The Multi-Dimensional Synchronicity Scale

A conceptual framework and validation agenda

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Abstract

Meaningful coincidences vary in personal significance, temporal arrangement, perceived unexpectedness, emotional context, and subsequent consequences. Their systematic study requires a distinction between descriptions of experience and explanations of event occurrence. This paper proposes the Multi-Dimensional Synchronicity Scale (MDSS) as an event-level assessment framework and preliminary instrument awaiting empirical development and validation. Eight domains organize the framework: meaningfulness, timing, perceived rarity, emotional and psychological context, perceived causal independence and causal assessment, contextual relevance, transformational impact, and perceived recurrence. The proposed protocol combines candidate self-report items, factual event descriptors, and separately documented researcher judgments. Personal significance is distinguished from statistical improbability; an unexplained connection is not treated as evidence of acausality. The primary output is a dimensional profile, with no validated total score, diagnostic threshold, or hierarchy of synchronicity strength. Immediate assessment is separated from follow-up so that subsequent change is studied as a possible outcome rather than built into the definition of the initial experience. A preliminary questionnaire and coding protocol accompany a staged validation agenda covering content evaluation, cognitive interviewing, prospective diaries, measurement structure, reliability, and construct validity. The MDSS is intended to complement existing measures of synchronicity awareness by describing individual coincidence episodes while remaining open to competing psychological, contextual, and temporal explanations.
Keywords: *synchronicity; meaningful coincidence; event-level assessment; meaning-making; measurement development; perceived recurrence*

1 Introduction

1.1 The measurement problem

A person thinks about an old friend shortly before receiving an unexpected message from that friend. Another person encounters a phrase that closely matches a concern they have been considering for weeks. Both experiences may be described as meaningful coincidences, yet their properties differ. One involves close temporal proximity; the other may derive its significance from contextual fit. Either may be common or uncommon, emotionally quiet or intense, briefly interesting or consequential. A useful assessment should preserve these differences rather than assume that every meaningful coincidence has the same structure.

Jung's account of synchronicity established meaning as central to the interpretation of certain coincidences and connected that experience to a wider hypothesis about acausal order (Jung, 1952/1973). These are distinguishable commitments. Researchers can investigate how a coincidence is experienced, recorded, and interpreted without first accepting a metaphysical account of its origin. The present framework adopts this separation as a methodological requirement. It treats reports of meaningful coincidence as accessible phenomena while leaving their causal and probabilistic explanations open.

For this purpose, a meaningful coincidence episode is defined as the noticed correspondence between two or more distinguishable events, thoughts, perceptions, or circumstances that the observer experiences as personally significant and does not regard as wholly explained by an obvious direct connection. This is an operational definition of a reported experience. It does not establish that the events are statistically independent, that all ordinary explanations have been excluded, or that the correspondence is objectively improbable. Deliberately arranged or subsequently explained episodes may be retained as comparison cases with their status clearly recorded.

1.2 Existing measures and the event-level contribution

Synchronicity research is not without measurement instruments. Russo-Netzer and Icekson (2023) developed and validated the Synchronicity Awareness and Meaning-Detecting Scale (SAMD), addressing individual differences in awareness of synchronicity experiences and the detection of meaning in them. Such work provides an empirical precedent and a relevant comparison measure. The proposed MDSS addresses a complementary question: how can the characteristics of a particular reported coincidence be documented systematically?

This distinction between a person and an episode matters. Someone who notices coincidences frequently may experience one particular episode as insignificant. Someone who rarely reports them may describe an unusually consequential event. A person's general tendency to notice meaning should therefore not be substituted for the properties of a specific occurrence. Similarly, a memorable episode cannot by itself establish how often that person encounters meaningful coincidences.

The MDSS is proposed as an event-level assessment framework with eight domains. The term scale is retained in its name, but the current instrument is a mixed-format prototype, not a validated psychometric scale. This paper presents no participant dataset, factor solution, normative distribution, or empirical estimate of reliability. Its contribution is conceptual specification, an initial item and descriptor set, and a research program through which those proposals can be evaluated.

2 Conceptual foundations

2.1 Experience and explanation

Jungian and post-Jungian scholarship offers a vocabulary for symbolic correspondence, personal transformation, and relations between psychological experience and the surrounding world. Cambray (2009), for example, develops connections between synchronicity and broader accounts of nature and psyche. These perspectives can inform the questions researchers ask without determining in advance what a questionnaire score must mean.

