

# The Resilience, Adaptation and Well-Being Project



Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation -  
General

FIRA - G

# **FIRA-G: Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation-General**

---

## **Overview**

The Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation-General (FIRA-G) was developed by Hamilton McCubbin (1987a) to provide a brief set of measures which have reliability and validity and can be used to test the major dimensions of the Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation.

The use of self-report family systems assessment measures in research, education, and clinical counseling work, and particularly family health research is based on the premise that family processes interact with individual family members' psychological and physiological processes in discernible and predictable ways. Clearly, the family system is but one of a host of interrelated environmental influences which can and does have a profound impact upon individual family members, but the research to substantiate this relationship is in an embryonic stage of development. The jury remains in session deliberating the merits of current research.

Until such research has been accumulated to guide family life education programs and family oriented clinical and health focused interventions, the training of family educators, nurses, social workers and physicians will continue to be guided by faith, experience, clinical insights and unconfirmed assumptions. To advance research to address these educational and clinical issues about the family system, family assessment measures have been developed and tested.

## **Development of FIRA-G**

To facilitate research in the study of family systems, their transitions, adjustment and adaptation, as well as their impact on family members, we have made an effort to develop a cluster of family measures designed and selected to assess the critical dimensions and components of this family stress model. This series of research instruments has been called the FIRA Series, the Family Indices of Regenerativity and Adaptation. In this publication we will introduce FIRA-G (Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation-General).

## **Conceptual Organization**

FIRA-G is designed to obtain 7 indices of family functioning (Table 29.1). Specifically, FIRA-G, which is patterned after the Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation, is designed to obtain reliable and valid indices of Family Stressors (A/AA Factor), Family Strains (A/AA Factor), Relative and Friend Support (PSC Factor), Social Support (BBB Factor), Family Confidence (BIBB Factor), Family Coherence (T Factor), Family Hardiness (T Factor), and two indices of family adaptation-Family Discord (X/XX Factor) and Family Distress (X/XX Factor).

**Table 29.1**  
**Overview of FIRA-G, Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation-General**

<b>Resiliency Family Dimensions</b>	<b>Primary Instrument</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
Family Stressors (A/AA)	FILE	10	Pile-up
Family Strains (A/AA)	FILE	10	Pile-up
Relative and Friend Support (PSC)	FCOPES	8	Family Support
Social Support	SSI	17	Community Support
Family Coherence (T)	FCOPES	4	Family Resources
Family Hardiness (T)	FHI	20	Regenerative Type
Family Distress (X/XX)	FILE	5	Adaptation

**The Family Stressors Index** (H.I. McCubbin, & Patterson, 1981b) consists of 10 items selected to record those life events and changes which can render a family vulnerable to the impact of a subsequent stressor or change. The index includes the addition of a member, changes in the work situation, deaths and illness. The psychometric properties of the Family Stressors index include a validity coefficient (correlation with the original FILE) of .60.

**The Family Strains Index** (H.I. McCubbin & Patterson, 1982f) consists of 10 items selected to record those life events and changes which can render a family vulnerable to the impact of a subsequent stressor or change. The index' includes conflict between husband and wife, conflict among and with children, financial hardships and the strains of caring for an ill member. The psychometric properties of the Family Strains Index include a Cronbach's alpha of .69 and a validity coefficient (correlation with original FILE) of .87.

**The Relative and Friend Support Index** (H.I. McCubbin, Larsen, & Olson, 1982b) consists of 8 items selected to record the degree to which families call upon relative and friend support as one of the strategies the family unit uses to manage its stressors and strains. The psychometric properties of the Relative and Friend Support Index include a Cronbach's alpha of .82 and validity coefficient (correlation with the original FCOPES) of .99.

**The Social Support Index** (H.I. McCubbin, Patterson, & Glynn, 1982) consists of 17 items selected to record the degree to which families are integrated into the community, view the community as a source of support and feel that the community can provide emotional, esteem, and network support. The psychometric properties of the Social Support Index include a Cronbach's alpha of .82 and a validity coefficient (correlation with the criterion of family well-being) of .80.

**Family Coping Coherence** (H.I. McCubbin, Larsen, & Olson, 1982a) consists of 4 items selected to record the degree to which families call upon their appraisal skills to manage stressful life events, strains, and changes. This index includes the acceptance of stressful events, accepting difficulties, a positive appraisal of a problem and having faith in God. The psychometric properties of Family Coping-Coherence include a Cronbach's alpha of .71 and a validity coefficient (correlation with the original F -COPES) of .80.

