

Family Hardiness Index (Marcia Van Riper, PhD, RN, FAAN & Karen Armijos-Yamby, PHD)

Title of Measure: Family Hardiness Index

Website:

- <https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/measures.html>
- https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_english.pdf

Reference for original article(s) describing how the measure was developed and tested:

- McCubbin, M.A., McCubbin, H.I., & Thompson, A.I. (1986). Family Hardiness Index (FHI). In H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, M.A. McCubbin (1996). *Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation: Inventories for research and practice*, pp. 239-305. Madison: University of Wisconsin System
- McCubbin, M.A., McCubbin, H.I., & Thompson, A.I. (1986) FHI: Family Hardiness Index. In Fischer, J., Corcoran, K.J. (2007). *Measures for clinical practice and research: A sourcebook*. (4th Ed.). NY Oxford University Pr. Vol. 1, pp. 291-293.

Purpose/Background:

- **Purpose:** The Family Hardiness Index (FHI) was developed by Marilyn McCubbin, Hamilton McCubbin, and Anne Thompson (1986) to measure the characteristic of hardiness as a stress resistance and adaptation resource in families which would function as a buffer or mediating factor in mitigating the effects of stressors and demands, and a facilitation of family resiliency adjustment and adaptation over time. Family hardiness specifically refers to the internal strengths and durability of the family unit and is characterized by a sense of control over the outcomes of life events and hardships, a view of change as beneficial and growth producing, and an active rather than passive orientation in adjusting to and managing stressful situations.
- **Background:** The Family Hardiness Index (FHI) was developed to adapt the concept of individual hardiness to the family unit. Items were constructed to fit the three components of commitment, challenge and control and reflect a we, rather than an I orientation. Initially, hardiness as applied to the family was thought to have four interrelated components: (1) family's co-oriented commitment, (2) its confidence in being able to handle problems, (3) its emphasis on viewing hardships as challenges and the seeking of new life experiences as challenges, and (4) its sense of internal control rather than being the victim of circumstances. However, in later research, it was found that the original three concepts used in personal hardiness research are stronger psychometrically than the four-component approach. So recent research has focused on the three components of commitment, challenge and control.
- For more details see:
https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_english.pdf

Psychometrics:

- **Reliability:** .82 (Cronbach's alpha). For the three subscales in the newer three component approach, the Cronbach's alpha are S1=.81; S2= .80 and S3= 0.65.
- **Validity:** In an early study (McCubbin, Thompson, & McCubbin, 1988) hypothesized that family hardiness (consisting of the four subscales Control, Co-oriented Commitment, Confidence, and Challenge) would be positively correlated with criterion indices of Family Flexibility; Family Time and Routines, as well as with indices of Family Satisfaction, Marital Satisfaction, and Community Satisfaction and these findings were confirmed.
- **Test-Retest Reliability:** .86.

- **Additional Validity Checks:** No additional validity information is available at this time.

Scoring Procedure:

- To obtain a total score for Family Hardiness, the values of all the responses (i.e., False=0, Mostly False=1, Mostly True=2, and True =3, and Not Applicable=0) should be summed. For nine of the items, however, 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 14, 16, 19, and 20 the values should be reversed before summing (i.e., False=3, Mostly False=2, Mostly True=1, True=0, and Not Applicable=0).
- Subscale scores are obtained by summing the number circled by the respondent (i.e., False=0, Mostly False=1, Mostly True=2, and True=3, and Not Applicable=0) for the items in each subscale. The following list will help you determine which items belong to each subscale for both of the subscale sets. Items that require reversal (i.e., 0=3, 1=2, 2=1, 3=0) before summing are marked with an asterisk in the right hand column.
 - Subscale 1: **Co-oriented Commitment:** An 8-item scale which measures the family's sense of internal strengths, dependability and ability to work together.
 - Items: 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 18
 - Subscale 2: **Confidence:** A 4-item scale which measures the family's sense of being able to plan ahead, being appreciated for their efforts, their ability to endure hardships and experience life with interest and meaningfulness.
 - Items: 2, 3, 8, 10
 - Subscale 3: **Challenge:** A 5-item scale which measures the family's efforts to be innovative, active, to experience new things and to learn.
 - Items: 12, 14, 15, 16, 17
 - Subscale 4: **Control:** A 3-item scale which measures the family's sense of being in control of family life rather than being shaped by outside events and circumstances.
 - Items: 1, 19, 20
- In the newer three subscale solution, the three subscales are:
 - Subscale 1: **Commitment:** An 8-item scale which measures the family's sense of internal strengths, dependability and ability to work together.
 - Items: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 18
 - Subscale 2: **Challenge:** A 6-item scale which measures the family's efforts to be innovative, active, to experience new things and to learn
 - Items: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
 - Subscale 3: **Control:** A 6-item scale which measures the family's sense of being in control of family life rather than being shaped by outside events and circumstances
 - Items: 1, 2, 3, 10, 19, 20