The MDSS therefore separates three evidential levels. The first concerns reported experience: what the observer noticed and how it mattered. The second concerns event documentation: what occurred, when it occurred, and what records are available. The third concerns explanatory assessment: which causal accounts or probability models can reasonably be evaluated. Evidence at one level does not automatically resolve another. A highly meaningful experience can be poorly documented, and a well-documented correspondence can carry little personal significance.

This separation permits disagreement about explanation without invalidating the report as a report. A participant may interpret an encounter spiritually while an investigator considers shared routines or prior exposure. Both interpretations can be recorded, with their evidential status distinguished. The measurement procedure should not reward agreement with either worldview.

2.2 Probability and significance

Meaningfulness and probability answer different questions. Personal significance concerns the role a correspondence has in an observer's concerns, understanding, or actions. Probability concerns an event specification under a model and a defined set of opportunities. A chance occurrence may be personally consequential; an unusual event may be irrelevant. The instrument should therefore avoid wording that requires respondents to reject chance before acknowledging meaning.

Statistical work on coincidences emphasizes the importance of the opportunities available for a match, the criteria used to recognize one, and the selection of noteworthy cases (Diaconis & Mosteller, 1989). Cognitive accounts also examine coincidence recognition as part of reasoning about possible explanations rather than simply as a failure of rationality (Johansen & Osman, 2015). These approaches support documenting both the correspondence and the processes through which it became salient.

The present proposal consequently treats rarity ratings as perceptions. An objective probability estimate requires additional information: a reference class, an observation period, an event-generating model, and a rule specifying what counts as a match. If these are unavailable, the appropriate result is that probability has not been estimated. A strong feeling of surprise cannot supply the missing denominator.

2.3 Event structure and the emergence of meaning

A useful conceptual distinction concerns the arrangement of events and the significance that arrangement acquires for an observer. Temporal proximity, repetition, and shared features describe aspects of event structure. The connection of those features to an active concern, memory, or goal describes a relation through which the episode matters. Neither description alone supplies a complete explanation of the experience.

Consider encountering an ordinary word shortly after discussing a difficult decision. The word itself may be common, but its relation to the decision may be experienced as unusually pertinent. Conversely, two statistically unusual occurrences may have no recognizable personal relevance. This distinction motivates separate assessments of event features and experienced significance rather than a single continuum running from ordinary chance to profound meaning.

Structural and experiential descriptors are organizing categories, not established latent factors. Contextual relevance, for example, concerns both a person's life circumstances and their interpretation of the correspondence. Forcing it into an exclusively objective category would obscure that relationship. Whether any domains form broader empirical groupings is a question for subsequent research.

3 Proposed development and administration

3.1 Status and selection of domains

The eight domains are theoretically selected candidates. Together they cover experiential, contextual, and temporal properties that should be distinguished in assessment. They were not extracted from a new systematic review, participant interview dataset, or factor analysis. Their inclusion reflects a conceptual synthesis of questions about significance, timing, surprise, affect, causal explanation, context, consequences, and repetition. Content validation may support revision, removal, or addition of domains.

Domain selection follows three provisional criteria. A domain should identify a feature relevant to describing an episode, support questions that respondents or coders can answer, and contribute information not already supplied by another domain. These criteria do not require that all domains covary or that higher values indicate a stronger form of the same phenomenon. The distinctions must be tested through respondent feedback and empirical comparisons.

3.2 Unit of assessment and sources of evidence

The unit of assessment is one reported episode involving at least two specified components. Participants identify Event A and Event B, describe the noticed correspondence, and record when each component occurred and when the relationship was recognized. More complex episodes may include additional components, but researchers should retain their sequence rather than compress several distinct matches into a single unexplained narrative.

Three sources of information are retained separately: participant ratings, event records, and researcher coding. A timestamped message can corroborate message receipt; it cannot establish the prior occurrence of an unrecorded thought. A diary entry can improve temporal documentation without independently validating the writer's interpretation. Documentation status should therefore be attached to each claim rather than assigned globally to an entire episode.

