

The Perinatal Anxiety Screening Scale (PASS): Administration, Scoring and Interpretation Guidelines

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Description of the Scale

The PASS is a valid and reliable 31-item self-report instrument designed to screen for problematic anxiety in antenatal and postpartum women. It differentiates between high and low risk for presenting with an anxiety disorder by measuring four domains that address specific symptoms of anxiety as they present in perinatal women. These domains form subscales which include: 1) Excessive Worry and Specific Fears, 2) Perfectionism, Control and Trauma, 3) Social Anxiety, and 4) Acute Anxiety and Adjustment. The PASS was validated for perinatal (i.e., pregnant or less than 1 year postpartum) women who are English-speaking, literate, and aged 18 years and older. The average time taken for respondents to complete the PASS is 6 minutes.

Administration and Scoring

The PASS is suitable for use by researchers and clinicians in a variety of settings to screen for problematic perinatal anxiety. Respondents self rate each of the four clusters of anxiety symptoms, indicating the frequency of the symptoms over the previous month. The items are on a scale ranging from 0 ("not at all") to 3 ("almost always"). Example scoring:

	Not at all	Some times	Often	Almost Always
1. Worry about the baby/pregnancy	0	1	2	3

Total Score

A total PASS score is obtained by adding all of the items on the PASS. A **cut-off score of 26** is recommended to differentiate between high and low risk for presenting with an anxiety disorder.

Recommended severity ranges:

Anxiety Severity	Range of scores
Asymptomatic	0 - 20
Mild-moderate symptoms	21 – 41
Severe symptoms	42 – 93

Subscales

Subscale items describe clusters of symptoms which are characteristic of various anxiety disorders. Raised item scores indicate risk of types of anxiety disorder presentations as indicated in the table below.

The PASS is **not** a diagnostic scale. However for clinical purposes it can be useful to have some indication of the nature of the anxiety symptoms being experienced. In addition, the answers to **item 7** should be considered individually, as this item is a **clinical indicator of phobia**.

PASS subscales and items**Anxiety symptoms indicating risk of disorders**

1. Excessive Worry and Specific Fears

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| 1. Worry about the baby/pregnancy..... | <i>Generalised or specific anxiety</i> |
| 2. Fear that harm will come to baby..... | <i>Generalised anxiety, specific fears</i> |
| 3. Sense of dread - something bad is going to happen..... | <i>Generalised anxiety, panic</i> |
| 4. Worry about many things..... | <i>Generalised anxiety</i> |
| 5. Worry about the future..... | <i>Generalised anxiety</i> |
| 6. Feeling overwhelmed..... | <i>Generalised anxiety, panic</i> |
| 7. Really strong fears about things eg blood, birth, pain, needles | <i>Phobia</i> |
| 8. Sudden rushes of extreme fear/discomfort..... | <i>Phobia, panic</i> |
| 9. Repetitive thoughts difficult to control..... | <i>Generalised anxiety, obsessive</i> |
| 10. Difficulty sleeping even when there is the chance to sleep..... | <i>General anxiety symptom, adjustment, generalised anxiety</i> |
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2 . Perfectionism, Control and Trauma

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| 11. Having to do things in a certain way or order..... | <i>Perfectionism, obsessive compulsive</i> |
| 12. Wanting things to be perfect..... | <i>Perfectionism, obsessive</i> |
| 13. Needing to be in control of things..... | <i>Perfectionism, obsessive, trauma</i> |
| 14. Difficulty stopping checking or doing things over and over..... | <i>Obsessive, compulsions</i> |
| 15. Feeling jumpy or easily startled..... | <i>Trauma</i> |
| 16. Concerns about repeated thoughts | <i>Trauma, Obsessive tendencies</i> |
| 17. Being 'on guard' or needing to watch out for things..... | <i>Trauma</i> |
| 18. Upset about repeated memories, dreams or nightmares..... | <i>Trauma</i> |
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3. Social Anxiety

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| 19. Worry that I'll embarrass myself in front of others..... | <i>Social-interpersonal</i> |
| 20. Fear that others will judge me negatively..... | <i>Social-interpersonal</i> |
| 21. Feeling really uneasy in crowds..... | <i>Social-interpersonal, specific fears</i> |
| 22. Avoiding social activities because I might be nervous..... | <i>Social-interpersonal</i> |
| 23. Avoiding things which concern me..... | <i>General anxiety symptom, phobia</i> |
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4. Acute Anxiety and Adjustment

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| 24. Feeling detached like watching yourself in a movie..... | <i>Dissociation, trauma, panic</i> |
| 25. Losing track of time and can't remember what happened..... | <i>Dissociation, trauma, panic</i> |
| 26. Difficulty adjusting to recent changes..... | <i>Adjustment</i> |
| 27. Anxiety getting in the way of being able to do things..... | <i>Adjustment, general anxiety symptom</i> |
| 28. Racing thoughts making it hard to concentrate..... | <i>Panic</i> |
| 29. Fear of losing control..... | <i>General anxiety symptom, panic</i> |
| 30. Feeling panicky..... | <i>Panic</i> |
| 31. Feeling agitated..... | <i>Panic, adjustment, generalised anxiety</i> |
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