

The Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ)

Self-regulation is the ability to develop, implement, and flexibly maintain planned behavior in order to achieve one's goals. Building on the foundational work of Frederick Kanfer (Kanfer, 1970a, 1970b), Miller and Brown formulated a seven-step model of self-regulation (Brown, 1998) (Miller & Brown, 1991). In this model, behavioral self-regulation may falter because of failure or deficits at any of these seven steps:

1. **Receiving** relevant information
2. **Evaluating** the information and comparing it to norms
3. **Triggering** change
4. **Searching** for options
5. **Formulating** a plan
6. **Implementing** the plan
7. **Assessing** the plan's effectiveness (which recycles to steps 1 and 2)

Although this model was developed specifically to study addictive behaviors, the self-regulatory processes it describes are meant to be general principles of behavioral self-control.

The Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ; (Brown, Miller, & Lawendowski, 1999) was developed as a first attempt to assess these self-regulatory processes through self-report. We did not know whether people could reliably and accurately report their own self-regulatory capabilities. Items were developed to mark each of the seven sub-processes of the Miller and Brown (1991) model, forming seven rationally-derived subscales of the SRQ. Subsequent analyses of the instrument have suggested that the scale contains one principal component, rather than specific factors corresponding to the rational subscales. If this is confirmed in further studies, the SRQ could be reduced to a short form that would reliably measure the underlying principal component.

Reliability

Reliability of the SRQ appears to be excellent. In a community sample of 83 people with varying levels of alcohol problem severity, the SRQ was administered twice, separated by 48 hours, to test stability of scores it provides (Aubrey, Brown, & Miller, 1994). Test-retest reliability for the total SRQ score was high ($r = .94, p < .0001$). Internal consistency of the scale was also quite high ($\alpha = .91$), consistent with the idea that its items contain much redundancy.

Content Validity

The SRQ also has shown strong convergent validity with concomitant measures. In our community sample (Aubrey et al., 1994), SRQ score was significantly and inversely correlated with volume of alcohol consumption per occasion ($r = -.23, p = .04$) and with negative consequences of drinking ($r = -.46, p < .0001$). That is, people with lower scores on the SRQ were more likely to be heavy and problem drinkers. The SRQ also significantly discriminated individuals meeting diagnostic criteria for alcohol dependence ($N = 32$; lowest scores) from heavy drinkers not seeking treatment ($N = 29$; intermediate scores) and people without alcohol problems ($N = 22$; highest SRQ scores).

In a clinical study with alcohol-dependent inpatients (Brown, 1994), individuals with lower SRQ scores showed more evidence of frontal impairment on neuropsychological measures, more alcohol-related consequences, fewer abstinent days, and a higher percentage of heavy drinking days. SRQ scores have also been found to be related to impulsivity (Patock-

Peckham, Cheong, Balhorn, & Nagoshi, 2001).

In a sample of 300 college students (Brown, Baumann, Smith, & Etheridge, 1997), lower SRQ scores were associated with binge drinking, more alcohol-related consequences, and more frequent marijuana use. In a subsequent study of 303 college students, SRQ scores were inversely related to risk-taking ($r = -.244, p < .001$) and impulsivity ($r = -.469, p < .001$) as well as binge drinking, driving after drinking, marijuana use and tobacco smoking.

Again with college students (N=251), the parenting style of the same-sex parent predicted students' self-regulation scores, which in turn predicted alcohol use and problems (Patock-Peckham, Cheong, Balhorn, & Nagoshi, 2001).

Factor Structure

With a sample of 391 college students (Carey, Neal & Collins, 2004), a single-factor solution emerged containing 31 items that as the same for men and women. A subsequent college sample (N = 237) yielded a two-factor solution termed Impulse Control and Goal Setting (Neal & Carey, 2005).