The protocol also distinguishes the first experience of meaning from later elaboration. Participants record whether an interpretation arose immediately, after discussion, or during retrospective reflection. When later information changes an account, the original report should remain available alongside the update. This preserves the sequence of evidence and interpretation.

3.3 Administration schedule

For prospective studies, the proposed initial assessment occurs as soon as practical, preferably within 24 hours of noticing the correspondence. The elapsed reporting delay is recorded rather than treated as grounds for automatic exclusion. Follow-up is proposed at 7 and 30 days to assess changes in meaning and perceived consequences. These intervals are pragmatic starting points and require feasibility testing.

Retrospective accounts remain eligible for descriptive studies, but their recall interval and documentation limits must be explicit. Researchers should not combine immediate diary reports and distant recollections without considering the different selection and recall processes involved. Instructions should invite ordinary, ambiguous, and unconvincing coincidences as well as memorable ones, reducing pressure to provide exceptional examples.

4 The eight assessment domains

4.1 Meaningfulness

Meaningfulness concerns the personal significance of the noticed correspondence at the time of initial assessment. Candidate items ask whether the correspondence mattered, carried personal significance, and was worth reflection. They do not require archetypal content, spiritual belief, positive emotion, or a change of identity. Everyday concerns can supply meaning, and an experience need not be dramatic to qualify for study.

Meaningfulness must remain distinguishable from its possible effects. If a meaning item asks whether an event changed the respondent's life, the instrument has already incorporated transformation into its definition. The preliminary item set therefore focuses on present significance, leaving subsequent change to follow-up. Three candidate items are included for content testing; their apparent similarity is not evidence that they already form a reliable subscale.

4.2 Timing

Timing comprises two distinct records: elapsed time between episode components and perceived timeliness in relation to the observer's circumstances. Participants provide dates or times where possible, an estimate otherwise, and an indication of precision. Researchers calculate the interval in its original units. No conversion into a hierarchy of synchronicity strength is proposed.

A separate item asks how well timed the correspondence felt in relation to something happening in the person's life. An episode can involve a long interval but

feel pertinent at recognition. Conversely, two events may occur seconds apart without feeling useful or significant. Shorter intervals are not assumed to indicate greater significance. Event occurrence, recognition, and reporting times should all be distinguished.

4.3 Perceived rarity

Perceived rarity is the observer's judgment that the particular correspondence is uncommon within a stated frame of experience. The questionnaire specifies the respondent's own everyday life as that frame. Unexpectedness is recorded separately because an event may be uncommon but anticipated, or familiar but unexpected on a particular occasion.

Respondents are not asked whether an event has ever happened to anyone else or whether it was impossible. Researchers seeking a probability estimate must perform a separate analysis, with explicit assumptions and uncertainty. The relevant target is generally the correspondence under a defined matching rule, not merely the frequency of either component alone. Flexible matching, repeated opportunities, and retrospective selection can materially alter the interpretation of rarity.

4.4 Emotional and psychological context

This domain separates emotional arousal immediately before the episode was noticed, attentional receptivity before noticing it, and the intensity of the emotional response afterward. These properties need not move together. A calm observer may notice a meaningful correspondence; an agitated observer may experience little significance. Neither state should receive privileged status as more authentically synchronistic.

Emotional valence is recorded separately as pleasant, unpleasant, mixed, or neutral. Respondents may describe the emotion in their own words. Stress, bereavement, curiosity, absorption, and excitement are potential contextual variables rather than interchangeable points on one ladder. Because reports of prior state may be reconstructed after the event, studies testing emotional antecedents should supplement event reports with scheduled assessments collected before an episode whenever feasible.

4.5 Perceived causal independence and causal assessment

This domain concerns perceived explanation and documented links; it does not supply a numerical measure of acausality. Participants indicate whether they know of a direct connection, deliberately helped produce the correspondence, or see a

plausible shared influence. They can answer uncertain. Researchers separately record evidence relevant to those possibilities and the limits of the available record.

Absence of deliberate orchestration does not establish causal independence. Two people may follow similar schedules, encounter the same news, or respond to shared circumstances without coordinating. A thought and a later encounter may both reflect prior exposure. Conversely, some intentional activity may be present without fully explaining the specific correspondence. These distinctions require narrative evidence rather than a ranking from partial influence to profound acausality.

