completely agree
1 = mostly agree
2 = mostly disagree
3 = completely disagree

Instructions: Read each statement and decide whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the statement. Once you have made your decision, darken the appropriate response on your answer sheet.

Items:
1. I contact experts and gather as much information as possible before making decisions about my education. (R)
2. There is no one for me to observe directly in order to find out about the kind of work I might like to do.
3. When solving a problem, I am able to think everything through in my own head. (R)
4. Once I have decided what kind of work I want to do, I know how to go about getting it. (R)
5. I can compare and look carefully at the various ideas I develop. (R)
6. I like to make plans and take action steps before making a final decision about a job. (R)
7. When it is time to make an important educational or occupational decision, I am able to develop an appropriate plan of action. (R)
8. When it comes to solving a problem, I consider all of the things that are part of the problem before deciding what to do. (R)
9. I do not know which talents to work on that will help me in the future.
10. I can tell the differences between talk that is backed up by facts and talk that is not backed up by anything. (R)
11. I use information I gather to help me develop several different ways to solve a problem. (R)
12. I know where to go to find dependable information about jobs. (R)
13. I am able to solve problems through the use of logic. (R)
14. I know how my actions and decisions will affect my occupational choice. (R)
15. In exploring the kind of work I might want to do, I get information about it, talk to people who work at it, and get a part-time job that is like the work I am considering.
Scoring:
- Reverse scoring (3=completely agree to 0=completely disagree) for items indicated with a (R).
- Sum all item ratings together. Range of scores= 0 to 45.
- Higher scores indicate greater problem solving/decision making skills.