Recommended Use

We do not recommend using the SRQ for clinical decision-making. There is good support for interpreting the total SRQ score as a reflection of self-regulatory functioning. Based on our clinical and college samples, we tentatively recommend the following ranges for interpreting SRQ total scores with the 63-item scale:

≥239	High (intact) self-regulation capacity	(top quartile)
214-238	Intermediate (moderate) self-regulation capacity	(middle quartiles)
# 213	Low (impaired) self-regulation capacity	(bottom quartile)

The seven subscales are for research purposes only. We do not recommend separate interpretation of the subscale scores at this stage of instrument development.

Scoring

All 63 items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale with the following scale points:

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Uncertain or Unsure
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

Table 1 presents the 63 items, the subscales to which they were logically assigned, and the items that are to be reverse-scaled (R). For reverse-scaled items, 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, and 5=1.

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Table 1
Items of the Self-Regulation Questionnaire

Item	Subscale	R
1. I usually keep track of my progress toward my goals.	Receiving	
2. My behavior is not that different from other people's.	Evaluating	R
3. Others tell me that I keep on with things too long.	Triggering	R
4. I doubt I could change even if I wanted to.	Searching	R
5. I have trouble making up my mind about things.	Planning	R
6. I get easily distracted from my plans.	Implementing	R
7. I reward myself for progress toward my goals.	Assessing	
8. I don't notice the effects of my actions until it's too late.	Receiving	R
9. My behavior is similar to that of my friends.	Evaluating	
10. It's hard for me to see anything helpful about changing my ways.	Triggering	R
11. I am able to accomplish goals I set for myself.	Searching	
12. I put off making decisions.	Planning	R
13. I have so many plans that it's hard for me to focus on any one of them.	Implementing	R
14. I change the way I do things when I see a problem with how things are going.	Assessing	
15. It's hard for me to notice when I've had enough@ (alcohol, food, sweets).	Receiving	R
16. I think a lot about what other people think of me.	Evaluating	
17. I am willing to consider other ways of doing things.	Triggering	
18. If I wanted to change, I am confident that I could do it.	Searching	
19. When it comes to deciding about a change, I feel overwhelmed by the choices.	Planning	R
20. I have trouble following through with things once I've made up my mind to do something.	Implementing	R

21. I don't seem to learn from my mistakes.	Assessing	R
22. I'm usually careful not to overdo it when working, eating, drinking.	Receiving	
23. I tend to compare myself with other people.	Evaluating	
24. I enjoy a routine, and like things to stay the same.	Triggering	R
25. I have sought out advice or information about changing.	Searching	
26. I can come up with lots of ways to change, but it's hard for me to decide which one to use.	Planning	R
27. I can stick to a plan that's working well.	Implementing	
28. I usually only have to make a mistake one time in order to learn from it.	Assessing	
29. I don't learn well from punishment.	Receiving	R
30. I have personal standards, and try to live up to them.	Evaluating	
31. I am set in my ways.	Triggering	R
32. As soon as I see a problem or challenge, I start looking for possible solutions.	Searching	
33. I have a hard time setting goals for myself.	Planning	R
34. I have a lot of willpower.	Implementing	
35. When I'm trying to change something, I pay a lot of attention to how I'm doing.	Assessing	
36. I usually judge what I'm doing by the consequences of my actions.	Receiving	
37. I don't care if I'm different from most people.	Evaluating	R
38. As soon as I see things aren't going right I want to do something about it.	Triggering	
39. There is usually more than one way to accomplish something.	Searching	
40. I have trouble making plans to help me reach my goals.	Planning	R
41. I am able to resist temptation.	Implementing	
42. I set goals for myself and keep track of my progress.	Assessing	
43. Most of the time I don't pay attention to what I'm doing.	Receiving	R

