



**Looking at Some Common Mental Health Issues and Symptoms
Which Can Often Coexist with Substance Use Issues**

<u>Column A -</u>	<u>Column B</u>	<u>Column C – (Total Score)</u>
<p>Frequency of Issues and Symptoms</p> <p>Use the following scale for each item in Column 1 below:</p> <p>1- Never 2- Rarely 3- Sometimes 4- Often 5- Almost Always</p>	<p>Use the following Scale to answer the question: How much does the issue in Column 1 affect your functioning when it is present?</p> <p>1- Not at all 2- A small amount 3- A moderate amount 4- A good amount 5- A great deal</p>	<p>Add your score from Column 1 and Column 2 here and write below</p>
1- I feel sad _____		
2- I feel worthless _____		
3- I lose my motivation get up and face the day _____		
4- Things I used to enjoy don't feel so enjoyable _____		
5- I feel hopeless _____		
6- I lose control of my emotions _____		
7- My mood can change unexpectedly _____		
8- I get really hyper and over-energized _____		
9- I have significant "highs" and "lows" with my mood _____		
10- It does not take much to set me off or put me in a bad mood _____		
11- I worry _____		
12- I think about upsetting or stressful things _____		
13- I feel like I can't handle stress _____		
14- I feel my heart racing even when I am not exercising _____		
15 – Certain situations can trigger me to feel very uncomfortable, nervous, or self-conscious _____		
16- I either can't sleep or I sleep too much _____		
17 – I feel overwhelmed _____		



18 – I have difficulty concentrating _____		
19- I feel unusually tired, lacking energy or fatigued _____		
20 – I either lose my appetite or else I eat way too much _____		
21 – I have disturbing nightmares or flashbacks _____		
22- I have obsessive thoughts and/or behavior rituals _____		
23 – I sometimes feel like I am going to start to panic _____		
24 – I have difficulty managing my anger _____		
25 – I have a real hard time sitting still, focusing, and paying attention _____		

Analysis - *This is not a diagnostic tool* so we will refrain from using specific names of “disorders”. However, the purpose of this exercise is to increase awareness of some of the most common mental health issues and symptoms that people who abuse substances commonly suffer from. The analysis of the above chart will help you identify some of these issues.

Scoring – Look at Column C and circle each score in Column C that is 7 or higher so that these issues stand out. For example, look at the first item in column I “I feel sad”. If in Column A you said that you feel sad “Sometimes” (Score = 3) and then in Column B you said that when you feel sad, it affects your functioning “A good amount” (Score = 4) then your Column C total would be 7. Since that Column C score is 7 or greater then it is a significant score so circle that answer. Repeat this for every row.

If you scored 7 or higher in Column C for any of the following–

Items 1 through 5 were all related to **Depression**. There are varying degrees of depression and depressive disorders but the central theme of all depressive issues is some kind of struggle with feelings of sadness, loss, hopelessness and/or worthlessness and emotional “lows” that affect the way someone is able to function. Obviously the higher your scores were and the more areas you scored 7 or greater for in this section the more evidence there is that perhaps you may be suffering from a form of depression.

Items 6 through 10 were all related to **Mood Swings**. Mood swings involve unexpected or difficult to manage shifts in mood that can be drastic in nature. Someone with problems with mood swings can have periods of depression and periods of mania (manic behavior), which are actually periods of extremely elevated mood that can get out of control. For example, when someone is manic they may feel like they are “on top of the world” to an extreme degree where reckless decisions are made that are later regretted such as spending large amounts of money or taking on projects that are way too much to handle or experiencing out of control anger outbursts.

Items 11 through 15 were all about **Anxiety**. Simply put, anxiety is all about excessive worry. Anxiety often involves a difficulty coping with stress or negative thoughts and a difficulty relaxing. Anxiety can be generalized and seem to come out of nowhere or anxiety can be associated specifically with certain types of situations, worries or fears. It is normal to be concerned about certain life issues and situations but someone



with an anxiety problem may feel consumed with worry or else have extreme difficulty stopping worry once it starts.

Items 16 through 20 are general symptoms often associated with many overlapping mental health issues. Symptoms such as sleep problems, feeling overwhelmed, appetite problems, poor concentration, and fatigue can be associated with Anxiety, Depression, Mood swings, or any combination thereof.

Items 21 through 25 are specific issues associated with specific forms of Anxiety, Depression or Mood Swings. The breakdown for these items is as follows –

- Item 21- A high score on this item may indicate difficulties with emotional **Trauma**. Trauma is associated with a disturbing event or time period in someone's past that was very difficult or hurtful such as being abused, witnessing abuse or violence, or being the unfortunate victim of an impactful event such as a car accident or being a victim of a crime, for example. Soldiers in a war zone and police officers are often subject to emotional trauma due to the nature of their work, for example.
- Item 22 – A high score on this item may indicate the presence of **Obsessive-Compulsive** issues. This involves difficulties with intrusive or repetitive thoughts often followed by repetitive behaviors in response to those thoughts. An example would be obsessive thoughts about germs followed with the repetitive behavior of excessive hand washing.
- Item 23 – This item may indicate issues with **Panic**. Panic is an extreme form of anxiety but it specifically involves panic attacks which are intense episodes of anxiety that can be extremely unpleasant and even immobilizing. It is not uncommon for someone who is experiencing a panic attack for their first time to go to the emergency room because the experience can be so intense.
- Item 24 – This item is not necessary a specific mental health “disorder” however **Anger Management** issues are very common, especially with people who abuse substances. Anger issues often involve feelings of anger that are disproportionate to the amount of stress or reactions to normal feelings of anger that are in excess of what they should be. For some people anger issues simply involve feeling angry more often one would like. Aggression is a behavioral manifestation of anger, which can be a huge problem in life, especially in relationships. Aggression can be verbal (using words to hurt others when angry) or physical (deliberately hurting others physically and/or breaking objects) or emotional (saying or doing things for the specific purpose of hurting others feelings)
- Item 25 – Listed in item 25 were some basic symptoms of issues with **Attention**. Having attention issues involves an ongoing difficulty focusing, concentrating, or sitting still. People with attention issues are often easily distracted and can experience feeling bored or frustrated when sitting and listening is required, like in a classroom or when reading a textbook. As one would expect, it can be challenging to learn and take in new information when attention issues are present. Sometimes difficulty with attention or concentration can be an additional symptom coinciding depression, anxiety or mood swings but at other times there is a specific issue present with attention that may be a completely separate problem unto itself (often associated with children but present with some adults as well)

Once again, the outcome of this exercise does not automatically specify that you have a mental health issue or disorder, but if you had a cluster of higher scores in a certain area, this may be an issue that you should discuss further with a trained counselor or doctor.