

Data Documentation

The Simplified Resilience Score: A Measure of Resilience in the HRS

Version 1

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This document provides background on the Simplified Resilience Score. Detailed information on the development of the scale is provided in the following publications:

Manning, L.K., Carr, D.C., Kail, B.L. (2016). Do higher levels of resilience buffer the deleterious impact of chronic illness on disability in later life? *Gerontologist*, 56(3), 514-24. doi:10.1093/geront/gnu068.

Taylor, M.G., Bruefach, T., Carr, D. (2024). Measuring psychological resilience in aging: Findings from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health). *Innovation in Aging*. 2024.

The Health and Retirement Study (HRS) psychosocial measurement does not include direct measurement of psychological resilience but does include items that can be used to create a resilience measure. Therefore, we developed a simplified resilience score (SRS) designed to capture adjustment and management of adversity. We followed the Wagnild and Young Resilience Scale in developing the SRS. Paralleling the Wagnild and Young (1993), we used five primary psychosocial domains to inform the development of the SRS. The domains are perseverance or the ability to keep going despite major setbacks, equanimity, which describes being able to adjust to change, often with humor, meaningfulness or the realization that life has a purpose, self-reliance or recognition of one's inner strengths, and existential aloneness or the realization that some experiences must be faced alone (Wagnild & Young, 1993).

Wagnild G. M., & Young H. M (1993). Development and psychometric evaluation of the Resilience Scale. *Journal of Nursing Measurement*, 1, 165–178

The publications cited above provide detailed background and methodology. Please direct any questions to the corresponding author, Dawn Carr (dccarr@fsu.edu).

The questions for the SRS come from the HRS psychosocial questionnaire. The table shows the HRS construct domain and the Wagnild & Young construct domains that each item maps to.

Table 1: Items Used to Calculate the Simplified Resilience Score and Related Domains

Variable Name	Question Wording	HRS Construct Domain*	Wagnild & Young Domain
wy1goals	I feel it is impossible for me to reach the goals that I would like to strive for	Hopelessness	Self-reliance

wy2impthings	So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life	Life satisfaction-subjective well-being	Meaning
wy3gowrong	If something can go wrong for me it will	Optimism-pessimism	Equanimity
wy4satisfied	I am satisfied with my life	Life satisfaction-subjective well-being	Existential aloneness
wy5control	What happens in my life is often beyond my control	Perceived constraints on personal control	Equanimity
wh6dowhatIwant	I can do the things that I want to do	Perceived mastery	Perseverance
wy7hopeless	The future seems hopeless to me and I can't believe that things are changing for the better	Hopelessness	Self-reliance
wy8selfdisc	When I really want to do something, I usually find a way to succeed at it	Perceived mastery	Perseverance
wy9ideal	In most ways, my life is close to ideal	Life satisfaction-subjective well-being	Equanimity
wy10setmind	I can do just about anything I really set my mind to	Perceived mastery	Self-reliance
wy11meaning	I have a sense of direction and purpose in life	Purpose in life (Psychological well-being – Eudaimonic well-being)	Meaning
wy12solveprob	There is really no way I can solve the problems I have	Perceived constraints on personal control	Self-reliance

*Read more about each HRS construct domain in the user guide on the HRS website: Smith, J. et al. (2023). [Psychosocial and Lifestyle Questionnaire 2026-2022](#)

The psychosocial questionnaire is part of the HRS enhanced face-to-face interview. Therefore, these items are available beginning in 2006 for the first half of HRS core respondents and in 2008 for the second half and so on through 2022. Many analysts stack the two adjacent half samples to create a full sample waves (e.g., 2006/2008, 2010/2012 etc...) For guidance and code on how to this, please visit the HRS website and view the page called [Using HRS Data: A Guide for New Users](#).

The file Simplified Resilience Score.zip contains a Stata data file with the following variables:

- 1) hhidpn: HRS person identifier
- 2) wave-specific resilience indicator: Survey wave identifier from 8 to 16 (2006 to 2022)
- 3) wave-specific individual items
- 4) a codebook

Researchers can use these items to calculate alpha scores for their research. Alpha scores in the total sample range between .82-.86.

It also contains the Stata command file to create the score across waves and this document.

Further reading

Taylor, M.G., Carr, D.C. (2021). Psychological resilience and health among older adults: A comparison of personal resources. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 76(6), 1241-1250.
doi:10.1093/geronb/gbaa116.

How Constructed

The Simplified Resilience Score is calculated as the sum of the 12 items shown in Table 1, and weighted so the highest possible score for the SRS is 12. Each individual item is coded so that the highest score indicates higher resilience. As a result, 5 of SRS items were reverse coded. Then, each item was divided by the highest score choice, so that the maximum value for each item was 1. For instance, for item #1 (wy1goals), individuals were asked how much they agreed with the statement: "I feel it is impossible for me to reach the goals that I would like to strive for." Response options were: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Slightly disagree, 4 = Slightly agree, 5 = Somewhat agree, 6 = Strongly agree. This item was reverse coded so that strongly agree=1 and strongly disagree=6. Then, we divided the item score by 6.

