

Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS)

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| Title: | Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) |
| Author: | Straus, M.A., Hamby, S.L., Boney-McCoy, S., Sugarman, D.B., Finkelhor, D., Moore, D.W., & Runyan, D.K. |
| Date: | 1973, 1998 |
| Constructs: | Family Relationships, Child and Family Health |
| Standardized: | No |
| Instrument Type(s): | Parent report (i.e., self-administered) or direct parent assessment (i.e., administration in person or over the telephone) |
| Uses of Information: | The CTS have been used to evaluate violence within families and intimate relationships. The CTS have been recognized as the standard survey tool for assessing domestic violence. The CTS meet the practical needs of family therapists, social workers, and other mental health professionals and can be easily added to standard intake procedures. |
| Environment: | Not specified. |
| Description: | <p>The Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) have been used for decades to evaluate violence within families and intimate relationships. The widespread use of these scales has resulted in a proliferation of adapted forms and some confusion about their clinical and research application. The handbook on the CTS, available from the publisher, Western Psychological Services, clarifies the situation by compiling and organizing, in a single source, the large body of information about the CTS. In addition, the handbook presents two updated versions of the instrument that serve as standard forms, namely, the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS 2) and the Conflict Tactics Scale: Parent-Child Version (CTS PC).</p> <p>The CTS 2 brings the instrument up-to-date by correcting the psychometric shortcomings of the original. It is the recommended form for assessing partner violence. The CTS PC is the recommended form for evaluating child maltreatment and parent-to-child violence.</p> |
| References: | Straus, M.A. (1973, 1974, 1990); Schafer, J. (1996) |
| Cost: | <p>\$75.00 The CTS KIT can be purchased from the publisher for \$75.00. The KIT includes the handbook, 10 CTS 2 AutoScore™ Forms, and 10 CTS PC AutoScore™ Forms.</p> <p>A package of 25 CTS 2 AutoScore™ Forms or CTS PC AutoScore™ Forms can be purchased for \$38.50 each, and a quantity price break is available from the publisher. The handbook alone costs \$49.50.</p> |
| Availability of Test Manual | Yes. The handbook describes the evolution of the CTS 2 and the CTS PC, provides examples of their use in various settings, discusses their psychometric properties, and offers practical guidance regarding administration and scoring. It also includes survey results from a number of groups for comparative purposes. Because the CTS are not |

typical psychological tests, the handbook does not include broad-based standard scores or information about diagnostic interpretation.

Western Psychological Services has published a new handbook for the CTS to replace the old handbook published by the Family Research Laboratory. The old CTS handbook (now called the SOURCEBOOK) can be purchased for \$25.00 (including postage in the USA; foreign postage is \$10 additional) from the Family Research Laboratory.

Contact Info: If there is a need to alter the published version or if there is a need to print the CTS for computer scoring, arrangements must first be made with Susan Dunn Weinberg (weinberg@wpspublish.com) of Western Psychological Services for licensing and royalty payments for the number of copies needed.

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Utility

Instructions: Paper and pencil instrument.

Administrator: The CTS can be administered in a self-report or interview format.

Qualification: An individual with roughly a 6th grade reading level can complete the scales.

Training Required: Yes. The training course is a 4-hour workshop that Dr. Straus runs every year in connection with an annual conference on family violence research.

Administration Time: The CTS 2 and the CTS PC can each be completed in 10 minutes.

Respondents: Parents of children. Because the CTS target specific actions, they do not require that respondents recognize their own behavior as violent in order to answer questions about it. They can be completed by one partner or by both partners separately.

Scales/Item Options:

The instrument has four scales: Parent-Child Scale (Scale 1), Partner-Child Scale (Scale 2), Parent-Partner (Scale 3), and Partner-Parent Scale (Scale 4). The Parent-Child and Partner-Child Conflict Scales each have five subscales and the two Parent-Partner Scales have four subscales each. The five subscales are (1) verbal discussion, (2) verbal aggression, (3) hostile-indirect withdrawal, (4) physical aggression, and (5) spanking (see Strassberg, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1992; Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994). The Parent-Partner and Partner-Parent Scales do not include the spanking subscales. Subscale scores are created by taking the mean for each set of variables for a given subscale by observation and then by finding the subscale means across all observations.

The CTS 2 includes 78 items, half referring to the respondent's behavior and half to the partner's behavior. Using an 8-point scale, the respondent indicates how often each behavior has occurred. This produces "Self" and "Partner" scores for the following dimensions: Negotiation, Physical Assault, Injury; Psychological Aggression; and Sexual Coercion.

The CTS PC is composed of 35 items, most focusing on the respondent's behavior with his or her child and several inquiring about the parent's own experiences as a child. These items yield scores for the following areas: Nonviolent Discipline Physical Assault; Neglect; Psychological Aggression; Weekly Discipline; and Sexual Abuse.

Both forms identify and quantify the level of abuse in families, specifically, with regard to wife beating and child abuse. Their primary focus is on physically aggressive acts of intimidation and coercion.

Scoring:

Manual Scoring. The CTS 2 test form includes space to record scores from an appropriate comparison sample selected from the handbook.

Languages:

English; Chinese; Dutch; Finish; Flemish; French; German; Hebrew; Italian; Korean; Portuguese; Russian; Sesotho; Spanish; Swedish; Zulu

Psychometric Properties:

The factor structure is consistent across studies using widely varying populations and conducted by different investigators. The internal consistency reliability is moderate due to the small number of items in each scale. The concurrent validity measures of agreement between family members are within the range of validity coefficients typically reported. There is strong evidence of construct validity, as it has been used in a large number of studies producing findings that tend to be consistent with previous research (when available), consistent regardless of gender of respondent, and theoretically meaningful. The handbook on the CTS, available from the publisher, Western Psychological Services, provides detail on its psychometric properties.

Source for the annotation was Prevent Child Abuse America, <http://www.preventchildabuse.org>.