



The Young Parent Stigma Scale

The Young Parent Stigma Scale (YPSS) is a multidimensional measure of perceptions of young parent stigma by both young fathers and mothers, validated in a national U.S. sample, for use in assessing stigma prevalence, examining its effects, and evaluating the effectiveness of stigma reduction interventions.

Item development

Young parent stigma was conceptualized using literature review and stakeholder interviews. 66 survey items were created to measure individual-level stigma. Items were modified based on feedback from scale development experts and young parent stakeholders. We recruited 12 young parents to complete the survey and participate in cognitive interviews. We revised the items based on the content of these interviews. The resulting items were administered online to parenting youth aged 13 – 24 across the U.S.

Scale validation

A total of 370 young parents completed the 66-item survey in English or Spanish. Using data from 370 young parents, exploratory factor analysis resulted in a 23-item scale (Cronbach's alpha: 0.92) with five subscales: internalized, enacted, anticipated, felt, and racialized stigma. Each subscale had low to moderate correlation with the others (0.41-0.59). The full scale has high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92.

Scoring

The range of possible score values for the full scale and subscales was 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher stigma. The mean score for the full scale was 2.36 (SD: 0.79) and the range was 1.0 to 4.2.

Applications

The YPSS has many applications. It may be administered to assess the pervasiveness of young parent stigma. This information could be leveraged to develop programs to reduce enacted stigma (e.g., by parents, teachers, public health agencies, etc.), interventions to reduce internalized stigma and promote empowerment among young parents, and to evaluate the effectiveness of such new or existing efforts. Subsequent studies may also use the scale to examine the association between young parent stigma and parental and child outcomes such as engagement in pediatric care, child development, and educational attainment. Attention to vulnerable groups should be incorporated to ensure that their needs and concerns are included in the national conversation on how to support young parents.

Enacted Stigma Subscale

The following statements are about how you've been treated as a young parent in your school or community.

Item #	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	NA
1	People told me to drop out of school	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
2	The other parents at my child's school or daycare do not respect me	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
3	The teacher(s) at my school treat me badly now that I am pregnant/parenting	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
4	I have had teachers/administrators at school say disrespectful things to me about being a young parent	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
5	I was kicked off sports team or other after school program at school for being pregnant and/or parenting	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
6	I was kicked out of my AP/Honor roll classes because of being pregnant and/or parenting	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
7	Strangers have said negative comments about me when I was pregnant and/or parenting	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
8	I have felt bad about myself because of what people have said about me as a young parent	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
9	The way people treat me because I'm a young parent stresses me out	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

Internalized Stigma Subscale (* reverse coded)

The following questions are about your personal opinions about young parents. How much do you agree to the following statements?

Item #	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
10	Young parents are just as good as older parents*	1	2	3	4	5
11	I am a responsible person*	1	2	3	4	5
12	I have control over my life*	1	2	3	4	5
13	I can provide for myself and my child*	1	2	3	4	5
14	I am loved by the people in my life*	1	2	3	4	5
15	My life is better now that I am a parent*	1	2	3	4	5
16	My child brings me great joy*	1	2	3	4	5

Anticipated Stigma Subscale

The following questions are about your personal experiences and feelings as a young parent. How worried are you that because you are a young parent...

Item #	Item	Not at all worried	A little worried	Some-what worried	Pretty worried	Extremely worried
17	You will be unable to stay in school	1	2	3	4	5
18	You will be unable to get the healthcare you need	1	2	3	4	5
19	You will be unable to get the healthcare your child needs	1	2	3	4	5

Felt Stigma Subscale

The following questions are about your personal experiences and feelings as a young parent. How worried are you that because you are a young parent...

Item #	Item	Not at all worried	A little worried	Some-what worried	Pretty worried	Extremely worried
20	People think you are a failure	1	2	3	4	5
21	People think you need too much help	1	2	3	4	5

Racialized Stigma Subscale

The following questions are about your personal experiences and feelings as a young parent. How worried are you that because you are a young parent...

Item #	Item	Not at all worried	A little worried	Some-what worried	Pretty worried	Extremely worried
22	People judge you as a young parent because of your race or ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5

How often have you had these feelings as a young parent? Please choose the answers that best match your feelings about the statements.

Item #	Item	I never feel this way	I rarely feel this way	I some-times feel this way	I often feel this way	I feel this way all the time
23	I am adding to negative stereotypes about my racial, ethnic or class group.	1	2	3	4	5