

## DYADIC COPING INVENTORY (DCI)

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**PURPOSE:** To assess dyadic coping and perceived communication of couples under stress

**DESCRIPTION:** The Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI: Bodenmann, 2008; Ledermann et al., 2010) is a 37-item instrument designed to measure perceived communication and dyadic coping (supportive, delegated, negative, and joint) that occurs in close relationships when one or both partners are stressed. Dyadic coping includes both (a) a persons attempt to reduce the stress of their partner and (b) a common endeavor between couples to deal with external stress that affects the relationship. A briefer version of the 68-item Questionnaire to Assess Dyadic Coping as a Tendency (Bodenmann, 2000), the DCI measures dyadic coping as a multidimensional construct that includes the following 4-parts: supportive, delegated, negative, and joint (common) dyadic coping. Supportive dyadic coping occurs when one partner provides problem- and/or emotion-focused support that assists the partner in coping. Delegated dyadic coping occurs when one partner takes over responsibilities to reduce their partner's stress. Negative dyadic coping includes hostile, ambivalent, and superficial actions/words that have deleterious intentions. Joint (common) dyadic coping occurs when both partners experience stress and symmetrically work together to handle these stressful situations. In addition to perceptions about dyadic coping, the DCI also assesses stress communication and provides an evaluation of the quality of self-perceived dyadic coping. Useful in clinical practice and research (relationship, couples, and families), the DCI can be used to measure communication and perceptions about the quality and quantity of partner support (positive and negative) in close relationships.

**HOW ADMINISTERED:** The DCI can be self-administered or administered in an interview and generally takes between 10 and 15 minutes to complete.

**SCORING:** Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 ("very rarely") to 5 ("very often"). The total DCI score is a sum of items 1 through 35 after reverse coding negatively keyed items (7, 10, 11, 15, 22, 25, 26, and 27). Items 36 and 37 are evaluation items and not included in the total score.

Subscale scores are the sum of the included items:

- (a) Stress communicated by oneself (SCO: items 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- (b) Supportive dyadic coping by oneself (SDC: items 20, 21, 23, 24, and 29)
- (c) Delegated dyadic coping by oneself (DDCO: items 28, and 30)
- (d) Negative dyadic coping by oneself (NDCO: items 22, 25, 26, and 27)
- (e) Stress communication of the partner (SCP: items 16, 17, 18, and 19)
- (f) Supportive dyadic coping of the partner (SDCP: items 5, 6, 8, 9, and 13)
- (g) Delegated dyadic coping of the partner (DDCP: items 12 and 14)
- (h) Negative dyadic coping by partner (NDCP: items 7, 10, 11, and 15)
- (i) Common dyadic coping (CDC: items 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35)
- (j) Evaluation of dyadic coping (EDC: items 36 and 37)

**RELIABILITY:** Psychometric evaluation of the DCI was reported with a sample of women (n = 1,327) and men (n = 1,072) in close relationships identifying adequate to high internal consistency for the DCI subscales ( range .71 und .92) (Bodenmann, 2008). Further evaluation of the German, (n = 216) Italian (n = 378), and French (n = 198) translations provide evidence of internal consistency for the overall scale (German = .91; Italian = .90; French = .90) and the individual subscales

(German range .61 to .86; Italian range .62 to .90; French range .50 to .92) (Bodenmann, 2008; Ledermann et al., 2010).

**VALIDITY:** The instrument authors conducted separate principal components analysis for items measuring one's own, one's partner and joint dyadic coping using data from three samples: German, (n = 216) Italian (n = 378), and French (n = 198) translations (Ledermann et al., 2010). The predicted four-factor solution was found for the analysis of one's own dyadic coping across the German, Italian, and French translations accounting for 62.1%, 64.3%, and 61.8% of the variance explained (respectively). Similarly, the predicted four-factor solution was found for the analysis of the dyadic coping of one's partner across the German, Italian, and French translations accounting for 65.1%, 67.4%, and 62.1% of the variance explained (respectively). Principal Components Analysis for items measuring joint dyadic coping identified the predicted one-factor solution accounting for 51.5%, 50.2%, and 54.2%, of the variance explained (Ledermann et al., 2010). In addition, stress communication (one's own and one's partner) strongly and positively correlated to marital quality, which provides of evidence of convergent validity. DCI scores correlated weakly with communication patterns questionnaire across three language samples, which provides evidence of divergent validity. Finally, multiple studies identified correlations between the dyadic coping scales and marital functioning (please see Bodenmann, 2008).

**NORMS/REFERENCE STANDARDS:** The DCI has established cut-off scores to include the following; DCI total score < 111, dyadic coping below average; DCI between 111-145, dyadic coping in the normal range; DCI total score > 145 dyadic coping above average. The German manual also provides age and gender based cut-off-score.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** The DCI is available in Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Thai.

