

SSCI

THE SHAPIRO SELF-CONTROL INVENTORY

The inventory was given to 70 individuals attending a Mental Health conference on the Psychology of Health Care: How to “take charge of your life; how to teach it to others” in Seattle and Chicago.

The data was collected and coded. Its importance was primarily heuristic. In terms of instrument development, it was a precursor to the SCI Control Inventory—all likert) and for helping with the coding categories for the SCCAS—the Control Content Analysis Scales It helped us in exploring the utility and benefit as well as disadvantages of “open ended” versus likert scale questions. ¹ The questionnaire and resulting data also helped in the formulation and refinement of some of the questions utilized as the basis of Control Therapy---in terms of foundational important questions to ask the client.

[View the Table of Contents of the SSCI](#)

SECTION TWO: INFORMATION ABOUT SELF-CONTROL: BELIEFS AND ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE CHANGE AREAS

This material provides information about areas where individuals wished to increase their self-control (2.1—2.4). The questions are provided, and then you can click “respondents” answers to see the areas in which greater self-control was desired.

(Section 2.1 (where they would like greater self-control)—current; 2.2 where wanted greater self-control (in the past); where exhibit high self-control (current-2.3). and in past (2.4).² Finally section 2.5 asks likert style questions on personal degree of self-control; desirability of self-control; self-efficacy in general and of their ability to control their: thoughts, feelings,³ behavior, and ability to learn skills to increase self-control.

¹ One advantage of giving a likert scale was illustrated when Sybil Carrere was coding “crying.” She noted (2/25/82) “putting an answer on a number on a scale would be helpful for individuals to put their answers in perspective. I had 2 individuals use the same adjective to describe the frequency with which they cried and then when the put the number of times they cried per month were VERY different.

² It would be helpful in subsequent drafts to ask the respondents how they feel about having high self-control: e.g., positive, neutral, or negative. Two additional questions might be asked: e.g., list any areas of your life in which you feel you exercise too much self-control; list any situations in your life in which you are able (or would like to be able to) give up “active control” i.e., to yield, be spontaneous, more accepting.

³ In future drafts we could refine the respondent’s beliefs about “feelings” in terms of “ do you feel it’s good to express your feelings; (and maybe open ended, when, where, under what circumstances); and then ask “do you

(Reflections on why including this material here (40 years later!). The effort to code domains was the first attempt in what later became the domains of control, including some refinement of cognitive, emotional control, interpersonal control issues, and “work” /professional added.

It is interesting that all of the respondents did have an area where “self-control” currently was important, suggesting the importance of the topic for most (all?) individuals. (This was true in this sample of mental health professionals, as well as when an open ended question “What brings you here” was asked of those seeking therapy (See articles on content analysis scales).

The question about where do you (and have you) shown high self-control was meant to provide foundational “strength” about the person’s ability in the past and present, which could then be brought to bear on the current area of concern. From their responses, it seems they understood the intent of the question, and didn’t confuse high self-control with overcontrol. However, I think it could be stated “more elegantly” as “successfully exhibited self-control”

The questions in 2.5 about self-efficacy beliefs were incorporated into the SCI, as well as into Control Therapy in terms of desire for control, beliefs about ability to gain control.

Two “limits” of this material which weren’t realized at the time were 1) the focus was on Self-control, and in so far as “others” were involved, it was how they may detract from impede self-control. There were no questions about positive sense of control from others/Others, which were added to the SCI. 2) Although some “domain-specific” info was asked (e.g. Intimacy), many respondents noted “it depends on the situation.” Therefore in the SCI, domain specific questions as well as general domain questions were asked.

- Section Two of the SSCI

[View questions from the SSCI Section 2](#)

- RESPONDENT’S ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS in section Two.

The first page is the “domains” which we developed for coding the respondents answers (e.g., emotional control, physical control, interpersonal. The second page is a broader listing of examples. This is followed by the respondents answers and our coding notations (e.g., b=body, m=mind, etc.) for questions 2.1-2.4

[View Respondent’s Answers to the Questions from Section 2](#)

express your feelings when you feel it is appropriate?; and finally maybe a question about self-control of feelings: e.g. do you sometimes express your feelings when in retrospect it might not have been appropriate (in terms of intensity, timing)?

