

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL READINESS FOR WORK OR EDUCATION SCALE

INTRODUCTION / ABOUT

Returning to work or school after a break, whether it's a short hiatus or an extended one, entails more than simply slipping back into familiar routines. It's a journey of self-discovery, a process that requires a deep understanding of one's mental and emotional state. This is where the "Mental Readiness to Return to Work or Education Scale" comes into play, meticulously designed to gauge an individual's mental readiness and fortitude as they prepare to re-enter the realms of education or the workforce. This tool offers comprehensive insights, proving invaluable to professionals such as psychologists, educators, social workers, and rehabilitation counselors.

The "Mental Readiness" instrument serves a dual purpose. It not only evaluates an individual's mental preparedness for the journey ahead but also acts as a guiding road map, illuminating the path forward for both the individual and the professionals involved. While it can be explored in a single session, its true depth is often revealed through multiple engagements. It transcends the mere act of checking boxes, integrating a diverse array of assessment methods to ignite crucial conversations, stimulate profound introspection, and lay the groundwork for focused planning and decisive action.

In today's intricate landscape of work and education, tools like the "Mental Readiness to Return to Work or Education Scale" aren't merely beneficial; they have become indispensable. The decision to employ such an instrument is a testament to the commitment and foresight of both the evaluator and the referral source. By opting for this scale, you are placing a premium on acquiring a comprehensive understanding of mental readiness, ensuring that re-entry into work or education is not just a return but a revitalized beginning. Your collaborative effort in embarking on this journey showcases a profound dedication to individual success and well-being. I commend your proactive approach, and your choice paves the way for meaningful transitions and establishes the foundation for lasting success.

For further information about the scale and access to reporting templates, please visit www.syracusetesting.com.

Sincerely,

T. Scott Smith, PhD

President/Owner

Syracuse Testing Systems

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Version 2023:10



Name: _____

Date: _____

01

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EMOTIONAL READINESS TO WORK

Here are a few factors that contribute to emotional readiness to work:

- Self-Awareness:** Understanding your own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses is crucial for emotional readiness. It enables you to recognize how your emotions may impact your work and how to manage them effectively.
- Stress Management:** Developing stress management skills is important for emotional readiness. Being able to cope with work-related stressors, handle pressure, and maintain a healthy work-life balance helps in maintaining emotional stability.
- Motivation:** Feeling motivated and enthusiastic about your work enhances emotional readiness. Having a sense of purpose, setting goals, and finding meaning in your work can boost your emotional well-being and engagement.
- Resilience:** Building resilience allows you to bounce back from setbacks and challenges. It involves developing a positive mindset, adapting to change, and effectively managing adversity, which contributes to emotional readiness.
- Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional intelligence involves understanding and managing both your own emotions and the emotions of others. It helps in building positive relationships, resolving conflicts, and promoting a harmonious work environment.
- Work-life Balance:** Striking a balance between work and personal life is essential for emotional readiness. Taking care of your physical and mental well-being outside of work helps in maintaining emotional stability and preventing burnout.
- Supportive Workplace Culture:** A supportive and inclusive workplace culture contributes to emotional readiness. When colleagues and supervisors provide support, recognition, and open communication, it fosters a positive work environment that promotes emotional well-being.
- Regular Check-ins:** Emotional readiness can vary from person to person and over time. It's important to regularly assess your emotional state and seek support when needed. Being ready to perform at your best in the workplace.

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CLIENT OR CONSUMER RESPONSE

History of Anxiety	more
History of Depression	
History of Psychosis	
History of Panic Attacks	
Current Participation in Therapy	
Current Medications	
Lost Job or Quit Work due to Mental Health	
Perception of Present Mental Stability	

03 COUNSELOR OR PROFESSIONAL OBSERVATIONS

— Cognition: intelligence, memory, academic skills

Intelligence: ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

Memory: ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

Academic Skills: ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

NOTES:

— Persistence: stay with task to completion

Persistence: ☐ Excessive ☐ High ☐ Minimum

— Conscientiousness and Motivation:

☐ Want to do a good job ☐ Job persistence to completion

— Honest, Trustworthiness:

☐ Truthful ☐ Honest with others ☐ Refrained from lying ☐ Not steal

— Job Specific Requirements:

