The Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2): Partner-to-Partner
Straus, M., et al., 1996

Description of Measure

Purpose
To assess the type and severity of conflict tactics used between the child’s primary caregiver and their partner during the past year, or ever used.

Conceptual Organization
The Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS, CTS2) were designed to measure the range of tactics used in response to conflict with a family member and the frequency with which respondents use specific tactics to solve conflicts. CTS were developed for use with (1) partners reporting on a dating, cohabiting, or marital relationship; (2) parents reporting on behavior towards their children; (3) children reporting on the behavior of parents toward each other; (4) children reporting on the behavior of parents towards them; (5) children reporting on their interaction with siblings; (6) adults reporting on the behavior of parents toward them when they were children; and (7) adults reporting on behavior of parents toward each other when they were children.

The 78-item scale (39 behaviors or experiences, each asked once for respondent and once for partner) is comprised of five subscales, including Negotiation (cognitive and emotional); Psychological aggression (minor and major); Physical Assault (minor and severe); Injury (minor and severe); and Sexual Coercion (minor and severe). Items are interspersed by severity.

The response categories gauge the frequency with which acts were used during conflict with a partner in the past year using a 6-point scale ranging from “never” to “20 or more times”(7). There are also response options of “Never in the last year, but it did happen before that,” and “This has never happened.”

Item Origin/Selection Process
The theoretical basis of all versions of the CTS is conflict theory, which assumes that conflict is inevitable and essential to bringing about positive change, but high levels of conflict, particularly when the means by which it is addressed involve hostile behaviors, can adversely affect the welfare of those involved (Straus, 1979). The conceptual framework of the CTS comes from the "catharsis theory" of violence control, which posits three modes of dealing with conflict: rational discussion and reasoning, verbal and nonverbal acts which symbolically hurt the other party, and the use of physical force as a means of resolving the conflict (Straus, 1974; 1979). The original CTS were developed within this framework through the use of a modeling technique analogous to a factorial design experiment (Straus, 1979). The revised CTS, the CTS2, includes new scales (Sexual Coercion and Injury), additional items added to the original three scales, some item refinement, and improved operationalization of minor and severe levels of conflict tactics. The original CTS items appeared in hierarchical order (least to most severe), while the CTS2 intersperses item-level severity.

Materials
The instruments are available through Western Psychological Services, Los Angeles, CA.

Time Required
About 7 minutes
LONGSCAN Administration Method
Interviewer-administered for the early interviews. For the age 12 and subsequent interviews, LONGSCAN utilized an A-CASI administration.

Training

Scoring
Score Types
There are five scales: negotiation (which includes two subscales, emotional and cognitive); Psychological Aggression (which includes two subscales, minor and severe); Physical Assault (which includes two subscales, minor and severe); Sexual Coercion (which includes two subscales, minor and severe); and Injury (which also includes two subscales, minor and severe).

There are several methods of scoring the Conflict Tactics Scales. The simplest is to add the response category code values for each scale to create a sum score. A mean score can also be created by taking the average of all items within a particular scale/subscale. Behaviors, or types of behaviors, can also be scored dichotomously as “present” or “not present.” Dichotomized scores are used in the calculation of rates. See data dictionary on internal website (http://www.iprc.unc.edu/databook/computing/dictionaries) for additional information regarding scoring.
For additional information on scoring, please see the Conflict Tactics Scales Handbook (Straus, M.A., Hamby, S. L., and Warren, W.L., 2003).

Score Interpretation
Higher scores indicate more use of the tactic or of a domain of tactics.

Norms and/or Comparative Data
The Conflict Tactics Scale has been used in national incidence studies of family violence (Straus & Gelles, 1986, 1988), and rates characterizing a specific group can be compared to a representative sample of the U.S. population.

Psychometric Support
Reliability
The author reports internal consistency reliability of the subscales ranging from .79 to .95.

Validity
Construct validity of the CTS has been demonstrated in a number of studies (Straus, 1990c). Concurrent validity has been examined by comparing reports obtained separately from husbands and wives. Husband-wife correlations are reported to range from .19 to .80, with a mean of approximately .40 (Straus, 1979). Correlations are lowest for Reasoning and highest for Physical Aggression. The authors suggest that because the CTS and the CTS2 are fundamentally the same conceptually and methodologically, the evidence supporting the validity of the CTS also applies to the CTS2 (Straus, 1996).
LONGSCAN Use

Data Points
Ages 12, 14, 16

The CTS was used at ages 6 and 8.

