

## MORS-SF: scoring and interpretation

This instrument assesses mothers' perceptions of their infants on two scales: warmth, and invasiveness. Mothers' perceptions are based, in part, on characteristics of their infants. Perceptions are also affected by mothers' hopes and fears, and feelings evoked by the experience of caring for their infant. A mother who sees her infant as unduly invasive or lacking in warmth towards her is at risk of experiencing difficulties with establishing a mutually satisfying relationship with her infant.

### SCORING

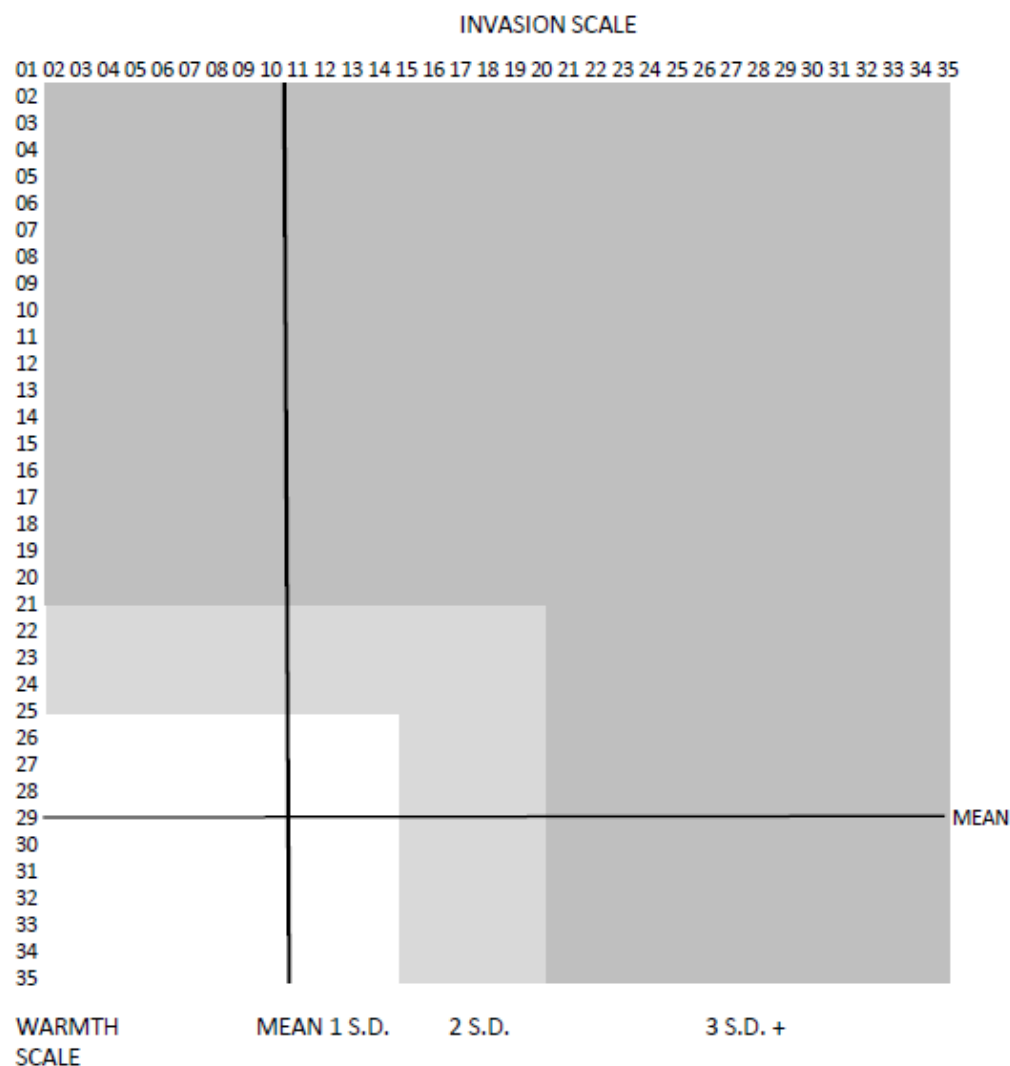
The score for each item ranges from 0 (never) to 5 (always).

**WARMTH:** this scale assesses a mother's perception of how warm her infant is towards her. It is scored by adding together the scores for items **1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11 and 13**

An average score on this scale is around 29; a score **lower** than 20 may indicate grounds for possible concern. 11 or less should indicate concern.

**INVASION:** this scale assesses the extent to which a mother feels a sense of unwelcome invasion or control by her infant. It is scored by adding together the scores for items **2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14**

An average score on this scale is around 10; a score **higher** than 12 may indicate grounds for possible concern. 17+ should indicate concern.



## SCORE PROFILES

A low warmth score combined with a high invasion score can indicate a situation where the development of a satisfactory relationship between mother and infant is particularly at risk.

Some theoretical predictions can be made about the diagnostic interpretation of particular score profiles. While a certain amount of variation around the mean values of each axis is to be expected, and can be considered as falling within a normal range, more extreme values on one or both axes may be taken as possible indicators of disturbed functioning in the mother-infant relationship. The following possibilities arise:

- a) elevated warmth/normal invasion. This is a possible indicator of some degree of role-reversal, with a mother having expectations for inappropriate displays of affection from her infant. This pattern may be associated with depressive symptoms in the mother. However, this profile may also be an indicator of a very warm, mutually satisfying relationship.
- b) depressed warmth/normal invasion. This profile suggests the possibility of a degree of emotional neglect, if the mother's emotional responses towards her infant are lacking in warmth as a result.
- c) normal warmth/elevated invasion. This does not suggest serious difficulties in the relationship. It may be associated with inexperience in managing infant care or with lack of support in the caring role.
- d) normal warmth/depressed invasion. This does not suggest serious difficulties in the relationship.
- e) depressed warmth/elevated invasion. This may be an indicator of a potentially serious problem in the relationship, with a risk of rejecting maternal behaviour.
- f) depressed warmth/depressed invasion. This may indicate a potentially serious problem in the relationship, with a risk of neglect.