All items collected in the 2006 study wave, and 9 of the 12 total items collected in the 2008 or later waves had response options ranging from 1 to 6. However, 3 of the items had response options ranging from 1 to 7 starting in 2008 (items #2, #4, and #9). For example, for item #2, respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life." They were given the following response options: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Slightly disagree, 4 = Neither agree nor disagree, 5 = Slightly agree, 6 = Somewhat agree, 7 = Strongly agree. For this measure, we divided the score by 7 so the maximum value was 1. Details about which items were reverse coded and which measures were had 7 response options are shown in Table 2.

In addition, Table 2 provides variables used to calculate the SRS for each study wave for each of the 12 items. This table indicates the original variable name used in the HRS core wave. In the provided dataset, each of the 12 items is provided for each year, and the SRS is the summary measure called "resiliency" and is based on the total score across all 12 items, with missing values for those missing on any of the 12 items. The descriptive details are provided at the bottom of this document for each measure for all available study waves, including the sample sizes available for each.

Table 2: Original HRS Measures for Each Resilience Item by Year

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022
wy1goals ^R	klb019l	llb019l	mlb019l	nlb019l	olb018g	plb018g	qlb018g	rlb018l	slb018l
wy2impthings	klb003d	llb003d+	mlb003d+	nlb003d+	olb002d+	plb002d+	qlb002d+	rlb002d+	slb002d+
wy3gowrong ^R	klb019f	llb019f	mlb019f	nlb019f	olb018a	plb018a	qlb018a	rlb018f	slb018f
wy4satisfied	klb003c	llb003c+	mlb003c+	nlb003c+	olb002c+	plb002c+	qlb002c+	rlb002c+	slb002c+
wy5control ^R	klb022c	llb022c	mlb022c	nlb022c	olb021c	plb021c	qlb021c	rlb021c	slb021c
wh6dowhatlwant	klb023e	llb023e	mlb023e	nlb023e	olb022e	plb022e	qlb022e	rlb022e	slb022e
wy7hopeless ^R	klb019m	llb019m	mlb019m	nlb019m	olb018h	plb018h	qlb018h	rlb018m	slb018m
wy8selfdisc	klb023b	llb023b	mlb023b	nlb023b	olb022b	plb022b	qlb022b	rlb022b	slb022b
wy9ideal	klb003a	llb003a+	mlb003a+	nlb003a+	olb002a+	plb002a+	qlb002a+	rlb002a+	slb002a+
wy10setmind	klb023a	llb023a	mlb023a	nlb023a	olb022a	plb022a	qlb022a	rlb022a	slb022a
wy11meaning	klb035g	llb035g	mlb035g	nlb035g	olb033g	plb033g	qlb033g	rlb033g	slb033g
wy12solveprob ^R	klb022e	llb022e	mlb022e	nlb022e	olb021e	plb021e	qlb021e	rlb021e	slb021e

^R Reverse coded

+ Based on a 7-category score

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
wy1goals2006	7,522	0.726	0.273	0.167	1.000
wy1goals2008	6,881	0.720	0.278	0.167	1.000
wy1goals2010	8,144	0.730	0.271	0.167	1.000
wy1goals2012	7,193	0.728	0.272	0.167	1.000
wy1goals2014	7,329	0.728	0.269	0.167	1.000
wy1goals2016	6,176	0.729	0.274	0.167	1.000
wy1goals2018	5,604	0.743	0.272	0.167	1.000

wy1goals2020	4,548	0.756	0.270	0.167	1.000
wy1goals2022	4,342	0.755	0.266	0.167	1.000
wy2impthingshings2006	7,552	0.781	0.229	0.167	1.000
wy2impthingshings2008	6,937	0.773	0.246	0.143	1.000
wy2impthingshings2010	8,227	0.759	0.251	0.143	1.000
wy2impthingshings2012	6,795	0.754	0.251	0.143	1.000
wy2impthingshings2014	7,442	0.769	0.245	0.143	1.000
wy2impthingshings2016	6,290	0.772	0.242	0.143	1.000
wy2impthingshings2018	5,654	0.776	0.243	0.143	1.000
wy2impthingshings2020	4,609	0.789	0.232	0.143	1.000
wy2impthingshings2022	4,399	0.786	0.236	0.143	1.000
wy3gowrong2006	7,460	0.714	0.269	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2008	6,841	0.730	0.267	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2010	8,087	0.734	0.265	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2012	7,154	0.732	0.266	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2014	7,298	0.704	0.258	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2016	6,147	0.701	0.264	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2018	5,568	0.749	0.265	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2020	4,513	0.752	0.265	0.167	1.000
wy3gowrong2022	4,330	0.750	0.264	0.167	1.000
wy4satisfiefsfied2006	7,567	0.776	0.235	0.167	1.000
wy4satisfiefsfied2008	6,937	0.763	0.255	0.143	1.000
wy4satisfiefsfied2010	8,227	0.746	0.262	0.143	1.000
wy4satisfiefsfied2012	6,785	0.737	0.264	0.143	1.000
wy4satisfiefsfied2014	7,433	0.762	0.253	0.143	1.000
wy4satisfiefsfied2016	6,280	0.765	0.252	0.143	1.000

