

Protective Factors Survey Frequently asked Questions & Answers

What is the cost of the PFS?

You may download and use the PFS free of charge. It is accessible on this page of the FRIENDS website:
<http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/pfs.htm>.

What is the purpose of the list of services on the Staff Only portion of the PFS?

The items about services were included so programs could track whether services offered were actually received. This information may be useful to programs that want to track that information. It may not be useful for others to use that section of the survey. The program specific or demographic items are not required for validity of the scale. They are optional. The survey items that are answered on the 1-7 pt. scale are the actual items that measure the protective factors and comprise the subscales.

Why did you choose a 7-point response scale?

The team that developed the PFS had many discussions about the scale and reviewed studies related to odd and even numbered scales and scale length. We made decisions about scaling (and item selection, etc.) only after extensive field testing and discussions with parent focus groups. Our experience was that neither administrators nor respondents reported any awkwardness in using the scale. The primary purpose of the PFS was to measure change in protective factors. It was critical to select a response scale that was sensitive to small amounts of change. The seven-point response scale was selected over the five-point response scale because it provided additional measurement points, thus increasing the sensitivity of the measure.

What instruments were used in the validation studies?

The following instruments were used in the validation studies:

- *Brief Child Abuse Potential Inventory*. (BCAPI; Ondersma, Chaffin, Simpson, & LeBreton, 2005)
- *Brief Cope*. (Carver, 1997)
- *PRIME-MD Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ)*. (Spitzer, Kroenke, & Williams, 1999)
- *Perceived Stress Scale*. (PSS; Cohen, Karmarck, & Mermelstein, 1983)
- *Physical Health and Functioning*.

How long after a parent begins a program should they be given the posttest? We are an open-ended parent support program. Parents sometimes participate in our program for many years.

Agencies should take theoretical considerations (estimated time for program impact) as well as logistical details (accessibility of clients) to determine the optimal time for survey administration.

Which items are appropriate for first time parents in a prenatal program?

Three of the PFS subscales (Concrete Support, Emotional Support, Family Functioning and Resiliency) refer to the family and could be answered by first time parents with no children in the home.

If parents are receiving services between the time they are pregnant and after the child is born, it would be appropriate to complete questions 1-11 before the child is born and then questions 1-20 after the child is born. The reason for repeating questions 1-11 is that protective factors may change when the child is born and it's important to understand how the protective factors are affected as a system. In terms of analysis, questions 1-11 could be examined using a time-series design, where prenatal serves as time point one, after birth is time point two, and end of program is time point three.

What age should a child be before a first-time parent should complete the form?



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The instrument was validated for use with parents of children of all ages.

Some items refer to a relationship with a specific child (e.g., when I discipline my child, I lose control). Our program will serve multiple children from a single household. Is it legitimate to answer these questions repeatedly, once for each child in our program?

The survey asks respondents to select one child – the child they are receiving services for or the child they think will benefit most from their participation in services. If participants have several children for whom they are receiving services, instruct them to pick one (it doesn't matter which one) and keep that same child in mind when responding to the questions. Although the questions could be asked repeatedly, the instrument has not been validated for this use. Moreover, the database is limited to one set of responses per question.

Are any subscales invalidated if a respondent lists a different child on the posttest from the one listed on the pretest?

The question about the target child's age is intended as a PROMPT for participants to encourage them to think about only one child when responding to the items. Its primary purpose is to help participants respond to the items in a consistent way by thinking about only one child. In our validity studies, we did not examine whether or not participants used the same target child at pretest and posttest. The survey functioned well without looking at this variable.

If the agency has the time, they can look at each participant's pretest and posttest data to ensure that the target child is the same (and retain only the responses for which the target child is the same). This will strengthen the rigor of the survey findings. However, our validity studies suggest it is appropriate to analyze the data without taking this variable into consideration.

How are the questions answered if the child does not live with the respondent?

