



Self-Reporting

Question Yourself

When starting on a self-reporting and tracking path, it is useful to ask yourself why? Why am I doing this? It is crucially important as it provides you with a motivation that would otherwise be missing if you just decide to track for “whatever” reason. For example, athletes track their HRV, workouts, heart rate and times because the “why” is to win the race or beat a personal record. Someone with hypertension tracks their blood pressure to be sure that they will not end up having a stroke. You get the picture. The “why” is the ultimate motivating factor.

Tracking and self-reporting is a great way to think more deeply about what is going on in your life and with your body. It can provide unique insights into your subjective experiences that others will never notice. It can be critical in understanding your motivations, or lack thereof, for getting healthy and let you examine why you let yourself go in the first place.

Virtues of Self Reporting

While self-reporting can suffer from biases such as desirability or recall errors, it remains a cornerstone of psychology and health research for its unique ability to capture the subjective experience and enable self-reflection. Some common advantages are:

- **Access to Subjective Experience:** Only the individual has direct access to their internal mental states, emotions, and personal history.
- **Cost-Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Self-report measures (questionnaires, surveys) are inexpensive to administer, allowing for quick data collection from large, diverse samples compared to direct observation.
- **Practicality in Clinical Settings:** It serves as a rapid screening tool for symptoms, helping clinicians identify disorders, assess patient perspectives, and guide further inquiry.
- **Fostering Self-Reflection:** Filling out assessments can heighten self-awareness of personal qualities, such as grit or behavioral patterns, aiding personal development.



- **High Sensitivity for Diagnosis:** Self-reports can be designed with high sensitivity to ensure that subjective symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression) are not missed.
- **Overcoming Observation Limitations:** It is indispensable for measuring psychological processes that are not directly observable, including attitudes, beliefs, and retrospective behaviors.