



## STRIVE TO AVOID INFERIORITY SCALES

### PART 1

Sometimes people can see life as something of a competition. For example, we often call it the 'Rat Race'. People can vary in how pressured they feel to strive and compete for things that are important to them. Below are a series of statements, which describe how people may think and feel about the need to strive and compete in life. Please circle a number to the right of the statements which best describes the degree to which a statement is **true** for you.

Please use the following scale:

**0 = NEVER 1 = RARELY 2 = SOMETIMES 3 = MOSTLY 4 = ALWAYS**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To be valued by others I have to strive to succeed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. If I make mistakes, I know other people will still like me                                      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Life is a competition   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. People don't have to succeed to prove themselves to others                                      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. People judge you by how well you perform in comparison to others                                | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Win or lose, people accept me anyway  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I never feel my place in society is secure but have to strive to prove myself worthy of it      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Others will accept me even if I fail  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I need to match what other people achieve   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. People are accepting of me without comparing me to others                                      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. If I don't strive to succeed, I'll be left behind everyone else                                | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Whether I succeed or fail, people value me as a person   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. People compare me to others to see if I match up   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I worry about failure because it means you can't keep up and compete with other people in life | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. I struggle to achieve things so that other people will not look down on me                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. If I fail at something, I know others will help me try again                                   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. Acceptance is something you have to earn and compete with others for                           | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. To get on in the world, you have to compete with others  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. If you don't keep up in looks or achievements others won't bother with you                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |



20. If I don't strive to achieve I'll be seen as inferior to other people	0	1	2	3	4
21. I don't feel under pressure to prove myself to others	0	1	2	3	4
22. People who can't compete are seen as weak	0	1	2	3	4
23. Even if I do succeed others will not believe it's enough	0	1	2	3	4
24. People accept me whether I'm successful or not	0	1	2	3	4
25. Being competitive gives me a right to life	0	1	2	3	4
26. I don't have to be the best in life to feel wanted	0	1	2	3	4
27. Others have to see me succeed otherwise it's worthless	0	1	2	3	4
28. I don't have to prove myself to feel part of a group	0	1	2	3	4
29. You are loved for what you are, not for what you achieve	0	1	2	3	4
30. You earn respect by out-performing others	0	1	2	3	4
31. Unless you can compete and keep up you get left behind	0	1	2	3	4



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### PART 2

We are interested in the reasons people feel under pressure to compete. Below are a series of questions which tap this, each beginning with 'If you don't compete with others and succeed.....'. Please circle the number which best describes how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

#### 1. LOSING OUT

##### If you don't compete with others and succeed...

You will not advance in life

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

You will miss out on opportunities

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

You will fall behind others

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

#### 2. OVERLOOKED

##### If you don't compete with others and succeed...

People will overlook you

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

People will not take much interest in you

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

People will pass you over

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

People will forget about you

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

#### 3. ACTIVE REJECTION

##### If you don't compete with others and succeed...

Others will actively reject you

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree



Others will push you away

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

Others will be critical and shame you

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree

Others will go out of their way to actively exclude you

Don't agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely Agree



## SCORING

**Part 1:** The scale is scored as two subscales:

Insecure striving = 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 30, 31,  
Secure non-striving = 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 21, 24, 26, 28, 29,

**Part 2:** Add items as shown into 3 subscales: losing out, overlooked, active rejection.

## DESCRIPTION

*Striving to avoid inferiority scale (SAIS): Part one*

Part one of the SAIS is a 31 item scale designed by Gilbert et al. (2007) to measure a) beliefs about striving to compete to avoid inferiority (e.g. 'If I don't strive to achieve I'll be seen as inferior to other people'); and b) feelings of acceptance by others whether one succeeds or fails and not having to compete (e.g. 'Others will accept me even if I fail'). The striving element we refer to as 'insecure striving', while the second element we refer to as 'secure non-striving'. Instructions ask participants to rate statements describing how they think and feel about the need to strive and compete in life. Each item is answered using a five-point Likert scale of 0 = 'Never' to 4 = 'Always'.

*Striving to avoid inferiority scale: Part two*

The second part of the SAIS focused on the reasons for people feeling under pressure to compete and avoid inferiority. We hypothesised three possible reasons: fear of losing out (not advancing in life, missing opportunities, and falling behind); being overlooked, which we regarded as a form of passive exclusion; and active rejection, involving being shamed and pushed away. Participants respond to statements on a 10-point scale ranging from 'don't agree' to 'completely agree'.

Parts one and two of the SAIS have shown good reliability with Cronbach's alphas of .84 insecure striving; .69 secure non-striving; .84 losing out; .80 overlooked and .79 rejection (Gilbert et al., 2007).

## REFERENCES

Gilbert, P., Broomhead, C., Irons, C., McEwan, K., Bellew, R., Mills, A., Gale, C. & Knibb, R. (2007). Striving to avoid inferiority: Scale development and its relationship to depression, anxiety and stress. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 46, 633-648.