Norms/or Comparative Data:

- Comparative data are available on families involved in three major surveys of family strengths.
- Additional comparative data from several recent studies are available in the pdf listed under website: (1) data for employees of a national insurance company are presented in Tables 7.3 through 7.6; (2) data for families with a member with chronic illness are presented in Tables 7.7 through 7.22; (3) data for farm families are presented in Tables 7.23 through 7.26; 4) data for families of Native Hawaiian ancestry are presented in Tables 7.27 through 7.30; (5) data for families of investment executives are presented in Tables 7.31 through 7.38; and (6) data for families of rural banking employees are presented in Tables 7.39 through 7.46.

Populations the measure has been used with:

- Families of children with asthma
- Individuals attending a meeting at farm union in rural Midwest community
- Caregivers of children with cognitive and/or physical disabilities
- Mothers with one developmentally disabled child, aged 6 years or younger
- Individuals most involved in the care of a family member age 60 or older
- Parents of adult children with mental retardation who were entering or had recently entered supported employment
- Investment executives of a regional investment firm with branch offices in sixteen states, & their spouses
- Multiracial families
- Female & male employees who are part of a longitudinal study of work, families & health
- Families associated with a large nationally recognized insurance company
- Native Hawaiian families
- High school students from 2 public high schools in a southwestern state.
- Families of individuals with Down syndrome from Brazil, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, United Kingdom, and USA
- Family members to person with cognitive dysfunctions and nursing students
- Families of older adults with chronic disease
- Patients with heart failure
- Chinese patients with gynecologic cancer and their spouses
- Guardians of children with inflammatory bowel disease
- Caregivers of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorders
- Families living with a child with a physical disability
- Divorced families
- Patients with panic disorder
- Families of children with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy
- African-American and White caregivers
- Caregivers of disabled older adults

Languages the measure is available in: (if there is a copy available online the link is included)

- Afrikaans
 - https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_afrikaans.pdf
- Chinese
 - https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_chinese.pdf
- English
 - https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_english.pdf
- Slovenian
 - https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_slovenian.pdf
- Spanish
 - https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_spanish.pdf
- Thai
 - https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_thai.pdf

- Xhosa
 - https://www.mccubbinresilience.org/uploads/5/9/7/9/59799889/fhi_description_-_xhosa.pdf
- Dutch
- Hebrew
- Icelandic
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Portuguese
- Swedish

Strengths and Limitations of the measure:

- **Strengths:**
 - The measure is available in many languages
 - The measure assesses positive aspects of family functioning
 - The psychometrics for the measure are good
 - The Family Hardiness Index is included in the Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation developed by Hamilton McCubbin.
- **Limitations:**
 - Although the Family Hardiness Index has been translated into many languages, there is a lack of international research reporting the psychometrics of the measures with different populations.
 - Another limitation is that the measure has been used in two ways- one using a three-subscale structure and one using a four-subscale structure. More research is needed to compare findings when the two approaches/
- **References for articles that include a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the measure:**
 - Persson, C., Benzein, E., & Årestedt, K. (2016). Assessing family resources: validation of the Swedish version of the Family Hardiness Index. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 30(4), 845–855. <https://doi.org/10.1111/scs.12313>
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References for articles by IFNA members and others who have used the measure:

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