The proposed coding categories describe explanatory status: documented direct link, plausible shared influence, no link identified in the available record, or insufficient information. They are not ordered scores, and multiple categories may apply to different components. Statistical independence is a model-based claim about distributions; it cannot be inferred from a single self-report of non-orchestration.

4.6 Contextual relevance

Contextual relevance concerns correspondence with identifiable concerns, goals, relationships, or circumstances already present when the episode occurred. Candidate items distinguish an active concern, an existing goal or decision, and a recognizable situation in the person's life. The respondent supplies a brief description of the relevant context, permitting later inspection of the claimed fit.

This domain differs from meaningfulness in its focus on what the episode connects to. A coincidence may feel significant while its relevance remains unclear. Another may closely match a practical concern without being experienced as deeply meaningful. To reduce retrospective reconstruction, prospective studies can record current concerns independently before collecting coincidence reports. Context should not be scored according to its conformity with a preferred developmental theory.

4.7 Transformational impact

Transformational impact concerns perceived changes in understanding, decisions, or behavior after the episode. It is assessed at follow-up rather than used to establish the initial episode's status. Participants identify what changed, when it changed, whether it persisted, and how strongly they attribute that change to the experience. An intention formed at initial assessment is recorded as an intention, not as an accomplished transformation.

Change can be beneficial, adverse, mixed, or absent. Researchers should not assume that a stronger consequence is a better outcome or that spiritual awakening

represents the highest endpoint. Reported attribution also differs from demonstrated causation: other experiences, relationships, or interventions may contribute to the change. Keeping consequence measures separate allows the study of whether initial significance predicts later outcomes without defining that relationship into existence.

4.8 Perceived recurrence

Perceived recurrence concerns the reported repetition of a specified theme or correspondence within a defined observation window. Participants describe the feature they believe has repeated, record the number of additional episodes recalled or logged, and provide dates when available. The preliminary default window is the preceding 30 days, excluding the current episode. Longer histories can be recorded separately.

Recurrence does not by itself demonstrate a cycle. Periodicity requires analysis of intervals, and fractal organization requires an appropriate formal analysis across scales. Neither follows from repeated numbers, related dreams, or recurring relationship themes alone. A single occurrence may be highly meaningful, so absence of recurrence does not lower the standing of the episode.

Studies of recurrence must also distinguish event frequency from observation and reporting effort. Someone who checks many displays or journals frequently has more opportunities to notice and record matches. A diary should therefore document adherence and relevant exposure where feasible, and thematic coding should use stated matching criteria.

5 Recording and interpretation

5.1 Response formats and the primary output

Candidate intensity items use a numerical response scale from 0 to 10, with 0 indicating the absence of the rated property and 10 its greatest stated extent. The midpoint is described in the instructions. Unknown and not applicable are separate responses, never substitutes for zero. Whether respondents can use eleven response categories consistently is an empirical question for cognitive interviewing and pilot work.

The MDSS output is a profile containing item-level ratings, interval and count descriptors, categorical causal assessments, and follow-up observations. Meaningfulness and contextual relevance each have several candidate items; the other domains contain distinct descriptors or questions that are not presumed

interchangeable. Consequently, the prototype does not define eight validated subscale scores. A study must specify which variables are primary before analysis.

5.2 Why no overall score is recommended

An additive total would assume that the domains can compensate for one another. In a hypothetical eight-domain, 1-to-10 scoring scheme, a meaningfulness rating of 1 combined with ratings of 10 on all other domains yields an average of 8.875. A high average could therefore coexist with minimal meaningfulness. This arithmetic illustrates a conceptual problem: the defining significance of an episode should not be replaced by unrelated properties.

The protocol therefore specifies no total-score thresholds or classifications of low, moderate, high, or profound synchronicity. Profile labels do not establish objective acausality or developmental periodicity. Profiles can describe similarities and differences without deciding how much synchronicity an event contains. Any future composite would require a clearly defined purpose, a defensible measurement model, and validation for that specific use.

5.3 Missing information and interpretation over time

Reports should retain the number of answered items and distinguish missing, uncertain, and inapplicable responses. No whole-instrument mean is calculated, and no missing domain is replaced by the mean of other domains. Until candidate subscales are validated, their items are reported separately. Later studies may establish subscale scoring and missing-data rules, but those rules should be prespecified and evaluated rather than assumed.