☐ Typing ☐ Conflict resolution ☐ People skills

— Family Support:

☐ Emotional ☐ Transportation ☐ Daily interactions ☐ Divorce

— Substance Abuse/Drugs:

☐ Current use/abuse

☐ Past drug(s) or alcohol

— Pace: Perform task(s) at a Reasonable Rate

☐ Slow ☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Fast

— Reliability: Come to Work Every Day

☐ Undetermined ☐ Not Reliable/Reliable ☐

— Interpersonal Functioning

☐ Accepts supervision ☐ Go down with co-workers ☐ Get along with supervisor

— Stress Tolerance

☐ Meet deadlines ☐ Work with people

— Medication Maintenance and Ability to Perform Work Duties

— Present or Past Criminal History

Mental response to prison or pending litigation

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04 PERSONAL EXPLORATION QUESTIONS

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Self-Awareness	1	2	3	4	5

My emotions do not significantly impact my decision making and work performance.

☐☐☐☐☐

Recognizing my own emotions has positively influenced the outcome of past work challenges.

☐☐☐☐☐

I have a clear understanding of my core strengths and areas for improvement.

☐☐☐☐☐

I have been overwhelmed or particularly challenged at work due to emotional reasons but managed to navigate through them.

☐☐☐☐☐

I accept feedback, both positive and negative, objectively and use it to inform my areas of improvement.

☐☐☐☐☐

Stress Management

I effectively manage my stress and maintain a positive attitude at work.

☐☐☐☐☐

I can prioritize tasks or projects effectively even when everything feels urgent.

☐☐☐☐☐

I can handle pressure and tight deadlines effectively.

☐☐☐☐☐

I handle feedback or criticism well, especially during high-pressure situations.

☐☐☐☐☐

I remain calm and composed under pressure, especially when I feel overwhelmed with work.

☐☐☐☐☐

Motivation

Certain aspects of my job provide significant satisfaction and drive.

☐☐☐☐☐

I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in my work achievements.

☐☐☐☐☐

I set short-term and long-term goals for myself and align them with my daily activities.

☐☐☐☐☐

I stay motivated and engaged even when faced with routine or monotonous tasks.

☐☐☐☐☐

I don't get bored from my work even when tasks seem unrelated to my larger goals.

☐☐☐☐☐

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	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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Resilience

I have faced significant setbacks or challenges at work and overcame them effectively.

I adapt quickly and efficiently to unexpected changes or shifts in work direction.

I maintain a positive outlook during tough times, even when outcomes are uncertain.

I assess mistakes effectively, learn from them, and plan future actions based on these learnings.

I actively build and maintain my resilience both in and outside of work.

Work-Life Balance

I manage my time well, setting clear boundaries between work and personal life.

I address situations proactively when work starts to interfere with my personal life.

I have a healthy work-life balance that allows me to be present and engaged in both areas.

I can effectively handle increased work pressure without compromising my well-being.

I am open and proactive in communicating with my manager about adjusting my work-life balance.

Supportive Workplace Culture

I feel supported and encouraged by colleagues and supervisors in my workplace.

I contribute actively to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment within my team or workplace.

I recognize the importance of a supportive workplace culture and can identify its key elements.

I value open communication within a team to resolve potential issues or conflicts.

I take active steps to ensure inclusivity when and where I may feel left out or not included.

Based on the five-point Likert scale provided (1-5), we can set a numerical threshold to categorize scores into Low, Medium, and High ranges.

For each category, since there are five questions, the total score will range from 5-25.

On the next page, add the scores of each section and show associated interpretation and recommendations.

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These recommendations can provide a framework for individuals to understand their current strengths and areas for growth, allowing them to take proactive steps toward professional and personal development.

SELF-AWARENESS:

Low: This score suggests that the individual may not be fully aware of their emotions or how they impact their work and decision making.

- Engage in self-reflective exercises or journaling
- Consider seeking feedback from colleagues or supervisors to better understand your strengths and areas of improvement.
- Attend workshops or courses focused on emotional intelligence and self-awareness.
- Engage in activities that encourage introspection, such as meditation or mindfulness practices.
- Continue self-reflective practices while paying specific attention to triggers that evoke strong emotions.
- Engage in role-playing activities to practice emotional responses in various scenarios.
- Join group sessions or discussions centered around self-awareness to learn from the experiences of others.