SECTION THREE: MOTIVATION

- [View the Questions from the SSCI Section 3](#)
- RESPONDENTS ANSWERS> All respondents felt there was an area that they currently wanted to develop greater self-control, and therefore answered the questions in Part 111, Motivation. Motivation looked at why the person wanted to develop self-control, (3.1—3.2) including what happens if NO change is made; and the benefits and advantages of changing. The qualitative data of their responses can be found below for questions in 3.1—3.2. Each question begins with efforts to list broad coding examples, followed by the actual respondent's data.

[View the Respondents Answers to the Questions from Section 3](#)

Section 3.3 asked some Likert style questions about motivation and adherence that were incorporated into Control Therapy.

SECTION FOUR: RESISTANCE; POSSIBLE PROBLEMS AREAS TO CHANGE

[View questions from the SSCI Section 4](#)

The first part of section 4 asks questions related to 4A MOTIVATION including 4.1 what are difficult times you see ahead if you decide to make the changes you noted in 3.2; what are potential stumbling blocks you see if trying to develop greater self-control (4.2); what excuses might you give to sabotage your efforts to change (4.3); and what might be *possible bad consequences* if you do *succeed* in changing.

[Read more for responses to these questions from Section 4.](#)

The second part (4B) is primarily likert responses related to FREEDOM REFLEX (the desire to not be controlled by others) and level of willingness to learn from others, accept personal criticism.

[View respondent's answers to 4.8](#) How do you respond when someone tells you the “right” way to do something?”.

The final part (4C) relates to RESPONSIBILITY. Open ended questions included: what aspects of your area of desired self-control are you responsible for (4.17); what aspects are out of your control and you cannot be responsible for (4.18); do you believe you can be responsible for your *reactions* to those aspects which are out of your control (4.18a); and 4.18b do you have difficulty accepting responsibility. ⁴

[Read more for responses to these questions from Section 4.](#)

The final three questions (4.19-4.21) are likert style related to issues of responsibility and limits of our ability to protect our children.⁵ These are interesting questions, but I now (45 years later!) wonder why I added them. I imagine it was my own concern at having two small children and exploring my own efforts and feelings (and limits of ability) to protect my own children.

SECTION FIVE: METHODS (TECHNIQUES) FOR TRYING TO CHANGE

This section looked at what methods and techniques respondents used to try to gain more self-control. [View questions from the SSCI Section 5](#)

This included 5.1b, why they selected the particular technique; (as well as info on how long they practiced it, and how much time each day) (5.1c/d).

This section also looked at cognitions regarding what they said to themselves if they didn't practice on a particular day (5.1e); what they said to themselves just before they began practicing on a given day (5.1f) and if they have stopped the technique, why (5.1g).

[Please view the answers of the respondents to these questions from Section 5.](#)

⁴ These questions on responsibility can be refined in future drafts to help the individual recognize in making changes, where they should take an active role, and where they should accept and yield. Also, to listen to their speech, and see if they are "blaming" others for their feelings: e.g., would you agree or disagree with the following statements: Other people make me feel guilty; other people make me feel angry; other people make me feel tense; other people make me feel happy. Refinements can address that there is "a" truth in the role of others in our emotions, and help the individual explore their own "responsibility" for recognizing and addressing their emotional reactions.

⁵ Sybil Carrere noted that there was confusion in these questions among some respondents in terms of what was meant by "protect" and from whom?

SECTION SIX OF SSCI (INTIMACY).

These questions in Six are about intimacy. The length of intimate relationships of the respondents ranged from one year to 33 years. [View questions from the SSCI Section 6](#)

(Question 6.9) The qualitative data explored respondents views of the rewards and advantages of intimacy (6.2); the problems and disadvantages of intimacy (6.3); personal stumbling blocks that keep them from developing intimacy (6.4, 6.7) as well as personal qualities you have that facilitate intimacy (6.8) and qualities you look for in an intimate relationship (6.10). Likert scaled questions looked at whether the respondents felt they “needed” other people (6.12-6.14); fear of being trapped by a relationship (6.15); and a forced choice question about active and receptivity in love making (6.16).

