

# How Functional Are We?

## Global Assessment of Functioning

**How functional is our child and how functional are we. One way to understand “Recovery” is to do what is necessary to raise our level of functioning.**

### Children

The **Children's Global Assessment Scale** (CGAS) is a numeric scale (1 through 100) used by mental health clinicians and doctors to rate the general functioning of children under the age of 18.

**100-91** Superior functioning in all areas (at home, at school and with peers); involved in a wide range of activities and has many interests (e.g., has hobbies or participates in extracurricular activities or belongs to an organised group such as Scouts, etc.); likeable, confident; ‘everyday’ worries never get out of hand; doing well in school; no symptoms.

**90-81** Good functioning in all areas; secure in family, school, and with peers; there may be transient difficulties and ‘everyday’ worries that occasionally get out of hand (e.g., mild anxiety associated with an important exam, occasional ‘blowups’ with siblings, parents or peers).

**80-71** No more than slight impairments in functioning at home, at school, or with peers; some disturbance of behaviour or emotional distress may be present in response to life stresses (e.g., parental separations, deaths, birth of a sibling), but these are brief and interference with functioning is transient; such children are only minimally disturbing to others and are not considered deviant by those who know them.

**70-61** Some difficulty in a single area but generally functioning well (e.g., sporadic or isolated antisocial acts, such as occasionally playing hooky or petty theft; consistent minor difficulties with school work; mood changes of brief duration; fears and anxieties which do not lead to gross avoidance behaviour; self-doubts); has some meaningful interpersonal relationships; most people who do not know the child well would not consider him/her deviant but those who do know him/her well might express concern.

**60-51** Variable functioning with sporadic difficulties or symptoms in several but not all social areas; disturbance would be apparent to those who encounter the child in a dysfunctional setting or time but not to those who see the child in other settings.

**50-41** Moderate degree of interference in functioning in most social areas or severe impairment of functioning in one area, such as might result from, for example, suicidal preoccupations and ruminations, school refusal and other forms of anxiety, obsessive rituals, major conversion symptoms, frequent anxiety attacks, poor to inappropriate social skills, frequent episodes of aggressive or other antisocial behaviour with some preservation of meaningful social relationships.

**40-31** Major impairment of functioning in several areas and unable to function in one of these areas i.e., disturbed at home, at school, with peers, or in society at large, e.g., persistent aggression without clear instigation; markedly withdrawn and isolated behaviour due to either mood or thought disturbance, suicidal attempts with clear lethal intent; such children are likely to require special schooling and/or hospitalisation or withdrawal from school (but this is not a sufficient criterion for inclusion in this category).

**30-21** Unable to function in almost all areas e.g., stays at home, in ward, or in bed all day without taking part in social activities or severe impairment in reality testing or serious impairment in communication (e.g., sometimes incoherent or inappropriate).

**20-11** Needs considerable supervision to prevent hurting others or self (e.g., frequently violent, repeated suicide attempts) or to maintain personal hygiene or gross impairment in all forms of communication, e.g., severe abnormalities in verbal and gestural communication, marked social aloofness, stupor, etc.

**10-1** Needs constant supervision (24-hour care) due to severely aggressive or self-destructive behaviour or gross impairment in reality testing, communication, cognition, affect or personal hygiene.

## Adults

**The Adult Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF)** is a numeric scale (0 through 100) used by mental health clinicians and physicians to subjectively rate the social, occupational, and psychological functioning of adults, e.g., how well or adaptively one is meeting various problems-in-living. The scale is presented and described in the DSM-IV-TR on page 32.

**91-100** Superior functioning in a wide range of activities, life's problems never seem to get out of hand, is sought out by others because of his or her many positive qualities. No symptoms

**81-90** Absent or minimal symptoms ( e.g., mild anxiety before an exam ), good functioning in all areas, interested and involved in a wide range of activities, socially effective, generally satisfied with life, no more than everyday problems or concerns ( e.g., an occasional argument with family members )

**71-80** If symptoms are present, they are transient and expectable reactions to psychosocial stressors ( e.g., difficulty concentrating after family argument ); no more than slight impairment in social occupational, or school functioning ( e.g., temporarily falling behind in schoolwork ).

**61-70** Some mild symptoms ( e.g., depressed mood and mild insomnia ) OR some difficulty in social occupational, or school functioning ( e.g., occasional truancy or theft within the household ), but generally functioning pretty well, has some meaningful interpersonal relationships.

**51-60** Moderate symptoms ( e.g., flat affect and circumstantial speech, occasional panic attacks ) OR moderate difficulty in social, occupational, or school functioning ( e.g., few friends, conflicts with peers or co-workers ).

**41-50** Severe symptoms ( e.g., suicidal ideation, severe obsessional rituals, frequent shoplifting ) OR any serious impairment in social, occupational or school functioning ( e.g., no friends, unable to keep a job ).

**31-40** Some impairment in reality testing or communication ( e.g., speech is at times illogical, obscure, or irrelevant ) OR major impairment in several areas, such as work or school, family relations, judgment, thinking, or mood ( e.g., depressed man avoids friends, neglects family, and is unable to work; child frequently beats up younger children, is defiant at home, and is failing at school ).

**21-30** Behavior is considerably influenced by delusions or hallucinations OR serious impairment in communication or judgment ( e.g., sometimes incoherent, acts grossly inappropriately, suicidal preoccupation ) OR inability to function in almost all areas ( e.g., stays in bed all day, no job, home, or friends ).

**11-20** Some danger of hurting self or others ( e.g., suicidal attempts without clear expectation of death; frequently violent; manic excitement ) OR occasionally fails to maintain minimal personal hygiene ( e.g., smears feces ) OR gross impairment in communication ( e.g., largely incoherent or mute ).

**1-10** Persistent danger of severely hurting self or others ( e.g., recurrent violence ) OR persistent inability to maintain minimal personal hygiene OR serious suicidal act with clear expectation of death.

(Source: Wikipedia 2010)