44. I try to be like people around me.	Evaluating	
45. I tend to keep doing the same thing, even when it doesn't work.	Triggering	R
46. I can usually find several different possibilities when I want to change something.	Searching	
47. Once I have a goal, I can usually plan how to reach it.	Planning	
48. I have rules that I stick by no matter what.	Implementing	
49. If I make a resolution to change something, I pay a lot of attention to how I'm doing.	Assessing	
50. Often I don't notice what I'm doing until someone calls it to my attention.	Receiving	R
51. I think a lot about how I'm doing.	Evaluating	
52. Usually I see the need to change before others do.	Triggering	
53. I'm good at finding different ways to get what I want.	Searching	
54. I usually think before I act.	Planning	
55. Little problems or distractions throw me off course.	Implementing	R
56. I feel bad when I don't meet my goals.	Assessing	
57. I learn from my mistakes.	Receiving	
58. I know how I want to be.	Evaluating	
59. It bothers me when things aren't the way I want them.	Triggering	
60. I call in others for help when I need it.	Searching	
61. Before making a decision, I consider what is likely to happen if I do one thing or another.	Planning	
62. I give up quickly.	Implementing	R
63. I usually decide to change and hope for the best.	Assessing	R

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SRQ

Please answer the following questions by circling the response that best describes how you are. If you STRONGLY DISAGREE with a statement, circle €. If you DISAGREE circle ∄. If you are UNCERTAIN or UNSURE circle ∟. If you AGREE circle ∇, and if you STRONGLY AGREE circle ®. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly and don't think too long about your answers.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain or Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I usually keep track of my progress toward my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. My behavior is not that different from other people's.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Others tell me that I keep on with things too long.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. I doubt I could change even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I have trouble making up my mind about things.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. I get easily distracted from my plans.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. I reward myself for progress toward my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. I don't notice the effects of my actions until it's too late.	1	2	3	4	5	
9. My behavior is similar to that of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. It's hard for me to see anything helpful about changing my ways.	1	2	3	4	5	
11. I am able to accomplish goals I set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	
12. I put off making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	
13. I have so many plans that it's hard for me to focus on any one of them.	1	2	3	4	5	
14. I change the way I do things when I see a problem with how things are going.	1	2	3	4	5	
15. It's hard for me to notice when I've had enough (alcohol, food, sweets).	1	2	3	4	5	
16. I think a lot about what other people think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	
17. I am willing to consider other ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	
18. If I wanted to change, I am confident that I could do it.	1	2	3	4	5	
19. When it comes to deciding about a change, I feel overwhelmed by the choices.	1	2	3	4	5	
20. I have trouble following through with things once I've made up my mind to do something.	1	2	3	4	5	

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain or Unsure Agree Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain or Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I don't seem to learn from my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I'm usually careful not to overdo it when working, eating, drinking.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I tend to compare myself with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I enjoy a routine, and like things to stay the same.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I have sought out advice or information about changing.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I can come up with lots of ways to change, but it's hard for me to decide which one to use.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I can stick to a plan that's working well.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I usually only have to make a mistake one time in order to learn from it.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I don't learn well from punishment.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I have personal standards, and try to live up to them.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I am set in my ways.	1	2	3	4	5
32. As soon as I see a problem or challenge, I start looking for possible solutions.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I have a hard time setting goals for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I have a lot of willpower.	1	2	3	4	5
35. When I'm trying to change something, I pay a lot of attention to how I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I usually judge what I'm doing by the consequences of my actions.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I don't care if I'm different from most people.	1	2	3	4	5
38. As soon as I see things aren't going right I want to do something about it.	1	2	3	4	5
39. There is usually more than one way to accomplish something.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I have trouble making plans to help me reach my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I am able to resist temptation.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I set goals for myself and keep track of my progress.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Most of the time I don't pay attention to what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I try to be like people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain or Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain or Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
45. I tend to keep doing the same thing, even when it doesn't work.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I can usually find several different possibilities when I want to change something.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Once I have a goal, I can usually plan how to reach it.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I have rules that I stick by no matter what.	1	2	3	4	5
49. If I make a resolution to change something, I pay a lot of attention to how I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Often I don't notice what I'm doing until someone calls it to my attention.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I think a lot about how I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Usually I see the need to change before others do.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I'm good at finding different ways to get what I want.	1	2	3	4	5
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55. Little problems or distractions throw me off course.	1	2	3	4	5
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61. Before making a decision, I consider what is likely to happen if I do one thing or another.	1	2	3	4	5
62. I give up quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
63. I usually decide to change and hope for the best.	1	2	3	4	5
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