Initial and follow-up profiles are retained as separate observations. A change in meaningfulness can indicate evolving interpretation rather than measurement failure. Similarly, a subsequently identified explanation need not erase the personal importance the episode had. Analyses should distinguish changes in significance, changes in reported facts, and changes in confidence about explanation.

5.4 Illustrative use

Suppose a participant records thinking about a friend at noon and receiving a message ten minutes later. They rate the correspondence as highly meaningful because of an unresolved disagreement. The message timestamp is available, but the earlier thought was not recorded independently. They report little emotional arousal beforehand and no similar episode in the previous month. A coder identifies a possible shared anniversary but cannot establish its role.

This profile describes high reported significance, a short estimated interval, identifiable context, low prior arousal, no reported recurrence, and an unresolved possible common influence. It does not produce a verdict about acausality. At follow-up, the participant may report reconciliation, no lasting effect, or increased worry. Each outcome adds information without retrospectively determining whether the initial report was admissible. This example is hypothetical and provides no validation evidence.

6 Validation agenda

6.1 Content evaluation and cognitive interviewing

Scale development requires more than selecting plausible labels. Content evaluation, respondent pretesting, and empirical assessment should precede claims about validity or reliability (Boateng et al., 2018). For the MDSS, a proposed expert panel would include measurement specialists, coincidence researchers, and scholars with differing explanatory perspectives. Participants from varied cultural and religious backgrounds should contribute to evaluating relevance, clarity, and omitted content.

Cognitive interviews would examine how respondents identify an episode, distinguish meaningfulness from contextual fit, interpret uncommonness, and use uncertain responses. They would also test whether the questions imply that a spiritual interpretation or dramatic emotional response is preferred. Revisions and their reasons should be documented. The appendix is an initial item pool and recording form for this process, not an instrument whose wording is already fixed by evidence.

6.2 Prospective pilot design

A proposed pilot would combine baseline person-level measures, a 30-day diary, and event-specific follow-up. Participants would record noticed correspondences across a broad range of significance. A brief daily check-in would distinguish days with no noticed episode from missing diary days and record monitoring effort. Because observation itself may change attention to coincidences, burden and reactivity should be assessed rather than assumed negligible.

Recruitment should include people with varied levels of interest in synchronicity. Reliance only on enthusiastic experiencers would narrow the range of interpretations and could inflate apparent endorsement. The study should report recruitment, exclusions, adherence, reporting delays, and the distribution of episodes across participants. Sample-size planning should follow the primary

estimand and model, allowing for repeated episodes, missing follow-up, and the desired precision.

Baseline measures could include SAMD scores and other established measures selected for explicit hypotheses. These person-level variables should be kept separate from event ratings. The pilot should prioritize feasibility, comprehensibility, and variable distributions before a definitive test of the entire theoretical framework.

6.3 Measurement structure and reliability

The mixed-format design requires different measurement questions for different components. Candidate meaning items may be tested as indicators of a common latent attribute, whereas elapsed time and recurrence counts are factual or estimated descriptors. Causal-status codes are categorical judgments. Treating all of these as interchangeable manifestations of one factor would be a strong and currently unsupported assumption.

Exploratory analyses may investigate the organization of suitable item sets, with confirmatory evaluation in an independent sample or a prespecified participant-level split. Events from one participant should not be divided across development and validation partitions as though independent. If sufficient repeated observations are available, multilevel models can distinguish within-person from between-person associations. Competing structures should be considered rather than imposing a subjective versus objective two-factor solution.

Internal-consistency estimates, including omega or alpha where appropriate, would concern coherent multi-item subscales, not the entire eight-domain record. Agreement between coders should be assessed for evidence and causal-status categories using suitable agreement statistics and uncertainty intervals. Repeated ratings of stable event facts address a different question from changes in meaning. Follow-up changes should not automatically be interpreted as poor test-retest reliability.

6.4 Construct validity and predictive use

Validation should test distinctions as well as expected associations. Meaningfulness and contextual relevance may correlate, but near-complete overlap could indicate redundancy. Perceived rarity should not be assumed equivalent to an independently estimated probability. Emotional arousal may predict reporting or salience without establishing a stronger coincidence. Associations with SAMD scores would inform relations between person-level tendencies and event descriptions, not validate acausality.

