

Meaning in Life: Scientific Measures

Three-Dimensional Meaning in Life Scale (3DM; Martela & Steger, 2023)

The Three-Dimensional Meaning in Life Scale (3DM) was developed to initiate an empirical examination of the three theoretically central dimensions of meaning – significance, purpose, and coherence (Heintzelman & King, 2014; Martela & Steger, 2016). The factor structure, psychometric properties, and validity of the scale is confirmed in (Martela & Steger, 2023).

Martela, F., & Steger, M. F. (2023). The role of significance relative to the other dimensions of meaning in life—an examination utilizing the three-dimensional meaning in life scale (3DM). *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 18*(4), 606-626. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1137623>

Perceived Overall Mattering Questionnaire (POMQ), Perceived Interpersonal Mattering Questionnaire (PIMQ), and Perceived Cosmic Mattering Questionnaire (PCMQ; Prinzing et al., 2023)

Each of these measures has strong internal reliability (all coefficient $\alpha \geq .96$) and includes 8 statements for participants to respond to using Likert scales, all of which are phrased in a directly parallel manner, differing only in whether or how they are contextualized. To illustrate, the POMQ includes: 'My life matters'; the PIMQ includes: 'My life matters to other people'; and the PCMQ includes 'My life matters in the grand scheme of the universe.' Participants respond using Likert scales (1 = 'Strongly disagree', 7 = 'Strongly agree').

Prinzing, M. M., Sappenfield, C. A., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2023). What makes me matter? Investigating how and why people feel significant. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 1-17*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2023.2168562>

Multidimensional MIL Scale (Costin & Vignoles, 2020)

The 16-item Multidimensional Meaning in Life (MIL) Scale was developed to test whether one's sense of coherence, purpose, and mattering function as bases for making MIL judgments, and to improve upon previous measures of these four constructs by including a balanced set of positive and reverse-phrased items. In studies using this scale, one's sense of mattering, rather than coherence or purpose, emerged consistently as the strongest precursor of MIL judgments, which emphasizes the importance of sense of mattering as a basis for MIL.

Costin, V., & Vignoles, V. L. (2020). Meaning is about mattering: Evaluating coherence, purpose, and existential mattering as precursors of meaning in life judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 118*(4), 864–884. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000225>

Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006)

The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) is a 10-item measure of the presence of, and the search for, meaning in life, with strong internal consistency, temporal stability, factor structure, and validity. The MLQ offers several improvements over current meaning in life measures, including no item overlap with distress measures, a stable factor structure, better discriminant validity, a briefer format, and the ability to measure the search for meaning.

Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The meaning in life questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 53*(1), 80–93. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.53.1.80>

Prioritizing Meaning Scale (Russo-Netzer, 2019)

This measure was developed specifically for the study detailed in (Russo-Netzer, 2019), in order to examine the extent to which individuals intentionally act and organize, as well as make decisions, in their day-to-day life so that they can experience more meaning. 12 items referring to prioritizing meaning in everyday life were formulated based on a review of existing measures of meaning in life, and the scale demonstrated coherent, replicable factor structure as well as good internal reliability.

Russo-Netzer, P. (2019). Prioritizing meaning as a pathway to meaning in life and well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being, 20*(6), 1863–1891. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-018-0031-y>

Multidimensional Existential Meaning Scale (MEMS; George & Park, 2017)

The Multidimensional Existential Meaning Scale (MEMS) is a tripartite approach to measuring meaning in life, which explicitly assesses three subconstructs of meaning: comprehension, purpose, and mattering. Studies indicate that the MEMS has favorable psychometric properties, can effectively differentiate the three subconstructs of meaning, and consists of subscales that carry predictive power for relevant variables and other meaning measures.

George, L. S., & Park, C. L. (2017). The Multidimensional Existential Meaning Scale: A tripartite approach to measuring meaning in life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(6), 613–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1209546>

Meaning in Life in Children in Children Questionnaire (MIL-CQ; Shoshani & Russo-Netzer, 2017)

The Meaning in Life in Children Questionnaire (MIL-CQ) is a 21-item self-report measure of the presence and the sources of meaning in life in children, based on Viktor Frankl's concept of the 'meaning triangle'. Confirmatory factor analysis and the examination of relationships with other psychological constructs has shown acceptable preliminary psychometric support for the use of the MIL-CQ as an assessment tool to explore different sources and levels of meaning in children.

Shoshani, A., & Russo-Netzer, P. (2017). Exploring and assessing meaning in life in elementary school children: Development and validation of the meaning in life in children questionnaire (MIL-CQ). *Personality and Individual Differences, 104*, 460-465. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.09.014>

Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI; Steger et al., 2012)

The WAMI is a novel measure of Meaningful Work (MW) that was developed to measure the extent to which work is a subjectively meaningful experience, by specifically assessing a person's a) experiences of positive meaning in work, b) sense that work is a key avenue for making meaning, and c) perception of their work to benefit some greater good. The WAMI is a simple, publicly accessible tool that can assist counselors in understanding the meaning a client has in their work life, since it has been found to account for significant variance in MW

above and beyond known predictors of job satisfaction, days absent from work, and life satisfaction.

Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). Measuring meaningful work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI). *Journal of Career Assessment, 20*(3), 322–337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072711436160>

Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (SoMe; Schnell, 2009)

The Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (SoMe) offers separate scales to measure a positive and a negative dimension of meaning: meaningfulness – a fundamental sense of meaning and belonging, and crisis of meaning – the evaluation of life as frustratingly empty and lacking meaning.

Schnell, T. (2009). The Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (SoMe): Relations to demographics and well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*(6), 483-499. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760903271074>