The survey is intended to be given to caregivers. Some of the parents involved in parenting services have had their children removed from their care (either through CPS intervention or a divorce/custody situation). If it is probable that they will care for their children sometime in the future—even if they never actually reside with that caregiver—and they are involved in prevention services, it is appropriate to give them the survey.

Some items refer to “family”. Is there a rule about the definition of family? Who constitutes a family?

Respondents are encouraged to construct their own definition of family. If they want to include children living in the household that are not directly related to them, or close relatives that may or may not live with them, that is fine.

Are there cutoff scores identified in the technical material?

No, there are no cutoff scores for the PFS.

Could this survey be used along with other parenting surveys effectively as a type of check & balance tool?

Yes. The PFS can be used with other measures to validate other instruments and/or increase the validity of the evaluation findings.

Is there a Spanish version of the PFS?

The tool has been validated for use in English only at this time.



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Is there a retrospective version of the PFS?

No. The retrospective version of the tool has not been tested sufficiently to be released to the public domain.

Do the database reports provide information on the statistical significance of scores?

The PFS report contains pretest/posttest means and standard deviations. To measure change, the percent of clients with improvements in scores from pretest to posttest is reported. The report does not include statistical significance tests.

The reliability of the subscales is reported in the PFS Field Test Report. All four subscales demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability ($\alpha > .7$). Agencies interested in conducting significance tests are encouraged to use a dependent samples t-test to compare pretest/posttest means. As with all significance testing, data should be screened prior to analysis.

If the database is used, does FRIENDS have access to each site's local data?

No. Once the database has been downloaded, FRIENDS does not have access to the data.

How long will agency data be retained on the PFS database?

After you download the PFS database, the data is stored on your local computer or network drive. Your database manager determines how long the data is retained. The database is not web-based.

Can we aggregate data from several agencies?

The database is set up to aggregate data across agencies. The database manager determines how the data is organized and reported. Please read the "read me" document on the FRIENDS website for details.

Is the downloadable PFS Database software compatible with Apple / Mac computers or only PCs / Windows?

The PFS database only works in a Windows environment.

What were the demographics of the population used in the PFS field trials?

Demographic information on race/ethnicity:

	Pilot Study	Study II	Study III
Hispanic/Latino	52.1%		
White	28.7%		
African-American	12.0%		
Native American (American Indian/Alaskan Native)		12%	1.40%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders		< 1%	0.30%
African American		9.20%	15.80%
Hispanic or Latino/a		5.60%	8.90%
Black (African Nationals/Caribbean Islanders)		5.60%	8.20%
White (non-Hispanic)		61.80%	62.20%



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Multi-Racial 2.80% 2.40%

Other Demographic Characteristics:

Characteristic	Pilot Study	Study II	Study III
Marital Status	N=330	N=248	N=291
Married	31.8	39	39.5
Partnered	7.6	9.2	9.6
Single	43.9	36.1	34.7
Divorced	7.3	7.6	7.2
Widowed	0.9	0.8	0.7
Separated	8.5	6.8	6.9
Education	N=324	N = 248	N=291
Elementary or junior high school	14.8	0.4	3.8
Some high school	32.4	2.8	17.2
High school diploma or GED	7.8	21.3	29.6
Trade/vocation school	6.8	6	6.9
Some college	4.9	18.9	22
Housing	N=72	N=247	N=291
Own	12.5	24.5	32
Rent	61.1	53.8	52.6
Shared housing	22.2	18.1	12.4
Temporary	4.2	2.8	2.1
Services	N/A	N = 248	N=291
Food stamps	N/A	47.8	42.3
Medicaid	N/A	65.9	52.6
Earned income tax credit	N/A	23.3	14.4
TANF	N/A	6.4	10.3
Head start/Early head start	N/A	10.8	10
Income Level	N=70	N=245	N=291
\$0-10,000	40	41	32
\$10,001-20,000	28.6	22.5	19.6
\$20,001-30,000	25.7	16.9	14.8
\$30,001-40,000	2.9	7.2	9.3
\$40,001-50,000	2.9	5.2	8.6
More than \$50,000	*	5.6	13.4
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