PROTECTIVE FACTORS SURVEY (PFS)

Author: The University of Kansas Institute for Educational Research & Public Service in partnership with the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

Date: 2008

Construct: Parenting Skills, Formal and Informal Sources of Support, Family Relationships

Standardized: No

Instrument Type(s): Caregiver self-report

Uses of Information: The PFS was developed as a brief, practical tool for paraprofessional and professional staff to measure family protective factors in order to guide intervention services, monitor family progress, and evaluate program outcomes. In addition to caregiver assessment, the PFS can be used to inform family goals, to open dialogues with families about parenting strategies that promote their child’s development and learning, to facilitate case reviews, to monitor changes in parenting behavior, and to evaluate parenting outcomes.

Environment: Any familiar setting where the caregiver is comfortable.

Description: The Protective Factors Survey is a pencil and paper survey. The survey takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The instrument is divided into two sections, the first section to be completed by a program staff member and the second section to be completed by the caregiver. The caregiver portion of the survey contains the core questions of the survey. In the demographic section, participants are asked to provide details about their family composition, income, and involvement in services. In the family protective factors section, caregivers are asked to respond to a series of statements about their family, using a seven-point frequency or agreement scale.


Cost: No cost. The PFS is in the public domain.

1 Funding for the development of the PFS was provided by the US Department of Health and Human Services.
### PROTECTIVE FACTORS SURVEY (PFS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability of Test Manual:</th>
<th>Survey administration manual is available as part of the survey kit, available on the FRIENDS website. See contact information.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information:</td>
<td>FRIENDS NRC, <a href="http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/pfs.htm">http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/pfs.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructions:</td>
<td>Provided in survey administration manual.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrator:</td>
<td>Paraprofessional or professional staff person who provides parenting education or support services to family and has participated in PFS administration training.</td>
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<td>Qualification:</td>
<td>PFS administration training.</td>
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<td>Administration Time:</td>
<td>5 minutes for survey instruction, 10-15 minutes to complete.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondents:</td>
<td>Caregivers</td>
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<td>Scales/Item Options:</td>
<td>The PFS contains four scales (Family Functioning/ Resiliency, Social Support, Concrete Support, and Nurturing and Attachment) and five items relating to child development/knowledge of parenting.</td>
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- **Family Functioning/Resiliency** (5 items): Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis. Family’s ability to openly share positive and negative experiences and mobilize to accept, solve, and manage problems.

- **Social Support** (3 items): Perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs.

- **Concrete Support** (3 items): Perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.

- **Nurturing and Attachment** (4 items): The emotional tie along with a pattern of positive interaction between the parent and child that develops over time.

- **Child Development/Knowledge of Parenting** (5 items): Understanding and utilizing effective child management techniques and having age-appropriate expectations for children’s abilities.
### Scoring:
The four scales take only a few minutes to calculate. Item must first be scored in the same direction such that a higher score reflects a higher level of protective factors. After scores are properly oriented, scale scores can be obtained. For each scale, sum the item scores and divide by the number of items completed. Scale scores should be interpreted using the 7-point response scale.

### Languages:
English

### Psychometric Properties:
The four scales of the PFS demonstrate high internal consistency (0.76 - 0.89). Temporal stability estimates are also adequate (0.52 - 0.75). Content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity were also examined and provide evidence that the PFS is a valid measure of multiple protective factors against child maltreatment. In two separate studies, the PFS subscales were found to be negatively related to stress, depression, and risk for child maltreatment, and positively related to adaptive coping and caregiver health.