**The Family Hardiness Index** (M.A. McCubbin, H.I. McCubbin, & A.I. Thompson, 1986) was developed to measure the characteristic of hardiness as a stress resistance and adaptation resource in families, which would function as a buffer or mediating factor in mitigating the effects of stressor and demands, and a facilitation of family adjustment and adaptation over time. Family hardiness specifically refers to the internal strengths and durability of the family unit and is characterized by a sense of control over the outcomes of life events and hardships, a view of change as beneficial and growth producing, and an active rather than passive orientation in adjusting to and managing stressful situations. The Family Hardiness Index is a 20-item in-

strument consisting of four subscales (Co-oriented Commitment, Confidence, Challenge, and Control) which calls for the respondent to assess the degree to which (False, Mostly False, Mostly True, True) each statement describes their current family situation. The Co-oriented Commitment subscale measures the family's sense of internal strengths, dependability and ability to work together. The Confidence subscale measures the family's sense of being able to plan ahead, being appreciated for efforts, their ability to endure hardships and experience life with interest and meaningfulness. The Challenge subscale measures the family's efforts to be innovative, active and to experience new things and to learn. The Control subscale measures the family sense of being in control of family life rather than being shaped by outside events and circumstances. The psychometric properties of the Family Hardiness Index include a Cronbach's alpha of .82 and validity coefficients ranging from .15 to .23 (see Chapter 7).

**The Family Distress Index** (H.I. McCubbin & Patterson, 1981a) consists of five items selected to record those major difficulties families may experience which reflect a deterioration in a family's stability. The index includes family members with emotional problems, the abuse of alcohol or drugs, physical or psychological violence, separation or divorce and deterioration in the marital relationship. The psychometric properties of the Family Distress Index are limited with a validity coefficient (correlation with original FILE instrument) of .50.

### Reliability

The reliabilities of each of the FIRA-G measures are presented in Table 29.2.

**Table 29.2**  
**FIRA-G Measures**

Resiliency Measures	Reliability	Validity
Family Stressors (A/AA)	*	.60
Family Strains (A/AA)	.69	.87
Relative and Friend Support (PSC)	.82	.99
Social Support	.82	.80
Family Coherence (T)	.71	.80
Family Hardiness (T)	.82	.15-.23
Family Distress (X/XX)	*	.50

\*Adapted from FILE instrument

### Validity

To get a complete picture of validity please refer back to the original measures (where available) in this publication. These measures were reported in the conceptual organization section, at the end of each paragraph.

### Test-Retest Reliability

The test-retest reliabilities can best be gleaned from the original measures presented in this book.

### Additional Validity Checks

No additional validity information is available at this time.

### Scoring Procedures

The scoring for FIRA-G may be viewed as relatively routine, with a few exceptions to be noted. The list below describes the procedure used for scoring each individual instrument. For items in Family Stressors, Family Strains and Family Distress scales, items answered Yes are given the weighted score for that item

in the Yes column, (i.e., item 1 from Family Stressors would equal 50 for a Yes response, 0 for a No). For the other 4 instruments in FIRA-G, each item is assigned a score of the response circled (i.e., 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree). Reversals (i.e., 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, and 5=1) are needed for some of the items in the Family Hardiness and Social Support Indexes in order to ensure that all items are weighted in a positive direction for analysis and interpretation. These are noted in the right hand column of the list below and are marked with an asterisk.

There is a 25-item version of the Social Support Index available which includes a social desirability scale not used in analysis. Items to be reversed in the 25-item version include: 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 22, and 24.

Family Stressors Index	Sum weighted items then divide by 10 for total Family Stressors score	Items 1 through 10
Family Strains Index	Sum weighted items then divide by 10 for total Family Strains score	Items 1 through 10
Relative & Friend Support	Sum items for total Relative & Friend Support score	Items 1 through 8
Social Support Index	Sum items for total Social Support score	Items 1 through 17 Reverse items 7*, 9*, 10*, 13*, 14*, 17*
Family Coping Coherence Index	Sum items for total Family Coping Coherence score	Items 1 through 4
Family Hardiness Index	Sum items for total Family Hardiness score	Items 1 through 20 Reverse items 1*, 2*, 3*, 8*, 10*, 14*, 16*, 19*, 20*
Family Distress Index	Sum weighted items then divide by 10 for total Family Distress score	Items 1 through 5

### **Norms and/or Comparative Data**

Comparative data are available on families involved in three major surveys of family strengths. The comparative data are presented in terms of means and standard deviations presented on the basis of family life cycle stages (Table 29.3).

