

Memorandum

Title: Items used to expand the K6 in predicting adolescent SED

Date: August 7, 2012

Green, J.G., Gruber, M.J., Sampson, N.A., Zaslavsky, A.M., Kessler, R.C. (2010). Improving the K6 short scale to predict serious emotional disturbance in adolescents in the USA. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 19(S1), 23-35.

- Study findings indicated that the K6 is a better predictor of SED associated with internalizing than behavior disorders among adolescents. In response, we augmented the K6 with five items measuring symptoms of behavior disorders. With these additional items, we improved prediction of SED, in general, and particularly SED associated with behavior disorders. Following article publication, we have received requests for information on the exact questions used to expand the K6 in this study.
- We first want to make clear that we do not recommend using the expanded version of the K6 scale in practice. The items we selected to augment the K6 in this study were merely added as a post hoc exercise to explore the types of symptoms excluded in the K6 that predict SED among adolescents. It is unlikely that these are optimal items.
- With that said, and for the purposes of helping to guide future instrument development, the original K6 and five additional items were as follows:

| Original K6 |
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| <i>In the past 30 days, how often did you have each of the following experiences:</i> |
| 1. How often did you feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up? |
| 2. How often did you feel nervous? |
| 3. How often did you feel restless or fidgety? |
| 4. How often did you feel hopeless? |
| 5. How often did you feel that everything was an effort? |
| 6. How often did you feel worthless? |
| Additional Items |
| 1. The next question is about concentration problems that usually start before the age of seven. These problems include not being able to keep your mind on what you are doing, losing interest very quickly in games or work, trouble finishing what you started without being distracted, and not listening when people spoke to you. During your first years at school – say between the ages of kindergarten and second grade – was there ever a period lasting <u>six months or longer</u> when you had <u>a lot more trouble</u> with problems of this sort than most children? |
| 2. Have you ever in your life had attacks of anger when all of a sudden you lost control and broke or smashed something worth more than a few dollars? |
| 3. Did you ever have a period lasting <u>six months or longer</u> when you often did things that got you in trouble with adults such as losing your temper, arguing or talking back to adults, refusing to do what your teachers or parents asked you to do, annoying people on purpose, or being grouchy and irritable? |
| 4. How would you rate your ability to stay out of trouble when you're in a situation where trouble could happen? |
| 5. How true is this statement for you: I have a very strong temper |