STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS AND DEPRESSION SCALE

1   Background and Rationale

1.1   Life Events Scale

This form is used to assess the extent to which participants experienced any major life disruptions during the previous six months. Participants are asked whether any of ten major life events occurred to them or someone close to them during the past six months. For some events, participants are asked to indicate whether this event was positive or negative. The scale is a subset of existing life events checklists and contains events commonly experienced by elderly adults. The scale has been demonstrated to have a strong relationship to participant morbidity.

1.2   Depression Scale (CESD)

The CESD is a depression scale widely used to self-report the presence and persistence of depressive symptoms. Many epidemiological and clinical studies have used the CESD to evaluate aspects of self esteem, state and trait anxiety, as well as the presence of depression. This version of the CESD consists of ten items which are scored from zero to three points, depending upon their frequency during the past week. The maximum score is 30; the higher the score, the more depressed the person is considered to be. Depression has been correlated to cardiovascular morbidity and mortality.

2   Definitions

2.1   Spouse/Partner Questions about a person's spouse/partner include both married spouses and unmarried partners who live together and have an intimate relationship.

2.2   Time frame

■   Stressful Life Events - Questions 1 to 10: Six months prior to questionnaire

NOTE: If the participant did not complete the eighteen-month Follow-Up Telephone Interview, these questions should be worded "...since we saw you at the clinic last year."

■   Depressive Symptoms - Questions 11 through 20 : Past seven days (Day of interview is Day 1)

2.3   Stressful Life Events - Questions 1-10

Q 1   Moving -- changing houses, apartments, or room(s) within the same residential care unit.

Q 3   Grandchild -- includes great-grandchild.

Q 4   Caregiving -- defined by the participant.

Q 5   Significant change in personal finances -- a major change in income status (e.g.,
       retirement, new employment, social security benefits, retirement benefits) or a
       major increase in debt or expenses.

Q 6   Close friend or close family member -- defined by the participant.

Q 6   Serious accident or illness -- one which required bed rest or hospitalization.

Q 8   Relationship -- a bond or communication between two people.
       Significantly worse -- defined by the participant.

Q 9   Someone you were close to -- defined by participant. A pet, however, may be
       included here.

       When did this person die -- If more than one death occurred within the past six
       months, record the time period that describes the most recent death.

       relationship to participant -- This question is added to this version of the form to
       account for more than one death within the specified time period. Record the
       relationship of all deaths here, including a pet. If there are two or more persons of
       the same category to document, record the second (or more recent) death in the
       "other" category and specify the relationship ("a second sister", etc).

Q 10   Other Changes -- events not previously covered which are significantly different
       from participant's normal routine. For example: taking a major trip/vacation,
       having problems with neighbors.

2.4   Depression Scale - Questions 11 through 20

■   When a participant asks for an interpretation of a particular response, the
       following definitions should be given.

       Rarely or none of the time =   Less than one full day
       Some of the time = One to two days
       A moderate amount of time = Three to four days
       Most or all of the time = Five to seven days

■   Use code 9 - Refused or Do not Know when:

- The question is asked, but the participant chooses not to answer. For example, response is:

> "I would rather not say," or
> "Go on to the next question."

- The question is asked, but the participant does not know, does not remember, or does not understand the question.

2.5   Scoring

2.5.1   **Life Events**

The computer calculates the score based on an algorithm which totals the scores for all responses in questions 1 through 10.

> Primary questions:
>   Score "0" for each "no"
>   Score "1" for each "yes"
>
> Positive vs negative:
>   Score -1 for each positive response
>   Score +1 for each negative response.

2.5.2   **Depression Scale**

The computer calculates the score based on an algorithm which totals the scores for all responses in questions 11 through 20. Total the values from 1 through 3 for all questions. Do not include code "9 - Refused or Do Not Know" in the score. If each question is answered, the total score will be 0 to 30.

3   **Methods**

3.1   Life Events Questionnaire

- ■ Questions 1 through 10 - The Life Events Questionnaire consists of ten questions.

  - Script: I am now going to ask you about a number of events that commonly happen in people's lives and that can affect your health. In some cases, I will ask whether the event has happened to you or a member of your family since we spoke to you about six months ago. In other cases, I will ask only whether it happened to you. When I ask a question about your spouse, I am referring to both married spouses and unmarried partners who live together. Please respond "yes" if the event happened and

"no" if it didn't.

- Read each question from the form.

- Check the participant's response on the form. If the participant refuses to answer the question, check "Unknown".

- Definitions for terms used in the questionnaire are as indicated under "Definitions" above. These should be provided when the participant asks for clarification.

3.2   Depression Scale

■   Questions 11 through 20 - The CESD Questionnaire consists of ten questions. Since it is a scale for depression, it must be completed using responses by the participant, not a proxy.

- Script: I am going to read you a list of ways you might have felt or behaved during the last week. After I read an item, please look at this card and tell me how often you have felt this way during the last week.

- Hand Card 8-S to participant.

- Read each item as it is written on the form, continuing with the response categories. For example:

    Script: During the past week I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me. How often did you feel this way? Did you feel that way rarely or none of the time, some or a little of the time, a moderate amount of time, or most of the time during the past week?

- Discontinue reading the responses when the participant provides a response before you are finished. On the next item, however, use your best judgment to decide whether to begin reading the entire set of responses.

- Check the response on the form. If the participant refuses to respond to the statement, check "Refused or do not know".

    If the participant asks about the meaning of an item or tries to qualify a statement, simply repeat the statement. For example:

    Participant: What do you mean by bothered?

    Interviewer: I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me. Did

you feel that way rarely, none of the time, most of time, or all of the time?

If the participant still asks about the meaning or says s/he does not understand, check "9 - Refused or do not know".

3.3   CESD (Depression) Alerts

A CESD alert is identified as a score of greater than or equal to 14 on the CESD (Depression) scale. In addition, any mention or indication during the clinic exam of suicidal tendencies is also to be considered an alert. If this occurs, the interviewer should let the participant know that it is possible to obtain help in dealing with such feelings. (If the interviewer is uncomfortable with doing this, the Clinic Coordinator may discuss this with the participant.) The participant should be asked if he/she has a physician that could be consulted regarding depression. If the participant indicates he/she has no outside resource, the interviewer may provide a professional referral which has been selected by the site's Principal Investigator.