

CQLS—Clutter Quality of Life Scale **(Organizing Professional Version)**

The Clutter Quality of Life Scale (CQLS) was developed by Dr. Catherine Roster, Associate Professor at the Anderson School of Management, University of New Mexico, in collaboration with volunteers from the Institute for Challenging Disorganization® (ICD®). Dr. Roster's expertise lies in consumer research, specifically in the areas of possession and dispossession and the role of objects in supporting self-identity.

The CQLS is a self-assessment tool that measures the negative impact of clutter on relationships, home functionality, and emotional well-being. It shows how personal clutter affects the quality of life and life goals.

To administer the scale to clients, offer them the ICD Clutter Quality of Life Scale (client version). Count their scores, from 1 to 7 in each item, and add them up. The scale should be scored as a summated scale with a range of 11 (low impact of clutter on subjective quality of life) to 77 (high impact of clutter on subjective quality of life). Further insight into the client's situation and possible motivation for gaining assistance in managing their clutter may be gained by looking at the color-coded version in this document. It may highlight one or more of the following areas on the client's perception of the impact of clutter on their quality of life.

The scale assesses three life domains: **livability**, **emotional**, and **social** well-being. The items in purple (**1, 3, 7, and 9**) refer to the home functionality and livability of the space. The items in orange (**5, 6, 8, and 11**) are related to emotional well-being. The items in green (**2, 4, and 10**) relate to the impact on relationships. The higher the score in a domain, the greater the negative impact felt by the individual. The overall scores can range from 11 (indicating minimal clutter impact) to 77 (reflecting a significant clutter impact). The average score is 36, and that's the tipping point where the negative impact begins to overwhelm.

The Clutter Quality of Life Scale (CQLS) is designed to measure inward, or subjective, consequences of clutter from the individual's perspective. As such, it provides an indirect assessment of a person's well-being by measuring personally felt negative consequences of clutter in that person's life across important life domains commonly associated with quality of life (QoL). The CQLS essentially measures the personally felt impact of clutter on QoL across life domains, which can differ from 3rd-party observation measures, such as ICD's Clutter–Hoarding Scale® (C–HS®). Both tools can contribute to a full understanding of the impact of clutter on a person's life.

It may be helpful to use the ICD CQLS at the beginning, middle, and end of your organizing project to measure the impact of the work you are doing with your client.

Clutter is defined as a **high volume of possessions**. Below are 11 statements about clutter, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree,” 7 = “strongly agree”). Read each statement in the table and indicate your extent of agreement with each.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Please rate each item from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).						Rating
1. I have to move things to accomplish tasks in my home.						
2. I avoid having people come to my home because of the clutter.						
3. I don't get to use spaces in my home the way I would like to because of clutter.						
4. My family life has suffered because of the clutter in my home.						
5. I feel overwhelmed by the clutter in my home.						
6. I'm worried about the amount of clutter in my home.						
7. I can't find things when I need them because of clutter.						
8. I feel guilty when I think about the clutter in my home.						
9. I have neglected taking care of things that need to be done in my home because of the clutter.						
10. I don't have family members over as much as I would like because of the clutter in my home.						
11. I feel depressed by the clutter in my home.						
Total score						

Recommended applications of the CQLS include:

- **Assessment Tool:** Find out how clutter is affecting your client's daily life and their environment.
- **Monitor Progress:** Use this evaluation any time you start and continue working on an organizing project to see how the progress is going.
- **Assess Completed Projects:** Evaluate if additional organization is needed for your project.
- **Understanding the situation:** Combine the ICD Clutter Quality of Life Scale (CQLS) with the Clutter–Hoarding Scale® (C–HS®) to develop a comprehensive understanding of the client's situation.

In addition, you can help your clients using the different fact sheets ICD® offers under [resources](#), not only in English but in various languages. Get more info, some quizzes, and tips to help them.

Chronic disorganization may not go away, but it can get easier.

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The CQLS and other informational material may be obtained from the ICD® website at challengingdisorganization.org.