STRESS MANAGEMENT:

Low: The individual may struggle with managing stress and prioritizing tasks, especially during high-pressure situations.

- Explore relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation.
- Attend stress management workshops or counseling sessions.
- Consider time-management courses to help prioritize tasks effectively.
- Identify the person's individual sources of stress and develop strategies to manage them.
- Strengthen coping strategies by exploring new stress-relief activities, such as physical exercise or engaging in hobbies.
- Establish boundaries to prevent work from encroaching on personal time.
- Consider peer group discussions or therapy groups focusing on stress management.
- Implement stress management techniques and monitor their effectiveness.
- Continue practicing and refining your stress management techniques.
- Share successful strategies with colleagues or consider leading workshops.
- Ensure to take breaks and maintain a consistent routine.

MOTIVATION:

Low: The person might not always find meaning in their work or may struggle with intrinsic motivation.

- Set clear short-term and long-term goals.
- Find a mentor or coach to provide guidance and inspire motivation.
- Engage in tasks that align with your personal passions or values.
- Recognize and reward yourself for achieving milestones and goals.
- Collaborate with peers to work on projects that ignite shared enthusiasm.
- Seek feedback on your accomplishments to boost motivation.
- Attend seminars or workshops on goal-setting and intrinsic motivation.
- Identify the person's current tasks and responsibilities and determine which ones are most motivating.
- Consider mentoring others to help them find their drive.
- Regularly reassess and set new challenges or goals to maintain high motivation levels.
- Engage in leadership roles or projects that align closely with your purpose.

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RESILIENCE:

Low: The individual may find challenges or setbacks difficult, leading to a loss of motivation or confidence.

- Engage in activities that boost self-esteem and confidence.
- Seek support groups or therapy to build coping mechanisms.
- Focus on developing a growth mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth.
- Engage in activities that build self-efficacy and resilience, such as sports or outdoor activities.
- Consider resilience training or workshops.
- Engage in regular self-reflection to understand reactions to setbacks.
- Establish a support system within the workplace or in personal circles to share challenges and solutions.

High: The person has a high degree of resilience, maintaining a positive outlook during challenges and bouncing back from setbacks.

- Stay proactive in seeking new challenges to further develop resilience.
- Share strategies with colleagues or consider leading resilience-building sessions.
- Ensure a balance between facing challenges and taking time for self-care.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE:

Low: The individual often feels overwhelmed by work, finding it hard to maintain a balance with personal life.

- Set clear boundaries between work hours and personal time.
- Prioritize self-care activities and schedule regular breaks.
- Consider seeking counseling or coaching to establish effective time-management strategies.
- Re-evaluate daily routines to ensure there's time set aside for personal activities.
- Engage in relaxation techniques to disconnect from work stresses.
- Attend workshops focused on work-life integration and balance.

High: The person successfully manages to maintain a healthy balance between their professional demands and personal well-being.

- Continue setting clear boundaries and ensure they are respected.
- Share successful strategies with colleagues or consider conducting sessions on maintaining balance.
- Stay vigilant about signs of burnout and adjust as needed.

SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE:

Low: The individual feels less secure and less motivated to contribute to a positive workplace culture.

- Seek feedback on how to better engage and contribute to a positive workplace culture.
- Attend team-building workshops or activities.
- Engage in communication training to promote open and supportive dialogues.
- Actively participate in supportive workplace and regularly communicate ideas and proposals for improvement.
- Engage in group discussions to understand diverse perspectives within the workplace.
- Consider leadership training to further promote inclusivity and support.
- Advocate for regular team feedback sessions to ensure a harmonious work environment.

High: The person leads a supportive and inclusive environment, valuing high values of open communication and inclusivity.

- Take on roles that allow you to shape and influence workplace culture positively.
- Mentor colleagues to foster a supportive environment.
- Engage in continuous learning to stay updated on best practices for promoting workplace inclusivity and support.

05 SELF-AWARENESS QUESTIONS

When discussing the topic of self-awareness with a job applicant, you want the questions to be structured in a way that helps you gauge their emotional intelligence and understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, without delving too deeply into personal mental health matters.