Prospective outcome analyses should keep initial predictors separate from later consequences. For example, initial meaningfulness might predict reported behavioral change at 30 days after accounting for baseline circumstances. Such an association would remain observational. An intervention study would need its own design to distinguish effects of the intervention from changes in attention, reporting, expectancy, and interpretation.

Cross-cultural research should evaluate translation, item interpretation, and measurement comparability before comparing group averages. A rating that has a spiritual connotation in one setting may have a practical or interpersonal connotation in another. Qualitative accounts should help identify these differences rather than serving only as illustrations of numerical findings.

6.5 Testing temporal hypotheses without circular selection

Fibonacci-based developmental and harmonic models provide examples of temporal hypotheses that could be investigated using prospectively recorded episodes (Sacco, 2016, 2018). Their role here is to motivate possible external analyses, not to supply scoring anchors or established facts about all meaningful coincidences. The MDSS does not award additional points for matching a Fibonacci age, interval, or motif.

A confirmatory temporal study should specify predicted windows or families, the observation period, event inclusion rules, comparison model, and multiplicity handling before examining the relevant outcomes. It should account for observation density and uneven diary participation. Alternative temporal models and null results should be reported. Selecting episodes because they already show recurrence and then using that selection to demonstrate recurrence would compromise the test.

This separation allows the same event record to inform competing explanations. A temporal association, if replicated, would establish a pattern under the tested design; it would not by itself establish the causal mechanism or personal significance of that pattern. Those remain distinct targets of inquiry.

7 Applications and limitations

The immediate application of the MDSS is organized description. It can help researchers compare episodes, preserve the timing of interpretations, and examine relationships among significance, context, and consequences. In qualitative work, the domains can guide interviews while leaving space for experiences that do not fit the proposed structure. In mixed-methods studies, narrative accounts can clarify why similar ratings arise from different circumstances.

In counseling or reflective practice, the questions may help structure a conversation about what an experience means to a person. The prototype has no established diagnostic validity and cannot distinguish adaptive interpretation from delusion, verify external guidance, or justify consequential decisions on the basis of a score. Any clinical use would remain exploratory and would require appropriate evaluation beyond the MDSS.

Several limitations remain. The domain set may omit relevant features or divide a single feature too finely. Reports are vulnerable to recall, selection, expectancy, and demand effects. Immediate recording reduces some retrospective ambiguity but cannot eliminate it. Coding requires judgment, and documentation is often incomplete. The proposed response scale and follow-up schedule may prove burdensome or insensitive in practice.

Most fundamentally, the framework studies noticed and reported correspondences. It does not enumerate all opportunities for coincidence or observe every unnoticed event. Rates of reports should not be interpreted as rates of objectively defined synchronicity without a separate sampling and event-detection model. Likewise, a dimensional profile provides measurement candidates, not evidence for a unified ontology of mind and matter.

8 Conclusion

The MDSS proposes a systematic way to describe individual meaningful coincidence episodes across eight domains while separating reported experience, event documentation, and explanatory assessment. Its principal contribution is a dimensional profile that preserves differences among significance, timing, surprise, emotion, context, causal uncertainty, consequences, and recurrence.

The framework does not establish validated subscales, an overall synchronicity magnitude, or diagnostic classifications. Its next step is empirical development: testing whether people understand the proposed distinctions, whether the resulting observations are dependable, and whether they support useful inferences. A successful instrument would make meaningful coincidences more clearly describable while allowing their explanations to remain open to investigation.

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Appendix A Preliminary MDSS questionnaire

Initial assessment and event record

This is a research prototype. It has not been validated and produces no total score or diagnostic classification. Complete one form for one episode, preferably within 24 hours of noticing the correspondence. Ordinary or uncertain experiences are welcome. You do not need to believe that anything unusual caused the events.
Participant code: _____ Episode code: _____
Date and time of completion: _____ Time zone: _____
Describe Event A, including any thought, dream, observation, or action involved.
_____
_____
Describe Event B and any additional components needed to understand the episode.
_____
_____
What was the specific correspondence you noticed?
_____
_____
When did Event A occur? _____ When did Event B occur? _____
Time precision for each: exact record / approximate recall / unknown
When did you first notice the correspondence? _____
Estimated interval between A and B, with units: _____
Which occurred first? A / B / simultaneous as far as known / uncertain
When did your interpretation develop? immediately / later on my own / after discussion / uncertain
What records exist for each component, and when were they created? Examples include messages, diary entries, or witness accounts. Do not supply another person's private information without appropriate permission.
_____
_____
Name any relevant concern, goal, decision, or life situation that was already present before the episode. If none was apparent, say so.
_____
Was this context recorded before the episode? yes / no / uncertain

