Overview
The Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) was initially designed to facilitate the recognition and diagnosis of depressive disorders in primary care. The PHQ-9 was modified for youth and adolescents (Severity Measures for Depression – Child Age 11-17) and to better assess for suicide risk and dysthymia in adolescents (PHQ-9-A).

Focus Area
Depression/Mood

Purpose
Screening/Initial Evaluation
Diagnostic
Progress Monitoring

Reporter
Student

Versions
Student, 9 items (for ages 11-17)
PHQ-9-A, Student, 13 items (for ages 13-17)
PHQ-9, Student, 10 items (for ages 18+)

Subscales
♦ Major depressive disorder
♦ Dysthymia*
♦ Suicide risk screening*
*Only in PHQ-9-A

Sample Items
♦ Little interest or pleasure in doing things
♦ Feeling tired or having little energy
♦ Thoughts you would be better off dead or hurting yourself in some way

Response Options
Not at all
Several days
More than half the days
Nearly every day

Estimated Completion Time
Five minutes

Languages
English
Spanish
Other

Cost
Free

Access the measures:
Online PHQ-9 screener
PHQ-9, PHQ-9-A, Severity Measures for Depression – Child Age 11-17

Summary compiled by CSMH (2017) for The SHAPE System (www.theSHAPEsystem.com)
### Scoring

#### Patient Health Questionnaire-9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHQ-9</th>
<th>PHQ-9-A</th>
<th>Severity Measure for Depression—Child Age 11-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible range</td>
<td>0-27</td>
<td>Not at all (0) to Nearly every day (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- To use the **PHQ-9** or **PHQ-9-A** as a *diagnostic aid* for major depressive disorder:
  - Rate symptoms present in the past two weeks
  - Five items* endorsed at 2 or more
  - One of the following items is endorsed:
    - Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless**
    - Little interest or pleasure in doing things
  - Impairment in functioning endorsed at 1 or greater

- To use the **PHQ-9-A** as a *diagnostic aid* for dysthymia (persistent depressive disorder):
  - Two items* endorsed at 2 or more
  - “Yes” endorsed on the following item:
    - In the past year, have you felt depressed or sad most days, even if you felt okay sometimes?**

- To use the **PHQ-9**, **PHQ-9-A**, or **Severity Measure for Depression — Child Age 11-17** for *screening* and *progress monitoring* for severity:
  - Rate symptoms present in the past two weeks (rate the past week for the Severity Measure for Depression)
  - Sum all items to get a total score
  - Use the criteria in the box below for interpretation of depression severity
  - Administration frequency is suggested for every two weeks

- To use the **PHQ-9-A** to *screen* for suicide risk, follow-up any positive endorsement of the following items with a clinical interview:
  - Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way?*
  - Has there been a time in the past month when you have had serious thoughts about ending your life?
  - Have you ever, in your whole life, tried to kill yourself or made a suicide attempt?

#### Interpretation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Depression Severity Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Positive endorsement of suicidal ideation is 1 or greater

**In adolescents, mood can be irritable

[Click here for background information/more detailed instructions](https://www.theSHAPEsystem.com) for the PHQ-9

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