


The Meaning in Life Questionnaire

Values & Meaning

 Assessment

 5 min.

 Client

 Yes



The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler, 2006) is a brief scale that assesses two dimensions of meaning in life: the presence of meaning in life and search for meaning. Presence is positively related to well-being, intrinsic religiosity, extraversion and agreeableness, and negatively related to anxiety and depression. Search is positively related to religious quest, rumination, past-negative and present-fatalistic time perspectives, negative affect, depression, and neuroticism. Search is negatively related to future time perspective, close-mindedness (dogmatism), and well-being. The MLQ has good reliability, test-retest stability, stable factor structure, and convergence among informants.

Goal

The current questionnaire measures both how full respondents feel their lives are of meaning and how engaged and motivated clients are in efforts to find meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives.



Scoring

The present assessment tool consists of two subscales: (1) Presence of Meaning (how much respondents feel their lives have meaning), and (2) Search for Meaning (how much respondents strive to find meaning and understanding in their lives). Scores on the subscales are calculated independently. Please see the scoring form on page 3.



Advice

The present assessment tool can be used to gather information at intake and assess successful therapy outcomes. For example, many clients have a desire for personal growth. The MLQ Search subscale can effectively measure the extent to which clients seek greater purpose and meaning as part of this growth process. The MLQ Presence subscale can also be used as a brief measure of psychological health, given the above described inverse relations with common forms of psychological problems and the finding that increased sense of life's meaning is one of the most commonly reported positive outcomes of coping with adversity.



Suggested Readings

Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 53*, 80-93.

Tool Description

Instructions: Please take a moment to think about what makes your life and existence feel important and significant to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
absolutely untrue	mostly untrue	somewhat untrue	can't say true or false	somewhat true	mostly true	absolutely true

no.	rating	statement
1		I understand my life's meaning.
2		I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.
3		I am always looking to find my life's purpose.
4		My life has a clear sense of purpose.
5		I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.
6		I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.
7		I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.
8		I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.
9		My life has no clear purpose.
10		I am searching for meaning in my life.

Presence of Meaning

Search for Meaning

item	score	item	score
1		2	
4		3	
5		7	
6		8	
9 ^R		10	
Total:		Total:	
Divided by 5:		Divided by 5:	

Note: Reverse coded items are indicated with an R.