

# Survey Results

The survey you have completed via the DWI **Deal With It** website is based on one of the scales from the **General and Specific Avoidance Questionnaire (GSAQ)**. It was developed by Dr. Lehan Stemmet with the help of co-workers in a couple of countries. The development of the GSAQ and findings were published in the **European Journal of Psychological Assessment**<sup>1</sup>. The GSAQ has three scales, namely, General Avoidance, Emotional Avoidance and Conflict Avoidance. The one you have completed is the **General Avoidance** scale.

It asks you to respond 'Yes / No' to a couple of statements developed to reflect a general approach to dealing with or not dealing with challenges across a number of situations. The technique used to develop the statements took into account both work and non-work activities and different social settings within diverse relationships you may have with the people you interact with, e.g. colleagues, family, stranger, etc. In other words, it assesses whether you tend to avoid dealing with challenges or not, regardless of the circumstances, hence the name **General Avoidance**.

Scores closer to **0** mean you use less general avoidance strategies, and closer to **23** means you make more use of avoidance coping as a strategy in general.

To read more about '**What is Avoidance Coping?**' Read the next document for a summary of avoidance coping, the opposite of **Deal With It**.

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<sup>1</sup> Stemmet, L., Roger, D., Kuntz, J., & Borrill, J. (2015). General and Specific Avoidance: The development and concurrent validation of a new measure of Avoidance Coping. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 33 (3), 222-230.

# What is... Avoidance Coping?

Coping can be defined as the skills or strategies used to deal with challenging or difficult situations<sup>2</sup> and Avoidance Coping could be defined as trying to avoid or escape from actions, a person or object. Avoidance coping is seen as a defensive response and could involve ignoring, distorting, or escaping from things (including emotions) which are perceived as threatening<sup>3</sup>. Researchers have also defined Avoidance Coping as the distortion or suppression of thought patterns, termed experiential avoidance, to avoid private physical, emotional, and cognitive experiences<sup>4</sup>.

Avoidance coping can sometimes be beneficial when, for example, faced with life-threatening situations, e.g. avoiding unnecessary dangerous situations or temporarily not focusing on one's emotions while dealing with an immediate demanding situation. However, when using avoidance coping as a coping strategy for all challenges or never returning to previously unresolved matters it is seen as maladaptive.

Maladaptive avoidance coping has been linked with psychological and physical health consequences and is considered to be a key factor in clinical conditions<sup>5</sup>. Avoidance coping could also prevent personal growth by missing opportunities for developing one's tenacity, endurance and resilience or increasing the repertoire of coping strategies.

Also see the *Asian Scientist* magazine article:

**Better To Deal With Problems Than Avoid Them** via the link below:

<https://www.asianscientist.com/2013/08/health/deal-problems-avoidance-coping-2013/>

<sup>2</sup> See for e.g.: Sica, C., Novara, C., Dorz, S., & Sanavia, E. (1997). Coping strategies: Evidence for cross-cultural differences? A preliminary study with the Italian version of the Coping Orientations to Problems Experienced (COPE). *Personality and Individual Differences*, 23, 1025-1029.

<sup>3</sup> See for e.g.: Ottenbreit, N.D., & Dobson, K.S. (2004). Avoidance and depression: The construction of the cognitive-behavioral avoidance scale. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 42, 293-313.

<sup>4</sup> See for e.g.: Hayes, S.C., Wilson, K.G., Gifford, E.V., Follette, V.M., & Strosahl, K. (1996). Experiential avoidance and behavioral disorders: A functional dimensional approach to diagnosis and treatment. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64, 1152-1168.

<sup>5</sup> See for e.g.: Stemmet, L., Roger, D., Kuntz, J., & Borrill, J. (2015). General and Specific Avoidance: The development and concurrent validation of a new measure of Avoidance Coping. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 33 (3), 222-230.