### **Instrument Utilization for Research**

The FIRA-G instrument is currently being tested within the Family Stress, Coping and Health Project and by other investigators. The few studies that have included this instrument have already been cited in the conceptual organization section of this chapter and are included in the references. Therefore, a summary table of related publications is not available at this time.

## Notes

1. The earlier writings on this instrument included a comprehensive description of the instrument's development. For the sake of brevity we limited the chapter to the basic information that users have requested and needed. If you desire a copy and are unable to find our earlier publications, either the 1987 or the 1991 edition, please write to us at the Center for Excellence in Family Studies, Family Stress, Coping and Health Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1300 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706 or send email to [manual@macc.wisc.edu](mailto:manual@macc.wisc.edu). There will be a charge for these additional materials.
2. When referencing this instrument, the proper citation is: McCubbin, H.I. (1987). Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation-General (FIRA-G). In H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, & M.A. McCubbin (1996). *Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation-Inventories for research and practice*. (pp. xx-xx). Madison: University of Wisconsin System. If using any of the subscales separately, still reference the subscale as follows: For example, McCubbin, H.I. & Patterson, J. (1981). Family Stressors. In McCubbin, H.I. (1987). Family Index of Regenerativity and Adaptation-General (FIRA-G). In H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, & M.A. McCubbin (1996). *Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation-Inventories for research and practice*. (pp. 823-841). Madison: University of Wisconsin System.

**Table 29.3**  
**FIRA-G Dimensions Distributed across 4 Stages of the Family Cycle:**  
**Means and Standard Deviation**

FIRA-G Dimensions	Couple Stage		Preschool School Age Stage		Adolescent Launching Stage		Empty Nest Retirement Stage	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Family Stressors (A/AA)↑	11.0	8.0	11.0	8.0	11.0	9.0	10.0	8.0
Family Strains (A/AA)↑	7.0	7.0	11.0	8.0	10.0	9.0	4.0	3.0
Relative and Friend Support (PSC)↑	25.0	4.0	25.0	6.0	24.0	5.0	25.0	6.0
Social Support*	45.4	8.0	45.3	7.5	47.9	7.7	N/A	N/A
Family Coherence (T)↑	16.0	2.0	16.0	2.0	16.0	2.0	16.0	2.0
Family Hardiness (T) ±	48.6	5.6	47.5	4.9	46.6	6.8	47.5	7.0
Family Distress (X/XX)↑	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0

\*N = 1036 Military Families

↑N = 1000 Families (Non-Military)

±N = 304 Families (Non-Military)

# FIRA-G

FAMILY INDEX OF REGENERATIVITY AND  
ADAPTATION-GENERAL

---

*English Version*



Family Stress, Coping and Health Project  
School of Human Ecology  
1300 Linden Drift  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Madison, WI 63706

# FIRA-G

FAMILY INDEX OF REGENERATIVITY AND ADAPTATION-GENERAL<sup>®</sup>

Hamilton I. McCubbin

*Family Stressors*

*Family Strains*

*Relative and Friend Support*

*Social Support Index*

*Family Coping-Coherence*

*Family Hardiness Index*

*Family Distress*





# FAMILY STRESSORS<sup>©</sup>

Hamilton I. McCubbin     Joan M. Patterson

**Directions:**

Decide whether or not each of the changes listed below happened in your family during the past year. After you have decided and selected a number, put that number in the boxes to the right marked Family Score. Add all the numbers in the Family Score boxes and put the total in the boxes marked **Total Score**. Next, divide the **Total Score** by 10. If necessary, round the score to the nearest whole number. Put the new total in the boxes marked **Family Stressors Score**.

