

Universal mental health literacy scale for adolescents (UMHL-A)

Practical guide for international use and scoring

What is this scale?

The UMHL-A was developed to assess Mental Health Literacy (MHL) of children and young adolescents (ages 10-14 years old) with the further use for public health implications.

Invitation for Collaboration

Since our working group is interested in the scale use in global contexts, interested scholars are invited to determine our joint steps for scale translation and possible collaboration on further use of UMHL-A in other cultural settings. We are planning in the future to assess cross-cultural validity and application. In case a potential partnership is of interest to you, please inform us to add you to our list of interested collaborators.

Conditions of Usage

Permission is freely granted to use the UMHL-A scale for research, educational, academic and professional purposes, subject to two conditions: [1] the user makes appropriate reference of the UMHL-A source; and [2] in order to avoid confusion or ambiguity, any modification(s) to the original scales must be clearly identified and recorded by the user in all reports and documentation pertaining to the user's project.

For a thorough explanation of this research, and the development and purpose of the survey, read the article "[Development and validation of a universal mental health literacy scale for adolescents \(UMHL-A\)](#)".

Three Potential Ways of Collaboration

- use; translate according to recommendations below; please inform us of any ongoing studies and publications
- use; contact us to support / supervise translation process in your context; co-authorship of process which we would offer support and supervision of study
- co-design of project and cross-cultural study; equal participation in study

FAQ

- What is the target group? We recommend using this scale with ages 14 and younger due to developmental thresholds.
- What can be inferred from generalisability of validation? Original study intended the scale use on universal population, however it can be tested on sub-population.
- Can I adapt your scale? Yes, however we recommend first piloting the original version to assess for properties and inform adaptation based on results.
- What are the correlates of UMHL-A? Current studies are underway, no results for indicating correlates have been published yet.

Translation recommendations

Based on our experience with the sensitivity of the language surrounding mental health, we advise using double blind back translation for use in other languages. Translate the scale to the target language by two independent translators for which the target language is their native tongue, aiming to have the translations conducted by individuals with distinct backgrounds in subject expertise. Compare the two forward-translated versions of the scale with the original version using a third bilingual independent translator noting different meanings and discrepancies across the versions. If there is any, it must be discussed in the team and consensus should be achieved. This preliminary initial translated version is translated back into the original language by two independent translators which creates two back-translated versions of the scale that need to be compared by a multidisciplinary committee using consensus among the committee members resulting in a synthesized translation. Finally, pilot this version among adolescents. We encourage you to involve youth through focus groups or cognitive interviews regarding the understanding of the translation. Based on these overall results, adaptations can be made, ideally communicated with the authors of the scale.

Through the whole process of translation, please keep in mind cultural differences and developmentally appropriate use of words for the intended target group.

You can find more instructions for rigorous translation in:

- [Sousa et al. \(2011\)](#)
- [Harcourt & Einarsdottir \(2011\)](#).

General information

The UMHL-A scale consists of four dimensions:

- Help-Seeking (HS)
- Stigma (ST)
- Knowledge about Mental Health (KMH)
- Knowledge about Mental Illnesses (KMI)

The dimensions HS and ST are measured using a 5-point Likert scale with an extra 'don't know' option, whereas KMH and KMI dimensions are measured on a True and False scale also with an extra added 'don't know' option.

The dimensions were determined based on a set of consecutive factor analyses. For more information about the development of the scale and validation please refer to the original publication:

Kågström, A., Pešout, O., Kučera, M., Juríková, L., & Winkler, P. (2023). Development and validation of a universal mental health literacy scale for adolescents (UMHL-A). Psychiatry Research, 115031. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2022.115031>

UMHL-A was developed in two versions, Czech and English, but was validated only in a sample using the Czech version.



UMHL-A Likert scale: Help-Seeking and Stigma dimensions

UMHL-A Likert scale is being coded as follows:

Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5), I don't know (3).

Score ranges:

- HS score ranges between 5 and 25
- ST score ranges between 3 and 15

Sum the scores of all items that belong to their respective dimensions:

MHL#	Item wording	HS	ST
MHL1a	Talking about my feelings with someone helps to improve mental health.	✗	
MHL2a	I am comfortable talking to my peers about my feelings.	✗	
MHL3a	How I get along with others affects my mental health.		✗
MHL4a	If I experienced mental health problems, I would seek help.	✗	
MHL5a	If someone I care about had mental health problems for a long time I would encourage them to get professional help.		✗
MHL6a	I am comfortable talking to adults in my life about my feelings.	✗	
MHL7a	If I had a mental disorder I would speak about it with others.	✗	
MHL8a	I would be willing to continue a friendship with someone who developed a mental health problem.		✗

UMHL-A True and False scale: Knowledge of Mental Health and Knowledge of Mental Illnesses

UMHL-A True and False scale is being coded as follows:
Yes (1), I don't know (0), No (0).

Score ranges:

- KMH score ranges between 0 and 5
- KMI score ranges between 0 and 4

Sum the scores of all items that belong to their respective dimensions:

MHL#	Item wording	KMH	KMI
MHL1b	Getting along with others is important for mental health.	✗	
MHL2b	Mental illnesses are caused by different things.		✗
MHL3b	Mental health impacts people's behavior.		✗
MHL4b	Mental disorders affect people's emotions.		✗
MHL5b	Depression is one of the most common mental illnesses among young people.		✗
MHL6b	The way people feel over time is a sign of their mental health.	✗	
MHL7b	How people think about things affects their mental health.	✗	
MHL8b	How people get along with others affects how they feel.	✗	
MHL9b	How people think about things affects how they feel.	✗	