In future research someone could look at and code responses in terms of a person’s “control profile”; and their modes of control (assertive/accepting) (Section 7) in relationship to goals, barriers, strengths of relationship. Also how their views of self-control (Sections 1-5) (and need/desire for control; freedom reflex (section 4b) enhance, facilitate, and /or create challenges in relationship⁶

[View respondents qualitative answers to the above questions in section six.](#)

There are also questions in Sections 7 (yielding/acceptance) and 8 (overcontrol, loss of control) which relate directly to Intimacy, and could be included here: including issues of positive yielding: trust, forgiveness, surrender; negative yielding (too passive, not mutual); positive assertive; and negative assertive (too controlling), high fear of loss of control. These questions include:

7.6 do you ever share the deepest part of yourself with another? .,8.21 In your close relationships, do you find it difficult to trust the other person? 8.33 Do you fear being vulnerable to an intimate? 8.39 Do you ever let yourself dance with abandon? Alone? With a partner? 8.12 in lovemaking, do you find it difficult to let go? 8.13 Do you find it difficult to have orgasms? 8.13 do you enjoy being tickled? 7.7 how easy is it to accept flaws in another; 8.6 do you expect perfection from others around you? (cf 9.9b how critical are you about other people) 7.10 do you consider yourself a jealous person; cf 9.13 do you fear being rejected?

⁶ In terms of future adaptations, Sybil Carrere, in going over the data made several suggestions: 1) may want people to rank categories instead of filling in the blanks. Also, on question 6.16, many people wrote “both”; do we want a third category or is that too easy a “socially desirable” “out”?

SECTION SEVEN: YIELDING/ACCEPTANCE

SECTION EIGHT: OVERCONTROL, LOSS OF CONTROL

[View questions from the SSCI Section 7](#)

[View questions from the SSCI Section 8](#)

In going over the twelve questions of Section Seven), (2/9/18—some thirty eight years later), it's interesting how several different areas of *yielding/acceptance* were placed under this umbrella topic. These likert style questions are included here to show possible heuristic questions which were used to help formulate refinements of these terms. Also, in looking at Section Eight (49 questions), on *Overcontrol, loss of control*, there is potential overlap in a number of areas. Below I try to suggest how these questions might be better grouped, and what they were attempting to refine.

YIELDING/ACCETPANCE/LETTING GO OF ACTIVE CONTROL: THE “PERSONAL SELF. One grouping addresses several ideas of acceptance, yielding, “letting go” of active control in term of the “personal” self.

Positive letting go: e.g., 7.12 are you playful and spontaneous; 7.3 When listening to music, do you let go and feel part of it? 7.4 do you ever feel yourself merging with nature, a lessening of self-other distinctions; 7.2 Do you ever pray to a higher power to help you through one more day? 8,15 Do you ever “lose” yourself in nature? 8.16 Do you find that you can lose yourself in a book, a movie;

Self-acceptance 7.7 how easy is it to accept flaws in yourself? 8.7 do you expect perfection from yourself? 8.1 Is it hard for you to admit when you can't do something?

Negative loss of control: 8.21 Do you ever get so angry you lose control of yourself? 8.32 Do you have a fear that if you ever expressed your anger, you would not be able to control yourself? 8.22 do you ever feel like compulsively eating or drinking and cannot stop yourself?

REGARDING CHILDREN:

7.9 to those with children, how do you/will you feel when your children begin to spend more and more time with other friends, “outside the family” people

DEALING WITH (fear of) LOSS; and situations not in your control: small to large!

- 8.30 How do you feel while driving when there's a large, slow moving truck in front of you and you can't get around?
- 8.18 Do you fear loss of a job?
- 8.19 Do you fear sickness?
- 8.31 How do you (would you) feel about someone feeding you?