<i>During the past year has this happened in your family!</i>	No	Yes	Family Score	
1. A family member gave birth to or adopted a child	0	50		
2. A family member stopped working, lost or quit a job (e.g., retired, laid off, etc.)	0	52		
3. A family member started or returned to work	0	41		
4. A family member changed to a new job/career, or was given more responsibility at work	0	40		
5. Family moved to new home/apartment	0	43		
6. A family member, relative or close friend became seriously ill or injured	0	43		
7. A family member or close relative became physically disabled, chronically ill, or was committed to an institution or nursing home	0	59		
8. A family member, close relative or close friend died	0	73		
9. Married son or daughter was separated or divorced	0	58		
10. A family member left home or moved back home	0	42		

**Total Score**

*(Divide Total Score by 10)*

**Family Stressors Score**



# FAMILY STRAINS<sup>©</sup>

Hamilton I. McCubbin     Joan M. Patterson

**Directions:**

Decide whether or not each or the changes listed below happened in your family during the past year. After you have decided and selected a number, put that number in the boxes to the right marked **Family Score**. Add all the numbers in the Family Score boxes and put the total in the boxes marked **Total Score**. Next, divide the Total Score by 10. If necessary, round this score to the nearest whole number. Put the new total in the boxes marked **Family Strains Score**.

<i>During the past year has this happened in your family!</i>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Family Score</b>	
1. Increase in conflict between husband and wife	0	53		
2. Increase in arguments between parent(s) and child(ren)	0	45		
3. Increase in conflict among children in the family	0	48		
4. Increased difficulty in managing child(ren)	0	40		
5. Increase in number of problems/issues that don't get resolved	0	43		
6. Increase in number of tasks/chores which don't get done	0	35		
7. Increase in conflict with in-laws or relatives	0	40		
8. Increased strain on family "money" for medical expenses, clothes, food, education, home care, etc.	0	22		
9. Increased difficulty with people at work or dissatisfaction with job/career	0	39		
10. Increased difficulty in providing care to a disabled or chronically ill family member	0	53		

**Total Score**

*(Divide Total Score by 10)*

**Family Strains Score**



# RELATIVE AND FRIEND SUPPORT<sup>©</sup>

Hamilton I. McCubbin    Andrea S. Larsen    David H. Olson

**Directions:**

Decide for your family whether you: (1) **Strongly Disagree**; (2) **Disagree**; are (3) **Neutral**; (4) **Agree**; or (5) **Strongly Agree** with the statements listed below. After you have decided and selected a number, put that number in the box to the right marked Family Score. Add all the numbers in the Family Score boxes and put the total in the boxes marked **Relative and Friend Support Score**.

<i>We cope with family problems by:</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Family Score
1. Sharing our difficulties with relatives	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Seeking advice from relatives	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Doing things with relatives (get together)	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Seeking encouragement and support from friends	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Seeking information and advice from people faced with the same or similar problem	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Sharing concerns with close friends	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Sharing problems with neighbors	1	2	3	4	5	
8. Asking relatives how they feel about the problems we face	1	2	3	4	5	

**Relative and Friend Support Score**

*(Put This Score On Your Scorecard)*



**SSI**  
 SOCIAL SUPPORT INDEX ©  
 Hamilton I. McCubbin    Joan Patterson    Thomas Glynn

**Directions:**

Read the statements below and decide for your family whether you: (1) **Strongly Disagree**; (2) **Disagree**; are (3) **Neutral**; (4) **Agree**; or (5) **Strongly Agree** and circle that number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Family Score
<i>Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your community and family:</i>						
1. If I had an emergency, even people I do not know in this community would be willing to help	1	2	3	4	5	
2. I feel good about myself when I sacrifice and give time and energy to members of my family	1	2	3	4	5	
3. The things I do for members of my family and they do for me make me feel part of this very important group	1	2	3	4	5	
4. People here know they can get help from the community if they are in trouble	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I have friends who let me know they value who I am and what I can do	1	2	3	4	5	
6. People can depend on each other in this community	1	2	3	4	5	

**Social Support Score 1**



*Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your community and family:*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Family Score</b>	
7. Members of my family seldom listen to my problems or concerns; I usually feel criticized	1	2	3	4	5		®
8. My friends in this community are a part of my everyday activities	1	2	3	4	5		
9. There are times when family members	1	2	3	4	5		®
10. I need to be very careful how much I do for my friends because they take advantage of me	1	2	3	4	5		®
11. Living in this community gives me a secure feelings	1	2	3	4	5		
12. The members of my family make an effort to show their love and affection for me	1	2	3	4	5		
13. There is a feeling in this community that people should not get too friendly with each other	1	2	3	4	5		®
14. This is not a very good community to bring children up in	1	2	3	4	5		®
15. I feel secure that I am as important to my friends as they are to me	1	2	3	4	5		
16. I have some very close friends outside the family who I know really care for me and love me	1	2	3	4	5		
17. Member(s) of my family do not seem to understand me; I feel taken for granted	1	2	3	4	5		®

