

1. Authors: O'Leary, K.D. and Porter, B.
2. Name of Instrument: Overt Hostility/O'Leary-Porter Scale
3. Variables Measured: Parent's perceptions of the frequency of occurrence of positive and negative interactions displayed by spouses toward each other in the presence of the child. Items assess differences over discipline, complaints about each other, physical or verbal abuse, displays of affection, etc.
4. Instrument Description: The scale is a 10-item scale using a 5-point rating ranging from "never" to "very often". The scale is designed to assess the amount that parents openly argue in the presence of their children. The question format originally used asked parents to complete the scale by asking the parents how often they disagreed about certain issues. More recently, Johnson and O'Leary (1987) modified the format in order to assess the extent to which one parent believed that he or she argued in front of the child. The scale was originally designed in order to assess how this specific aspect of a marriage that might predict child conduct problems more accurately than general marital discord.

5. Sample Items:

How often has this child heard you argue about the wife's role in the family?
(Housewife, working wife, etc.)

How often do you complain to your spouse about his/her personal habits in front of this child?

Husbands and wives often disagree on the subject of discipline. How often do you and your spouse argue over disciplinary problems in this child's presence?

6. Length: The scale contains 10 items. The first 9 items are keyed positively; the 10th item, regarding displays of affection, is keyed negatively.
7. Reliability: Cronbach's alpha for an earlier version of this scale on a sample of 65 volunteer community parents was .86; test-retest reliability on this sample over a two-week period was .96.

Validity: The correlation of this overt hostility scale with the Locke Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale was .63 for a clinic sample of 25 boys and 25 girls (Emery and O'Leary, 1982). The correlation of the Locke Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale and this overt hostility scale was .43 in a nonclinic sample (N=132) (Emery and O'Leary, 1984). Overt hostility correlated .30 (significant) with conduct disorders in girls when the reports of behavior were made by the mother (Johnson & O'Leary, 1987).

Similarly, there was a significant correlation (.40) between overt hostility of parents toward each other and conduct problems of young boys (<10 years) in the Porter and O'Leary (1980) study. In addition, there were significant correlations between the

overt hostility scale and total pathology for boys less than 10 ($r=.45$) and older than 10 ($r=.43$). It is not clear that the overt hostility scale will ultimately predict conduct problems of children better than general marital discord, though it has in the studies by Porter and O'Leary (1980) and Johnson and O'Leary (1987).

8. Availability: The scale is available from Dr. K.D. O'Leary, Psychology Department, Statue University of New York, Stony Brook, NY 11794.

The scale is also available through NAPS, National Auxiliary Publication Service

9. References: Some publications that have used the Overt Hostility Scale include:

Porter, B., and O'Leary, K.D. (1980). Marital discord and childhood behavior problems. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 8, 287-295.

Emery, R.E., and O'Leary, K.D. (1982). Children's perceptions of marital discord and behavior problems of boys and girls. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 10, 11-24.

Emery, R.E., and O'Leary, K.D. (1984). Marital discord and child behavior problems in a nonclinic sample. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 12, 411-420.

Johnson, P.L., and O'Leary, K.D. (1987). Parental behavior patterns and conduct problems in girls. Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology.

Tesser, A., Forehand, R. (1991). Adolescent functioning: communication and the buffering of parental anger. Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology, 10(2), 152-175.

Matteson, K.J. Resiliency and vulnerability: The role of parent-child relationships in association with marital discord and girls' adjustment. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences & Engineering, 55(10-B), 4608.

Corinne, D., Steele, R., Forehand, R., Armistead, L. (1996). The role of family conflict and marital conflict in adolescent functioning. Journal of Family Violence, 11(1), 81-91.

Mann, B.J., MacKenzie, E.P. (1996). Pathways among marital functioning, parental behaviors, and child behavior problems in school-age boys. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 25(2), 183-191.

Ehrle, G.M. (1998). Adjustment in children being reared by grandparents because of substance abuse of their parents: A comparison of children from intact families, divorced families, and guardian grandparent families. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences & Engineering, 58 (8-B), 4489.

Burton, J.P. (1998). Marital conflict and child adjustment: Children's perceptions of marital conflict. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences & Engineering, 59 (6-B), 3089.

Goodrich, G.M. (1999). Evaluating a divorce adjustment program: Kids connection (program evaluation). Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences & Engineering, 60 (5-B), 2339.

Sherwood, H.B. (2001). Managing marital discord: Validating the parental management of conflict scale. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences & Engineering, 61 (10-B), 5581.

Zudiker, S.N. (2001). An object relations study on post-divorce boys, interparental conflict, and externalizing behaviors. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 62(4-B), 2098.

Please answer all of the following questions to the best of your ability. The questions refer to your son/daughter, _____, only.

1. It is difficult in these days of tight budgets to confine financial discussions to specific times and places. How often would you say you and your spouse argue over money matters in front of this child?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

2. Children often go to one parent for money or permission to do something after having been refused by the other parent. How often would you say this child approaches you or your spouse in this manner with rewarding results?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

3. Husbands and wives often disagree on the subject of discipline. How often do you and your spouse argue over disciplinary problems in this child's presence?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

4. How often has this child heard you and your spouse argue about the wife's role in the family? (Housewife, working wife, etc.).

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

5. How often does your spouse complain to you about your personal habit (drinking, nagging, sloppiness, etc.) in front of this child?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

6. How often do you complain to your spouse about his/her personal habits in front of this child?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

7. In every normal marriage there are arguments. What percentage of the arguments between you and your spouse would you say take place in front of this child?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

8. To varying degrees, we all experience almost irresistible impulses in times of great stress. How often is there physical expression of hostility between you and your spouse in front of this child?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

9. How often do you and/or your spouse display verbal hostility in front of this child?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

10. How often do you and your spouse display affection for each other in front of this child?

Never _____ Rarely _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____ Very Often _____

Please answer all of the following questions to the best of your ability. The questions refer to your son/daughter, _____, only.

1. It is difficult in these days of tight budgets to confine financial discussions to specific times and places. How often would you say you and your spouse argue over money matters in front of this child?

Never 4 Rarely 3 Occasionally 2 Often 1 Very Often 0

2. Children often go to one parent for money or permission to do something after having been refused by the other parent. How often would you say this child approaches you or your spouse in this manner with rewarding results?

Never 4 Rarely 3 Occasionally 2 Often 1 Very Often 0

3. Husbands and wives often disagree on the subject of discipline. How often do you and your spouse argue over disciplinary problems in this child's presence?

Never 4 Rarely 3 Occasionally 2 Often 1 Very Often 0

4. How often has this child heard you and your spouse argue about the wife's role in the family? (Housewife, working wife, etc.).

Never 4 Rarely 3 Occasionally 2 Often 1 Very Often 0

5. How often does your spouse complain to you about your personal habit (drinking, nagging, sloppiness, etc.) in front of this child?

Never 4 Rarely 3 Occasionally 2 Often 1 Very Often 0

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9. How often do you and/or your spouse display verbal hostility in front of this child?

Never 4 Rarely 3 Occasionally 2 Often 1 Very Often 0

10. How often do you and your spouse display affection for each other in front of this child?

Never 0 Rarely 1 Occasionally 2 Often 3 Very Often 4