



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SIX ITEM SCREENER (SIX)

I. General Instructions

The Six-item Screener (SIX) is administered by telephone directly to the participant (not a proxy). It consists of 3-item recall and 3-item temporal orientation.

In this setting, the Six-Item Screener is available to use to assess whether or not a participant should bring a proxy with them to the visit. It is administered when the answer to question 4 of the RTS 'Requires Confirmation'.

We would like to capture the participant's optimal cognitive performance. There are several factors which could hamper a participant's performance (e.g., significant hearing loss or extraneous background noise at the participant's home). When, in the interviewer's judgment, administration of the SIS is not possible or unduly influenced by extraneous factors (such as hearing loss), the SIS is discontinued and the reason noted. If administration of the SIS is interrupted for some reason and not completed, the interviewer should attempt to re-contact the participant at a convenient time. The SIS may also be completed at a home interview.

Interviewer behavior may also affect results. During administration of the Six Item Screener, there should be no extraneous background noise or interruptions in the interviewer's immediate surroundings as these distractions may affect test results. Instructions and questions should be presented at a measured pace (not too fast). If a participant is hard of hearing, speaking in a lower tone is often more effective than trying to speak more loudly.

Some participants may feel challenged by the task. It is important for the interviewer's attitude to be friendly, non-threatening, reassuring and supportive. Do not indicate whether specific responses are correct or incorrect. For participants who express concern about missing an item or two on the Six Item Screener, they may be reassured that "you're doing fine" or that "many people may have difficulty at times with some of the questions." Some participants may have concerns about their cognitive functioning and inquire about the need for further evaluation. The interviewer may reassure the participant that these questions are just a screening tool and do not make any clinical diagnosis, so more detailed information about performance cannot be shared. The interviewer can also note that there are several treatable conditions that may affect memory and thinking, and recommend that the participant discuss their concerns with their primary care provider. It may be helpful for the interviewer to have on hand the names of at least two physicians in the local area that evaluate older adults for those participants who do not have a primary care provider.

II. Detailed Instructions for each Item.

0a. Enter the date on which the SIX was administered.

0b. Enter the staff ID for the person administered the SIS.

Read the script introducing the task:

“Next, I will ask you a few questions that ask you to use your memory and attention. These questions are similar to ones that you have done in the ARIC clinic, but now we are asking them over the phone. I am going to say three words. After I’ve said all three words, I would like you to say them back to me. Try to remember what the words are, because I am going to ask you to name them again in a few minutes. Please do not write the words down. Ready? “Please repeat these words for me: TREE – BALL - FLAG.”

The words should be read at a pace of ~1 word per second. If the participant begins to say each word immediately after it has been read (instead of waiting until the interviewer has said all three words), stop, and say: **“Let’s try it again. This time wait until I have said all three words, and then say them back to me.”** If the participant is unable to repeat all three words back correctly, the words may be repeated up to 3 times. For example, if on the first attempt the participant repeats back, “Tree”, “Flag”, “Bell”, the interviewer would say, **“Let’s try that again”** and would said the words again (this would be trial 2). If the participant again cannot say the words back correctly, the interviewer would again say, **“Let’s try it one more time”** and would say the words again (this is the third and final trial).

As another example, if the participant repeats back on the first trial, “Tree, Ball” and says “what did you say was the third word?” The interviewer would repeat back all three words (this would count as the second trial). After three failed trials, the words are not presented again, and the form is completed as described below.

General Instructions: If the three words task was not attempted at all (e.g., after hearing the instructions they refused) or was attempted but discontinued due hearing loss or inability to comprehend the instructions, or some other reason, then move on to the temporal orientation questions (items 1-3) and mark the recall questions (items 4-6) as ‘Incorrect/Not Attempted/Refusal’.

Temporal orientation items:


1. Without the aid of a calendar or watch, the participant is asked to name the year.
2. Without the aid of a calendar or watch, the participant is asked to name the month.
3. Without the aid of a calendar or watch, the participant is asked to name the day of the week. If the participant gives the date when prompted for the day, say: **“Good, and what day of the week is it?”**

Recall items:

Script: **“Now, what were those three words I asked you to remember?”** Allow reasonable time for recall, but no more than ~90 seconds. If a participant is too quick to give up, pause, and encourage him/her to at least make an attempt. Please note that no hints are allowed. The intent of this exercise is to recall all three words correctly, regardless of the sequence.

4. Record “correct”, if “TREE” was recalled. Otherwise, record ‘incorrect/not attempted/refusal’.
5. Record “correct”, if “BALL” was recalled. Otherwise, record ‘incorrect/not attempted/refusal’.
6. Record “correct”, if “FLAG” was recalled. Otherwise, record ‘incorrect/not attempted/refusal’.

SAVE THE FORM in CDART.

Then, click the [] to run the scoring algorithm to determine if a proxy is suggested. If the participant got all 3 temporal questions wrong, then item 7 will be ‘Yes’. Additionally, if 2 or fewer of items 1 through 6 are answered correctly, then item 7 will be ‘Yes’, suggesting a proxy would be advisable to accompany the participant to the visit.