

Simplified Personal Questionnaire Procedure (ver. 3; 6/07)

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The Personal Questionnaire (PQ) is an expanded target complaint measure that is individualized for each client. It is generated from the PQ Problem Description Form, completed by the client during the screening process. It is intended to be a list of problems that the client wishes to work on in therapy, stated in the client's own words.

Materials:

4" x 6" Index Cards

Blank PQ Form (for writing in items)

Problem Description Form (completed)

Procedure

1. Generating Items. The items generated for the PQ should be the most important in the client's view. However, an attempt should be made to include one or two problems from each of the following areas:

- Symptoms
- Specific performance/activity (e.g., work)
- Relationships
- Self-esteem
- Emotions and inner experiences

This means that if the client does not list a problem in a particular area, the interviewer should ask the client if s/he has any difficulties in that area that s/he wants to work on in therapy. If, however, the client does not wish to have an item for this area, the researcher does not insist on it.

This part of the procedure should be thought of as a brainstorming session, generating as many potential items as possible (around 15 is preferable). If the client has difficulty coming up with 10 problems, the interviewer can use other screening measures as sources of possible problems. For example, if the client has completed the SCL-90-R or CORE-Outcome Measure, the interviewer can ask the client about items with "3" or "4" ratings.

2. Refining the PQ items. Next, the interviewer helps the client to clarify his/her items and, if necessary, to rephrase the goals into problems. If necessary, the number of items is reduced to around 10.

2a. In this part of the procedure, the interviewer begins by writing each problem onto a separate index card, revising it in the process. Refining PQ items is not a mechanical procedure, but requires discussion with the client to make sure that the PQ reflects his/her chief concerns. It takes careful, patient communication to make sure that the PQ items truly reflect the client's experience of what is problematic.

PQ items should be present problems or difficulties, and should be worded "I feel," "I am," "I can't," "My thinking," and so on. It is useful to think of the list as things the client wants to change through therapy. A good PQ item has the following characteristics:

- (i) It reflects an area of difficulty, rather than a goal (e.g., "I am too shy" rather than "I want to be more outgoing").
- (ii) It is something that the client wants to work on in therapy.

- (iii) It refers to a specific problem; that is, general, vague problems are to be specified and described explicitly where possible.
- (iv) It refers to a single problem; that is, items referring to multiple problems (e.g., “I’m uncomfortable around other people and have trouble talking about myself.”) are divided up into multiple items.
- (v) It is in the client’s own words, not the interviewer’s.
- (vi) It is not redundant with another PQ item.

2b. After the interviewer writes down the items, s/he then asks the client if anything has been left out, adding further items as needed, until the client feels that the list is complete.

2c. The interviewer next reviews the items with the client, asking the client to revise or confirm them. If the client has generated more than 10 items, the interviewer asks the client to delete or combine repetitive items. If there are still more than 10 items, the interviewer asks the client if s/he wants to drop any. The interview should not force the client to generate exactly 10 items; but try to obtain 8-12 items where possible.

3. Prioritizing the items. Next, the interviewer asks the client to sort the index cards into order, with the most important concern first, the next most important second, etc. The rank order of the item is written on the card.

4. Rating the PQ. After prioritizing, the interviewer gives the client a blank PQ form and the rank-ordered index cards, and asks the client to use the blank form to rate how much each problem has bothered him/her during the past week. These ratings become the client’s initial baseline score for the PQ.

5. Duration ratings. In addition, at this first administration of the PQ, the interviewer may want to find out how long each problem has bothered the client at roughly the same level or higher as it does now, using the Personal Questionnaire Duration Form. This can be useful for establishing a retrospective baseline for the PQ.

6. Prepare the PQ. Finally, the interviewer types or writes the PQ items onto a blank PQ form, making at least 10 copies for future use. In doing so, it is a good idea to leave 2 spaces blank for the client to add more items later, in case his/her problems shift over time.

7. Adding items. Clients may add items to their PQs, either on a temporary basis, by writing them in the space at the bottom on the form, or permanently, by requesting that the item be added to the printed form.

Your initials:_____ (Client ID:_____)
Today's date:

Problem Description Form: Do this one first!

1. Please describe the main problems you are having right now that led you to seek treatment.

2. If you are seeking psychotherapy, please list the specific problems or difficulties that would like assistance with. Please feel free to add to your list as you fill out other forms.

PERSONAL QUESTIONNAIRE (9/01)

Client ID _____

Today's date: _____

Instructions: Please complete before each session. Rate each of the following problems according to how much it has bothered you during the past seven days, including today.

	Not At All	Very Little	Little	Moder- ately	Consider-ably	Very Consider- ably	Maxi-mum Possible
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Additional Problems (optional): * Add this item to my printed form	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Personal Questionnaire Duration Form

Client

ID _____

Today's date: _____

Instructions: Please rate how long each of your problems has bothered you at roughly the same level (or higher) as it does now.

	less than 1 month	1 - 5 months	6 - 11 months	1 - 2 years	3 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	more than 10 years
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7