Here are five questions you might consider:

Q1 What would you consider to be your core strengths and areas for improvement? How did you come to

Q1

Q2 How do you usually manage feedback, both positive and negative, especially when it pertains to areas of improvement?

Q2

Q3 Can you describe a time when you received constructive feedback and how you responded to it?

Remember, when discussing self-awareness with applicants, it's essential to maintain a respectful and professional tone. The goal is to understand their self-perception and how they view their strengths and weaknesses, not to probe deeply into their personal or mental health.

STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

When evaluating a job applicant's stress management skills, you'd want to explore how they've handled past challenges and not a sense of their current state.

Here are five questions you might consider:

Q1 Can you describe a time when you faced a particularly stressful situation at work and how you managed it?

Q1

Q2 How do you typically handle stress or pressure, and what strategies do you use to stay calm?

Q3 When you feel overwhelmed with work, do you seek support or delegate tasks?

Q3

Q4 How do you manage your time and prioritize tasks when you're under a lot of pressure?

These questions can help you gain a better understanding of the applicant's stress management capabilities while respecting their privacy and focusing on their skills and experiences.

NOTES:

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07 MOTIVATION QUESTIONS

When exploring an applicant's motivation levels and how they derive enthusiasm and purpose from their work, consider the following questions:

Here are five questions you might consider:

Q1 Can you describe a time when you felt particularly proud of an accomplishment at work? What drove

Q1

you to achieve this? What motivated you to complete this task?

Q2 How do you set short-term and long-term goals for yourself, and how do they influence your daily activities or decisions at work?

Q3 How do you deal with challenges or setbacks at work?

These questions can help you gauge an applicant's intrinsic motivation, their ability to set and follow goals, and how they find purpose and meaning in their tasks, all of which are critical for long-term job satisfaction and productivity.

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When assessing an applicant's resilience, consider the following questions:

Q4 When facing a failure or setback, how do you assess what went wrong and plan for future actions?

Q5 How do you deal with stress and pressure at work? What strategies do you use to maintain your focus and productivity?

Q6 How do you build and maintain your resilience outside of work? Are there practices or habits that help you stay resilient?

Q7 How do you handle conflict or difficult conversations at work?

These questions aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the applicant's resilience, their coping strategies, and their ability to bounce back from setbacks, which are crucial for long-term success and well-being in a professional setting.

NOTES:

09 WORK LIFE BALANCE

Here are five questions centered on the topic of work-life balance:

Q1 How do you handle situations where work pressures increase, such as during tight deadlines or high-demand periods?

Q1

Q2 What indicators signal to you that you might need a break or need to adjust your work-life balance? How do you then act upon those indicators?

Q2

These questions are used to understand the applicant's approach to maintaining a healthy balance between professional commitments and personal well-being.

10 SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE

When assessing an applicant's experience with workplace culture, these questions are used:

Q1 Can you describe a time when you received support or encouragement from colleagues or supervisors? How did it impact your performance or well-being?

Q1

Q2 How do you handle situations where a colleague may feel left out or not included? What steps do you take to ensure inclusivity?

Q2

These questions are designed to understand the applicant's experiences with, and contributions to, a supportive workplace culture.

NOTES:

11 CHECKLIST: ASSESSING READINESS TO RETURN TO WORK OR EDUCATION

Use the following checklist after completing the evaluation to evaluate readiness for yourself or a referral/client to return to work.