wy4satisfiedsfied2018	5,644	0.773	0.247	0.143	1.000
wy4satisfiedsfied2020	4,598	0.773	0.246	0.143	1.000
wy4satisfiedsfied2022	4,392	0.779	0.242	0.143	1.000
wy5control2006	7,555	0.758	0.261	0.167	1.000
wy5control2008	6,928	0.754	0.269	0.167	1.000
wy5control2010	8,166	0.764	0.262	0.167	1.000
wy5control2012	7,186	0.762	0.259	0.167	1.000
wy5control2014	7,406	0.769	0.256	0.167	1.000
wy5control2016	6,263	0.778	0.255	0.167	1.000
wy5control2018	5,578	0.783	0.248	0.167	1.000
wy5control2020	4,581	0.784	0.251	0.167	1.000
wy5control2022	4,373	0.785	0.246	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2006	7,588	0.780	0.232	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2008	6,953	0.778	0.236	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2010	8,206	0.778	0.233	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2012	7,211	0.768	0.238	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2014	7,458	0.775	0.236	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2016	6,276	0.784	0.230	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2018	5,616	0.787	0.230	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2020	4,590	0.782	0.234	0.167	1.000
wy6dowhatIwant2022	4,388	0.795	0.220	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2006	7,558	0.792	0.258	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2008	6,894	0.794	0.262	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2010	8,159	0.794	0.264	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2012	7,182	0.798	0.259	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2014	7,319	0.802	0.254	0.167	1.000

wy7hopeless2016	6,166	0.811	0.253	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2018	5,629	0.814	0.247	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2020	4,582	0.806	0.247	0.167	1.000
wy7hopeless2022	4,394	0.798	0.255	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2006	7,602	0.824	0.205	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2008	6,967	0.819	0.208	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2010	8,207	0.822	0.205	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2012	7,214	0.813	0.212	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2014	7,452	0.813	0.210	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2016	6,273	0.823	0.205	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2018	5,612	0.820	0.207	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2020	4,582	0.819	0.210	0.167	1.000
wy8selfdisc2022	4,379	0.825	0.203	0.167	1.000
wy9ideal2006	7,530	0.718	0.243	0.167	1.000
wy9ideal2008	6,894	0.673	0.267	0.143	1.000
wy9ideal2010	8,197	0.665	0.269	0.143	1.000
wy9ideal2012	6,769	0.646	0.268	0.143	1.000
wy9ideal2014	7,405	0.692	0.259	0.143	1.000
wy9ideal2016	6,262	0.696	0.258	0.143	1.000
wy9ideal2018	5,629	0.703	0.257	0.143	1.000
wy9ideal2020	4,587	0.696	0.256	0.143	1.000
wy9ideal2022	4,381	0.701	0.256	0.143	1.000
wy10setmind2006	7,622	0.800	0.222	0.167	1.000
wy10setmind2008	6,976	0.796	0.226	0.167	1.000
wy10setmind2010	8,218	0.801	0.223	0.167	1.000
wy10setmind2012	7,226	0.792	0.228	0.167	1.000

wy10setmind2014	7,451	0.793	0.225	0.167	1.000
wy10setmind2016	6,279	0.804	0.223	0.167	1.000
wy10setmind2018	5,624	0.803	0.221	0.167	1.000
wy10setmind2020	4,586	0.796	0.229	0.167	1.000
wy10setmind2022	4,383	0.807	0.216	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2006	7,459	0.781	0.226	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2008	6,836	0.812	0.219	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2010	8,083	0.806	0.222	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2012	7,148	0.791	0.227	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2014	7,359	0.790	0.228	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2016	6,217	0.791	0.230	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2018	5,564	0.793	0.228	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2020	4,548	0.794	0.226	0.167	1.000
wy11meaning2022	4,363	0.789	0.224	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2006	7,567	0.830	0.235	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2008	6,937	0.831	0.239	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2010	8,186	0.831	0.237	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2012	7,216	0.830	0.235	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2014	7,431	0.834	0.235	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2016	6,268	0.845	0.228	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2018	5,603	0.847	0.225	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2020	4,581	0.851	0.223	0.167	1.000
wy12solveprob2022	4,381	0.856	0.213	0.167	1.000
resiliency2006	6,864	9.338	1.757	2.000	12.000
resiliency2008	6,347	9.299	1.824	2.571	12.000
resiliency2010	7,596	9.275	1.833	1.929	12.000

resiliency2012	6,144	9.215	1.830	1.929	12.000
resiliency2014	6,820	9.273	1.806	1.929	12.000
resiliency2016	5,739	9.336	1.756	2.381	12.000
resiliency2018	5,136	9.449	1.748	2.262	12.000
resiliency2020	4,221	9.447	1.762	1.929	12.000
resiliency2022	4,064	9.457	1.723	2.095	12.000