#### **PRIMARY REFERENCES:**

- ✓ Bodenmann, G. (2008). *Dyadisches Coping Inventar: Test manual* [Dyadic Coping Inventory: Test manual]. Bern, Switzerland: Huber.
- ✓ Ledermann, T., Bodenmann, G., Gagliardi, S., Charvoz, L., Verardi, S., Rossier, J., Bertni, A., & Iafrate, R. (2010). Psychometrics of the Dyadic Coping Inventory in three language groups. *Swiss Journal of Psychology/Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Psychologie/Revue Suisse de Psychologie*, 69(4), 201-212.

**AVAILABILITY:** The DCI is protected by international copyright but may be used at no charge to academics, clinicians, and researchers. Authors are asked to reference the original DCI study German translation of the instrument and obtain the manual, which may be acquired for a fee. For additional information please contact the instrument author Guy Bodenmann at e-mail address [guy.bodenmann@psychologie.uzh.ch](mailto:guy.bodenmann@psychologie.uzh.ch)

#### **OTHER CITED REFERENCES:**

- ✓ Bodenmann, G. (2000). *Stress und Coping bei Paaren* [Stress and coping in couples]. Göttingen: Hogrefe.
- ✓ Gmelch, S., Bodenmann, G., Meuwly, N., Ledermann, T., Steffen-Sozinova, O., & Striegl, K. (2008). Dyadisches Coping Inventar (DCI): Ein Fragebogen zur Erfassung des partnerschaftlichen Umgangs mit Stress [Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI): A questionnaire assessing dyadic coping in couples]. *Zeitschrift fuer Familienforschung*, 20, 185–203.

## DYADIC COPING INVENTORY (DCI)

This scale is designed to measure how you and your partner cope with stress. Please indicate the first response that you feel is appropriate. Please be as honest as possible. Please response to all items by marking the appropriate case, which is fitting to your personal situation. There are no false answers.

### **This section is about how you communicate your stress to your partner.**

	very rarely	rarely	some- times	often	very often
1. I let my partner know that I appreciate his/her practical support, advice, or help.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. I ask my partner to do things for me when I have too much to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. I show my partner through my behavior when I am not doing well or when I have problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. I tell my partner openly how I feel and that I would appreciate his/her support.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### **This section is about what your partner does when you are feeling stressed.**

	very rarely	rarely	some- times	often	very often
5. My partner shows empathy and understanding to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. My partner expresses that he/she is on my side.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. My partner blames me for not coping well enough with stress.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. My partner helps me to see stressful situations in a different light.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. My partner listens to me and gives me the opportunity to communicate what really bothers me.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. My partner does not take my stress seriously.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. My partner provides support, but does so unwillingly and unmotivated.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. My partner takes on things that I normally do in order to help me out.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. My partner helps me analyze the situation so that I can better face the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. When I am too busy, my partner helps me out.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. When I am stressed, my partner tends to withdraw.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### **This section is about how your partner communicates when he/she is feeling stressed.**

	very rarely	rarely	some- times	often	very often
16. My partner lets me know that he/she appreciates my practical support, advice, or help.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17. My partner asks me to do things for him/her when he has too much to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18. My partner shows me through his/her behavior that he/she is not doing well or when he/she has problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19. My partner tells me openly how he/she feels and that he/she would appreciate my support.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**This section is about what you do when your partner makes know his/her stress.**

	very rarely	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
20. I show empathy and understanding to my partner.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
21. I express to my partner that I am on his/her side.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
22. I blame my partner for not coping well enough with stress.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
23. I tell my partner that his/her stress is not that bad and help him/her to see the situation in a different light.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
24. I listen to my partner and give him/her space and time to communicate what really bothers him/her.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
25. I do not take my partner's stress seriously.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
26. When my partner is stressed I tend to withdraw.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
27. I provide support, but do it so unwillingly and unmotivated because I think that he/she should cope with his/her problems on his/her own.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
28. I take on things that my partner would normally do in order to help him/her out.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
29. I try to analyze the situation together with my partner in an objective manner and help him/her to understand and change the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
30. When my partner feels he/she has too much to do, I help him/her out.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**This section is about what you and your partner do when you are both feeling stressed.**

	very rarely	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
31. We try to cope with the problem together and search for ascertained solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
32. We engage in a serious discussion about the problem and think through what has to be done.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
33. We help one another to put the problem in perspective and see it in a new light.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
34. We help each other relax with such things like massage, taking a bath together, or listening to music together.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
35. We are affectionate to each other, make love and try that way to cope with stress.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**This section is about how you evaluate your coping as a couple.**

	very rarely	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
36. I am satisfied with the support I receive from my partner and the way we deal with stress together.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
37. I am satisfied with the support I receive from my partner and I find as a couple, the way we deal with stress together is effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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From: Simmons, C. & Lehmann, P. (2012). *Tools for Strengths' Based Assessment and Evaluation*. New York: Springer.