*The ® symbol is for computer use only.*

**Social Support Score 2**

**Social Support Score 1**

**Social Support Score Total**



Family Stress, Coping and Health Project  
 School of Human Ecology  
 1300 Linden Drift  
 University of Wisconsin-Madison  
 Madison, WI 63706

# FAMILY COPING-COHERENCE<sup>©</sup>

Hamilton I. McCubbin    Andrea S. Larsen    David H. Olson

**Directions:**

Decide for your family whether you: (1) **Strongly Disagree**; (2) **Disagree**; are (3) **Neutral**; (4) **Agree**; or (5) **Strongly Agree** with the statements listed below. After you have decided and selected a number, put that number in the box to the right marked Family Score. Add all the numbers in the Family Score boxes and put the total in the boxes marked **Family Coping-Coherence Score**.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Family Score
<i>We cope with family problems by:</i>						
1. Accepting stressful events as a fact of life	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Defining the family problem in a more positive way so we don't get discouraged	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Having faith in God	1	2	3	4	5	

**Family Coping-Coherence Score**

*(Put This Score On Your Scorecard)*



**FHI**  
 FAMILY HARDINESS INDEX ©  
 Marilyn A McCubbin    Hamilton I. McCubbin    Anne I. Thompson

**Directions:**

Please read each statement below and decide to what degree each describes your family. Is the statement **False** (0), **Mostly False** (1), **Mostly True** (2), or **True** (3) about your family? Circle a number 0 to 3 to match your feelings about each statement. Please respond to each and every statement.

<i>In our family...</i>	False	Mostly False	Mostly True	True	
1. Trouble results from mistakes we make	0	1	2	3	®
2. It is not wise to plan ahead and hope because things do not turn out anyway	0	1	2	3	®
3. Our work and efforts are not appreciated no matter how hard we try and work	0	1	2	3	®
4. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good things that happen	0	1	2	3	
5. We have a sense of being strong even when we face big problems	0	1	2	3	
6. Many times I feel I can trust that even in difficult times things will work out	0	1	2	3	
7. While we don't always agree, we can count on each other to stand by us in times of need	0	1	2	3	
8. We do not feel we can survive if another problem hits us	0	1	2	3	®
9. We believe that things will work out for the better if we work together as a family	0	1	2	3	
10. Life seems dull and meaningless	0	1	2	3	®
11. We strive together and help each other no matter what	0	1	2	3	

*The ® symbol is for computer use only.*

**Subtotal**

<i>In our family...</i>	<b>False</b>	<b>Mostly False</b>	<b>Mostly True</b>	<b>True</b>	
12. When our family plans activities we try new and exciting things	0	1	2	3	
13. We listen to each others' problems, hurts and fears	0	1	2	3	
14. We tend to do the same things over and over ... it's boring	0	1	2	3	®
15. We seem to encourage each other to try new things and experiences	0	1	2	3	
16. It is better to stay at home than go out and do things with others	0	1	2	3	®
17. Being active and learning new things are encouraged	0	1	2	3	
18. We work together to solve problems	0	1	2	3	
19. Most of the unhappy things that happen are due to bad luck	0	1	2	3	®
20. We realize our lives are controlled by accidents and luck	0	1	2	3	®

The ® symbol is for computer use only.

**Subtotal**

**Total**





# FAMILY DISTRESS<sup>©</sup>

Hamilton I. McCubbin     Joan M. Patterson

## Directions:

Decide whether or not each of the changes listed below happened in your family during the past year. After you have decided and selected a number, put that number in the boxes to the right marked Family Score. Add all the numbers in the Family Score boxes and put the total in the boxes marked **Total Score**. Next, divide the **Total Score** by 10. If necessary, round the score to the nearest whole number. Put the new total in the boxes marked **Family Distress Score**.

<i>During the past year has this happened in your family!</i>	No	Yes	Family Score	
1. A family member appeared to have emotional problems	0	58		
2. A family member appeared to depend on alcohol and/or drugs	0	66		
3. Physical and/or psychological violence in the home	0	79		
4. Increased difficulty with sexual relationship between husband and wife	0	58		
5. Husband and wife separated or divorced	0	75		

**Total Score**

*(Divide Total Score by 10)*

**Family Distress Score**