Respondent
Primary maternal caregiver

Mnemonic and Version
Item –level data:
- Age 6: CTPA (includes both spouse/partner to respondent & respondent to spouse/partner behavior)
- Age 8: CTB (includes only spouse/partner to respondent behavior)
- Ages 12, 14 & 16: CTPC (includes only spouse/partner to respondent behavior)

Scored Data:
- Age 6: CTPS
- Age 8: CTS
- Ages 12, 14, and 16: CPSS

Rationale
Children who live in households where domestic violence is taking place often witness this violence and are at higher risk for being victims of neglect or abuse themselves (Campbell & Lewandowski, 1997; Wright, Wright, & Isaac, 1997). These data were collected to allow examination of the mental and physical effects of intimate partner violence on women and their children.

LONGSCAN Administration and Scoring Notes
At the age 6 and age 8 interviews, maternal caregivers provided data for this measure only if they were currently living with a spouse or partner. At age 12 however, an “ever occurred” option was added to the response set in order to let all caregivers provide data for this measure. The original seven-point response set was reduced to 4 points ranging from 0 (never) to 3 (more than 5 times in the past year). The response set also included a 7 (not in the past year, but it did happen before that) to capture whether or not any behaviors ever occurred.

Results
Descriptive Statistics
For descriptive statistics of the age 6, 8, 12, and 14 Conflict Tactics Scales, please refer to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd volumes of the measures manuals (Hunter et al., 2003; Knight et al., 2008). Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the age 16 Conflict Tactics Mean scores for the 5 scales. The percent of those caregivers who endorsed any item (ever occurred) for a given scale is also presented in Table 1.

At age 16, 22% of caregivers reported that they had experienced physical assault, while 17% reported experiencing an injury. A majority of caregivers (61%) reported experiencing psychological aggression, while 18% reported experiencing sexually coercive behaviors. Single parents reported higher percentages on all of the scales. For instance, 15% of single parents reported experiencing physical assault as compared to 6% of caregivers in two parent households.
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Age 16 Conflict Tactics Scale (Partner to Partner) Mean Scores (in the past year) and endorsement of any item for “ever occurred” by Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negotiation</th>
<th>Physical Assault</th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Psychological Aggression</th>
<th>Sexual Coercion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N † % M (SD)</td>
<td>% M (SD)</td>
<td>% M (SD)</td>
<td>% M (SD)</td>
<td>% M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>340 86.9 1.54 (1.06) 21.9 0.02 (0.14) 16.8 0.01 (0.09) 60.9 0.28 (0.44) 18.1 0.04 (0.18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>179 50.9 1.21 (1.05) 15.3 0.02 (0.11) 12.8 0.01 (0.10) 34.7 0.20 (0.38) 12.5 0.03 (0.13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two parents</td>
<td>106 36.8 2.11 (0.78) 6.4 0.02 (0.15) 4.6 0.01 (0.09) 29.1 0.39 (0.44) 5.4 0.05 (0.21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>121 29.9 1.50 (1.05) 5.7 0.01 (0.50) 4.5 0.00 (0.04) 18.5 0.19 (0.35) 4.5 0.02 (0.11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>66 16.3 1.36 (1.00) 3.9 0.01 (0.07) 3.0 0.02 (0.10) 11.9 0.23 (0.39) 2.1 0.00 (0.05)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>151 40.8 1.65 (1.08) 12.3 0.04 (0.20) 9.3 0.02 (0.12) 30.4 0.37 (0.50) 11.4 0.07 (0.25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Based on data received at the Coordinating Center through July '09.
% represents endorsement of ANY item (ever occurred).
† Sample N’s may change across scores.
The Southern (SO) and Southwestern (SW) sites did not collect CTS data at age 16.

Reliability

As can be seen in Table 3, internal consistency for the Conflict Tactics scales using the LONGSCAN sample was very good (ranging from .79 to .93).

Table 3. Cronbach Alphas for the Age 16 Conflict Tactics Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negotiation</th>
<th>Physical Assault</th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Psychological Aggression</th>
<th>Sexual Coercion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 16</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.88</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Based on data received at the Coordinating Center through July ‘09.

Affect on Child Functioning

Tables 4 and 5 provide correlations between the Conflict Tactics Scales and other select age 16 outcomes (i.e., T scores from the Child Behavior Checklist, Trauma Symptom Checklist, and Youth Self Report Form).

Table 4. Correlations between Age 16 Conflict Tactics Mean Scores and other Select Age 16 Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Behavior Checklist T Scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Negotiation</th>
<th>Physical Assault</th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Psychological Aggression</th>
<th>Sexual Coercion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing Problems</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.19***</td>
<td>.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing Problems</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Problems</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.10*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trauma Symptom Checklist T Scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>PTSD</th>
<th>Dissociation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Based on data received at the Coordinating Center through July ‘09.
* <.05, ** <.01, *** <.001
References and Bibliography


