Perceived Stress Scale — AI-Aligned (PSS-10)

Purpose: Measure perceived stress (not diagnosis)
Time frame: *Over the last 1 month*
Best for: Students, working professionals, burnout detection

Instruction shown to user:

The following statements describe thoughts and feelings people commonly experience. Please choose how often you felt this way during the **past one month**.

AI Action Rules (Mentamind-Style)

- **Low stress** → Normal wellness guidance

- **Moderate stress** → Stress-management tools, check-ins

- **High stress** → Burnout screening + anxiety/depression screen

- Reassess monthly → Track **stress trend line**

"The Perceived Stress Scale helps our AI quantify how overwhelmed a person feels in daily life, without labeling or diagnosing, making it ideal for students and working professionals."

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10 – AI-Aligned)

Time frame: Over the last **1 month**

Instruction to user:

Please choose how often you felt or thought this way during the past one month.

Response Options (Same for ALL Questions)

- **0** – I never felt this way.

- **1** – I almost never felt this way.

- **2** – I sometimes felt this way.

- **3** – I fairly often felt this way.

- **4** – I very often felt this way.

Q1. Feeling overwhelmed by unexpected events

- **0** – I never felt overwhelmed by unexpected events.
- **1** – I almost never felt overwhelmed by unexpected events.
- **2** – I sometimes felt overwhelmed by unexpected events.
- **3** – I fairly often felt overwhelmed by unexpected events.
- **4** – I very often felt overwhelmed by unexpected events.

Q2. Feeling unable to control important things in life

- **0** – I never felt unable to control important things in my life.
- **1** – I almost never felt unable to control important things in my life.
- **2** – I sometimes felt unable to control important things in my life.
- **3** – I fairly often felt unable to control important things in my life.
- **4** – I very often felt unable to control important things in my life.

Q3. Feeling nervous or stressed

- **0** – I never felt nervous or stressed.
- **1** – I almost never felt nervous or stressed.
- **2** – I sometimes felt nervous or stressed.
- **3** – I fairly often felt nervous or stressed.
- **4** – I very often felt nervous or stressed.

Q4. Feeling confident about handling personal problems *(Reverse-scored)*

- **0** – I never felt confident about handling personal problems.
- **1** – I almost never felt confident about handling personal problems.
- **2** – I sometimes felt confident about handling personal problems.
- **3** – I fairly often felt confident about handling personal problems.
- **4** – I very often felt confident about handling personal problems.

Q5. Feeling that things were going your way *(Reverse-scored)*

- **0** – I never felt that things were going my way.
- **1** – I almost never felt that things were going my way.
- **2** – I sometimes felt that things were going my way.
- **3** – I fairly often felt that things were going my way.
- **4** – I very often felt that things were going my way.

Q6. Feeling unable to cope with all responsibilities

- **0** – I never felt unable to cope with my responsibilities.
- **1** – I almost never felt unable to cope with my responsibilities.
- **2** – I sometimes felt unable to cope with my responsibilities.
- **3** – I fairly often felt unable to cope with my responsibilities.
- **4** – I very often felt unable to cope with my responsibilities.

Q7. Feeling unable to manage all the things you had to do

- **0** – I never felt unable to manage everything I had to do.
- **1** – I almost never felt unable to manage everything I had to do.
- **2** – I sometimes felt unable to manage everything I had to do.
- **3** – I fairly often felt unable to manage everything I had to do.
- **4** – I very often felt unable to manage everything I had to do.

Q8. Feeling in control of your time *(Reverse-scored)*

- **0** – I never felt in control of my time.
- **1** – I almost never felt in control of my time.
- **2** – I sometimes felt in control of my time.
- **3** – I fairly often felt in control of my time.
- **4** – I very often felt in control of my time.

Q9. Feeling angry because things were out of your control

- **0** – I never felt angry due to lack of control.

- **1** – I almost never felt angry due to lack of control.

- **2** – I sometimes felt angry due to lack of control.

- **3** – I fairly often felt angry due to lack of control.

- **4** – I very often felt angry due to lack of control.

Q10. Feeling overwhelmed by daily demands

- **0** – I never felt overwhelmed by daily demands.

- **1** – I almost never felt overwhelmed by daily demands.

- **2** – I sometimes felt overwhelmed by daily demands.

- **3** – I fairly often felt overwhelmed by daily demands.

- **4** – I very often felt overwhelmed by daily demands.

Reverse-Scored Items (CRITICAL FOR AI)

- **Q4, Q5, Q8**

Reversed Score = 4 − selected score

Total Score

Total PSS-10 Score = Sum of all items (after reverse scoring)

Range = 0–40

Why PSS Is Ethically Strong

- No diagnosis

- No psychiatric labels

- Low risk

- High engagement

- Excellent for **burnout + academic pressure**

Interpretation

Score	Stress Level
0–13	Low
14–26	Moderate
27–40	High

PSS-4 — Ultra-Short Perceived Stress Screener

Use case: First-touch onboarding
Time frame: *Over the last 1 month*
Purpose: Measure perceived stress (**not diagnosis**)
Target users: Students & working professionals

Instruction to user:

Please choose how often you felt or thought this way during the **past one month**.

Response Options (Same for ALL Questions)

- **0** – I never felt this way.

- **1** – I almost never felt this way.

- **2** – I sometimes felt this way.

- **3** – I fairly often felt this way.

- **4** – I very often felt this way.

Q1. Feeling unable to control important things in life

- **0** – I never felt unable to control important things in my life.

- **1** – I almost never felt unable to control important things in my life.

- **2** – I sometimes felt unable to control important things in my life.

- **3** – I fairly often felt unable to control important things in my life.

- **4** – I very often felt unable to control important things in my life.

Q2. Feeling confident about handling personal problems *(Reverse-scored)*

- **0** – I never felt confident about handling personal problems.

- **1** – I almost never felt confident about handling personal problems.

- **2** – I sometimes felt confident about handling personal problems.

- **3** – I fairly often felt confident about handling personal problems.

- **4** – I very often felt confident about handling personal problems.

Q3. Feeling that things were going your way *(Reverse-scored)*

- **0** – I never felt that things were going my way.

- **1** – I almost never felt that things were going my way.

- **2** – I sometimes felt that things were going my way.

- **3** – I fairly often felt that things were going my way.

- **4** – I very often felt that things were going my way.

Q4. Feeling overwhelmed by difficulties

- **0** – I never felt overwhelmed by difficulties in my life.

- **1** – I almost never felt overwhelmed by difficulties in my life.

- **2** – I sometimes felt overwhelmed by difficulties in my life.

- **3** – I fairly often felt overwhelmed by difficulties in my life.

- **4** – I very often felt overwhelmed by difficulties in my life.

Reverse Scoring (CRITICAL)

Reverse the scores for:

- **Q2**

- **Q3**

Reversed score = 4 − selected score

Total Scoring Logic

PSS-4 Total Score = Sum of all 4 items (after reverse scoring)

Range = 0 – 16

Interpretation Bands

Score Range Perceived Stress Level

0–5   Low stress

6–10   Moderate stress

11–16   High stress

These are **stress levels**, not clinical diagnoses.

AI Onboarding Decision Rules

- **0–5** → Normal onboarding

- **6–10** → Offer stress-management tools

- **11–16** → Prompt deeper screening (PSS-10 / GAD-7 / PHQ-9)

Panel-Ready One-Liner

"PSS-4 allows our AI to quickly assess perceived stress during onboarding without diagnostic labeling, making it ideal for students and working professionals."