

## THE COPING STRATEGIES INDEX: FIELD METHODS MANUAL (2ND EDITION)

**Pathway Component:** Food access

**Search Category:** Food access

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**URL:** [http://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/coping\\_strategies\\_tool.pdf](http://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/coping_strategies_tool.pdf)

### CONTENT SUMMARY

**Brief Description:** The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) is a tool that measures what people do when they cannot access enough food. It is a series of questions about how households manage to cope with a shortfall in food for consumption, and results in a simple numeric score. The CSI is based on the many possible answers to a single question: "What do you do when you don't have adequate food and don't have the money to buy any?"

**Uses:** The CSI measures the frequency and severity of coping behaviors. The CSI is an appropriate tool for emergency situations when other methods are not practical or timely. It can be used for a variety of purposes, including to:

- Provide a quick, current status indicator of the extent of food insecurity.
- Measure or monitor the impact of food assistance programs.
- Act as an early warning indicator of an impending food crisis.
- Identify areas and population groups where needs are greatest.
- Shed light on the causes of malnutrition

### Tool Components:

1. Overview of the CSI
2. Constructing the CSI (requiring context specific-list of coping behaviors and severity weights)
3. Using the CSI and interpreting the score
4. The reduced CSI (standard set of five coping behaviors, with universal set of severity weightings)
5. Applications of CSI: Informing decision making

### OPERATIONS

**Number of Staff Required:** Not specified (but possible for one staff member to administer the CSI to one household).

**Time:** The time to administer one household survey is relatively quick, but total time will depend on the number of households included in the sample. Additionally, practitioners must account for the time required to create a context-specific list of coping behaviors and weightings (unless using the reduced CSI).

**Cost of Assessment:** Not specified; this will depend on context and sample size.

**Training:** Not specified, but the CSI is relatively simple and easy to use. Staff with assessment experience could likely use the CSI after reading the manual.

**Geographic Targeting:** The CSI is asked to an individual household so it can target specific communities or populations.

**Type of Data Collection:** The CSI is a quantitative household survey, but can be adapted as a qualitative tool.

**Degree of Technical Difficulty:** The CSI is relatively simple and easy to use and understand.

**Complements other Resources:** It is recommended that the CSI be used with other measures of food security (such as dietary diversity or WFP Food Consumption Score) to allow for triangulation. It is a proxy for food security and can be used as a variable in a simple regression analysis of nutritional status to check the extent to which food insecurity is major contributing factor to poor nutritional status.