Aging, Mortality. 7.1 How do you feel about your life as footprints in the sand? 8.34 How do you feel about aging (e.g., wrinkles, balding, graying, etc.);

[View respondents qualitative answers to question 8.34 in section eight.](#)

8.8 do you fear death? (and note how that response relates to the image of self as a highly controlled person (Section One).;

“Control and others” 7.11 how much do other people control your life; 7.12 if you feel they control it very much, how do you feel about that?; 8.10 do you have a fear of someone having power and authority over you; 8.2 is it hard for you to admit when you need other's help? 8.11 Do you have trouble delegating responsibility? 4.8a

Coping? 8.3 If you have more work to do than you can possibly get done in the allotted time, and your boss gives you another task, how do you respond? (Note the three likert responses: why not other possibilities? e.g., “tai chi dance with boss, dialogue, some balance of assertive/acceptance (e.g., sharing one's limits and abilities, setting limits, asking guidance on priorities?)

OVERCONTROL BELIEFS/desire for control needs.

- 8.5 When you play a dice game, is there some part of you that feels you can control the dice?
- 8.20 How do you feel when a car passes you on the freeway? (Is this “losing”? Competition? Not clear question. Toss or rewrite for what is its purpose.
- 8.22 Do you ever find yourself showing your power (control) for its own sake: e.g., show a child who is boss, a car on the road?
- 8.25 How do you feel taking medications?
- 8.26 Do you often feel rigid, inflexible?

NEGATIVE YIELDING:

8.27 Do you ever feel immobilized, unsure how to act?

Goal directed:

- 8.4 Once you can see the end of a project, how important is it for you to finish it? (+)
- 8.17 Once you make a decision, do you see it through in spite of obstacles (or subsequent information)? (Note, in spite of obstacles seems +; the addition of subsequent information is ambiguous, could be + or -. Rewrite as two questions.

How feel about “involuntary” behaviors:

- 7.13 do you ever cry (when, where , how often);
- 8.28 How do you feel after you’ve yawned?
- 8.29 How do you feel after you’ve sneezed?

[Read original questions and likert scale here.](#) (and qualitative answers to question 7.5 on crying).

SECTION 9: GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT PERSONAL STYLE

The qualitative questions in this section address:

9.1 What gives you a sense of competence?

[View respondents’ answers to these questions from section 9.1.](#)

9.2 What gives you a sense of incompetence?

[View respondents’ answers to these questions from section 9.2.](#)

9.3 “If you feel comfortable sharing, please note what you consider the three most important personal tragedies in your life (e.g., death of a loved one, serious illness breaks up of an important relationship;)

[View respondents’ answers to these questions from section 9.3.](#)

9.3a Please describe, again, if you are willing, how you have/are dealing with those issues.

[View respondents’ answers to these questions from section 9.3a.](#)

9.4 In general when faced with a problem or concern, what is the first method or strategy you would use to try to deal with it.

[View respondents’ answers to these questions from section 9.4.](#)

9.41 What are other methods you might also use, though less frequently?

[View respondents’ answers to these questions from section 9.41.](#)

9.7 List three positive and three negative things someone might say about you

[View respondents’ answers to these questions from section 9.7.](#)

There were also likert style questions regarding

- ***desire for “control”*** :9.16 how important is it for you to feel in control of events in your life;
- ***use of intuition, reason and logic***: in general when faced with a problem or concern, would you primarily try to use 9.5 reason and logic to solve it; 9.6 use your intuition to solve it
- ***self-image***: 9.8 how important is it for you to feel unique; 9.13 do you fear being rejected; 9.15 do you fear being too proud/
- ***criticalness***: 9.9 how critical are you about yourself; 9.9 how critical are you about your work; 9.9b how critical are you about other people
- ***self-consciousness***: 9.11 do you feel self-conscious when someone tells a story about you?
- 9.12 do you feel an observer of events rather than part of them? 9.14 How do you feel about having someone watch while you work.
- ***About assertive, acceptance:9.10*** Imagine you are talking on the telephone and the line goes dead. You don't know why. In general, would you wait for the other person to call you back, or would you call the other person back.
- 8.9 Given a choice, would you rather listen to a record (upgrade technologically!) or the radio? (The idea behind this is would you like preprogrammed collection of songs that you know what to expect, (prediction and control) or the newness and random selection of songs selected by someone else)? [Click to read J and D discussion of this question](#)