

### 3.4.6 Health and Life

#### I. PURPOSE

This questionnaire includes several instruments designed to measure psychosocial characteristics that may be important in understanding the causes of cardiovascular disease. These psychosocial factors may themselves lead to increased risk of cardiovascular disease or may interact with other traditional risk factors, such as diet or sedentary lifestyle. The areas assessed as part of this questionnaire include feelings of happiness/unhappiness and availability of help/affection. Each area is measured by a set of questions or a scale.

#### II. DEFINITIONS

The terms used in the questionnaire should require no explanation, because they are used in the way they tend to be used by most people in everyday life.

#### III. METHODS

This is a **self-administered questionnaire**. Provide the participant with the form and a pencil and give brief instructions for completion.

##### 1. General Instructions

- 1.1 It is important that the participant have some private time in a quiet area to complete the form. The participant should be asked to answer each question by bubbling in the circle with the appropriate response. Review the top section of the questionnaire carefully with the participant before starting. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers and that we are interested in their feelings and opinions about things. Also emphasize that they should not spend too much time on any one question. Show them that additional instructions are provided at the beginning of each section. Before starting, note that only one bubble should be filled for each question or statement.
- 1.2 Ask the participant to try to answer all questions. Remind him/her to request assistance from a staff member if anything is unclear. Most participants should be able to complete the questionnaire on their own. However, if the participant expresses or appears to have difficulty reading or comprehending the questions, offer to help and make arrangements for an interviewer-administered version in the appropriate language.
- 1.3 Important points for clinic staff and participants to consider:
  - If the topic should arise, remind participants that all information is strictly confidential and will be used only for research purposes. Explain that things about people's lives, including the stressful situations they go through, may be important to their health. Knowing about these things may help us understand the causes of heart disease better. Also emphasize that it is important to get complete data so that the study results will be valid. However, if a participant is upset by the questions or does not want to answer, he or she should feel free to skip the question or section. Refusal to answer the questions will not jeopardize his/her participation in the study.
  - The measurement of these dimensions is complex. Generally they are measured using scales or collections of questions that attempt to get at the same underlying concept in different ways. For this reason some of the questions may seem repetitive. If questions

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on this should arise, acknowledge that some questions may seem similar, but ask participants to respond to each one separately as best they can.

- The terms used should be understood by most people. If the participant asks about the meaning of any item or tries to qualify a statement, ask the participant to re-read the statement (or question) and answer as they best understand the question. Do not attempt to explain the question or provide synonyms (unless specified in the specific instructions below), because this may create problems for some of the scales.

### 2. Specific Instructions

**Questions 1A-1T correspond to a scale designed to measure a person's feelings and behavior during the past week.** The participant is asked to indicate how well each statement describes his/her feelings or behavior during the past week. The instruction on the form reads:

*1. Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you felt this way DURING THE PAST WEEK.*

Possible answers are: “Rarely or none of the time (Less than 1 Day),”  
“Some or a little of the time (1-2 Days),”  
“A moderate amount of the time (3-4 Days),”  
“Most of the time (5-7 days).”

- A. I was bothered by things that don't usually bother me.*
- B. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.*
- C. I felt that I could not shake off the blues, even with help from my family and friends.*
- D. I felt that I was just as good as other people.*
- E. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.*
- F. I felt depressed.*
- G. I felt that everything I did was an effort.*
- H. I felt hopeful about the future.*
- I. I thought my life had been a failure.*
- J. I felt fearful.*
- K. My sleep was restless.*
- L. I was happy.*
- M. I talked less than usual.*
- N. I felt lonely.*
- O. People were unfriendly.*
- P. I enjoyed life.*
- Q. I had crying spells.*
- R. I felt sad.*
- S. I felt that people dislike me.*
- T. I could not “get going.”*

**Question 2 corresponds to a scale designed to measure a person's feelings of isolation or support.** The participant is asked to indicate how well each statement describes the way he or she usually is. The instruction on the form reads:

*2. Please read the following questions and mark the answer that best describes your life now.*

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Possible answers are: “None of the time,” “A little of the time,” “Some of the time,” “Most of the time,” and “All of the time.”

*Is there someone available to you whom you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk?*

*Is there someone available to give you good advice about a problem?*

*Is there someone available to you who shows you love and affection?*

*Is there someone available to help you with daily chores?*

*Can you count on anyone to provide you with emotional support (talking over problems or helping you make a difficult decision)?*

*Do you have as much contact as you would like with someone you feel close to, someone in whom you can trust and confide?*

**Questions 3-6 are intended to measure loneliness and companionship.**

***Question 3: How often do you feel that you lack companionship?***

Possible answers are: “Hardly ever,” “Some of the time,” and “Often.”

***Question 4: How often do you feel left out?***

Possible answers are: “Hardly ever,” “Some of the time,” and “Often.”

***Question 5: How often do you feel isolated from others?***

Possible answers are: “Hardly ever,” “Some of the time,” and “Often.”

***Question 6: Are you currently married or living with a partner?***

This question requires a “yes” or “no” answer. The participant should answer “yes” if s/he is married *or* living with a partner. If the participant is married or has a partner *but is currently not living with that person, then “no” should be marked.*

MESA staff will complete the form by filling out the box “For MESA Field Center Use Only:”

- If the form was self-administered, check for completeness.
- Mark if form was self-administered or interviewer-administered.
- Record Interviewer or Reviewer ID (your ID number)