- ☐ **Diagnosis Understanding:** Does the individual have a clear understanding of their mental health diagnosis?
- ☐ **Treatment Plan:** Is there an established and effective treatment plan in place, including therapy and medication if necessary?
- ☐ **Healthcare Professional Support:** Are they actively engaged with a mental health professional or therapist?
- ☐ **Stable Symptoms:** Have their symptoms stabilized to a manageable level?
- ☐ **Medication Management:** Are they effectively managing their medications, if prescribed?
- ☐ **Coping Strategies:** Have they developed effective coping strategies for managing stress and triggers?
- ☐ **Support System:** Do they have a strong support system in place, including family, friends, or support groups?
- ☐ **Self-Awareness:** Are they self-aware of their mental health triggers and warning signs?
- ☐ **Communication Skills:** Can they effectively communicate their needs and boundaries to others?
- ☐ **Stress Management:** Are they equipped with stress management techniques?
- ☐ **Work or Education Accommodations:** Have necessary accommodations been discussed and arranged with employers or educational institutions?
- ☐ **Gradual Return:** Is there a plan for a gradual return to work or school, including a phased schedule?
- ☐ **Relapse Signs:** Do they understand the signs and symptoms of a potential relapse?
- ☐ **Clear Goals:** Are they clear about their goals for returning to work or school?
- ☐ **Financial Stability:** Do they have a stable financial situation to support their return?
- ☐ **Workplace or School Environment:** Has the environment been assessed for potential triggers or stressors?
- ☐ **HR or School Support:** Have they informed HR (at work) or school authorities about their condition for support?
- ☐ **Crisis Plan:** Is there a crisis plan in place in case of an emergency or relapse?
- ☐ **Transportation and Commute:** Is transportation to work or school considered and planned for?
- ☐ **Self-Care Routine:** Do they have a consistent self-care routine established?
- ☐ **Time Management:** Can they effectively manage their time and workload?
- ☐ **Social Interactions:** Are they comfortable interacting with colleagues or classmates?
- ☐ **Evaluation Period:** Is there a planned evaluation period to assess progress and make adjustments?
- ☐ **Mental Health Days:** Is there an understanding that taking mental health days may be necessary?
- ☐ **Feedback Mechanism:** Do they have a way to provide feedback to supervisors, professors, or counselors about their experience and needs?

This checklist should be used as a guide, and it's essential to customize it to the individual's specific circumstances and mental health condition. Regular check-ins and adjustments to the plan are crucial to ensure ongoing success and well-being.

Mental and Emotional Readiness Report: Tayla Jacob

Background:

Tayla Jacob has experienced a series of emotionally traumatic events, including the passing of her father in June 2018 and a subsequent divorce in 2021. These events triggered anxiety, severe depression, and panic attacks, resulting in her leaving her job.

Strengths and Academic Skills:

Ms. Jacob showcases medium intelligence (KBIT 2 Revised Scaled Score = 92) and possesses average academic skills, with her WRAT-5 score revealing her competencies in various academic areas. She demonstrates an average pace in task completion but has a high level of persistence. Observations reveal that she accepts supervision well, maintains good interpersonal relations with coworkers, and is proficient in public interactions.

Personal and Social Context:

Ms. Jacob currently resides with her two children and, while divorced, continues to receive financial support from her ex-husband. This family support structure may provide a foundational safety net as she transitions back into the workforce. Additionally, there's no history of criminal activities or substance abuse, reducing potential barriers for her reintegration into the workforce.

Self-Perception and Challenges:

While she perceives herself as stable and eager to return to work, she has identified challenges regarding work-life balance, motivation, and stress management. Her propensity to focus on end goals without breaking them into manageable short-term objectives, along with her reluctance to delegate or take breaks when overwhelmed, suggest potential areas that may require ongoing support or targeted intervention.

Recommendations:

Given her expressed readiness and the supportive observation, Tayla Jacob is prepared for a gradual transition back to work or education. However, ongoing monitoring, ongoing support, and targeted training or coaching may be beneficial in ensuring her long-term success and mental well-being. Consideration of roles that offer flexible hours or understanding work environments would be advantageous. Potential work options include: Administrative Assistant, Library Assistant, and Customer Service Representative.

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ABOUT DR. T. SCOTT SMITH

Dr. T. Scott Smith received his undergraduate degree at Louisiana State University and continued to complete his Master of Arts degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Alabama. He then obtained a Master of Science degree as well as his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Texas A&M University. Dr. Smith has continued to provide his expertise as a Certified and Licensed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, a Certified Life Care Planner, a Consultant for various universities and government agencies, and an Expert Witness for various forensic settings.

ABOUT MS. DEVIN BOURQUE

Ms. Devin Bourque is a South Louisiana native, attended the University of Louisiana at Monroe where she obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a concentration on Forensic Psychology. For the last 2 years, she's held the position of psychology assistant and state university security coordinator for many security-related events, transportation, and general safety.

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