Initial ratings

For each question, enter a whole number from 0 to 10. Use the question's endpoint descriptions; 5 means a moderate extent or intensity. Select U if you do not know and NA if the question does not apply. Zero denotes the lower endpoint, not missing information. Circle one answer for categorical questions. Rate the episode as you understand it now. These candidate items are recorded separately.

M1. How personally significant was the correspondence itself? 0 = not significant; 10 = extremely significant. Response: _____

M2. How much did this correspondence matter to you? 0 = not at all; 10 = very much. Response: _____

M3. How much did the correspondence give you something personally important to reflect on? 0 = nothing; 10 = a great deal. Response: _____

T1. How well timed did the correspondence feel in relation to something happening in your life? 0 = not well timed at all; 10 = exceptionally well timed. Response: _____

R1. How uncommon is this particular kind of correspondence in your own everyday life? 0 = very common; 10 = extremely uncommon. Response: _____

R2. How unexpected was this correspondence on this occasion? 0 = fully expected; 10 = completely unexpected. Response: _____

E1. Immediately before noticing the correspondence, how emotionally activated did you feel? 0 = completely calm; 10 = extremely activated. Response: _____

E2. Immediately before noticing it, how attentive were you to possible connections among things happening around you? 0 = not attentive; 10 = extremely attentive. Response: _____

E3. How intense was your emotional response after noticing it? 0 = no emotional response; 10 = extremely intense. Response: _____

E4. What was the overall emotional tone of your response? pleasant / unpleasant / mixed / neutral / uncertain

C1. How closely did the correspondence relate to a concern that was already active in your life? 0 = no relation; 10 = very close relation. Response: _____

C2. How closely did it relate to a goal or decision you were already considering? 0 = no relation; 10 = very close relation. Response: _____

C3. How closely did it fit an identifiable situation already occurring in your life? 0 = no fit; 10 = very close fit. Response: _____

If you wish, explain your ratings or describe anything these questions missed.

_____

_____

Explanatory assessment and recurrence

I1. Do you know of a direct connection by which one component produced the other? yes / no known connection / uncertain
I2. Did you deliberately do anything to help bring about the particular correspondence? yes / no / uncertain
I3. Could a shared circumstance, prior exposure, communication, or routine plausibly have contributed to both components? yes / no possibility identified / uncertain
I4. Briefly explain your answers. Distinguish what you know from what you suspect.

_____
_____

I5. Is there anything you would need to check before forming an explanation?

_____

P1. Excluding this episode, how many similar correspondences do you recall noticing during the previous 30 days? Count: _____ / uncertain
P2. What specific feature makes those episodes similar? If there were none, enter NA.

_____

P3. List the dates or approximate dates of those episodes, if known.

_____

P4. How were those earlier episodes identified? contemporaneous records / memory only / both / NA
P5. In the previous 30 days, how often did you intentionally look for this type of correspondence? never / occasionally / often / very often / uncertain
P6. Are there older examples you wish to describe separately? Do not include them in the 30-day count.

_____

Initial intentions, if any: Did this episode lead you to plan a change or action? Describe the plan without treating it as something already accomplished.

_____
_____

Follow-up at 7 days and 30 days

Complete a separate copy at each follow-up. Link it to the original episode code and retain the original responses unchanged. The actual elapsed time takes precedence over the planned interval.
Participant code: _____ Episode code: _____
Follow-up date: _____ Days since initial assessment: _____
Repeat M1, M2, and M3 from the initial form, rating the correspondence's significance now. Use the same 0-to-10 endpoints and U/NA options.
Current M1: _____ Current M2: _____ Current M3: _____
F1. Since the initial report, how much change in your understanding do you attribute to this episode? 0 = none; 10 = very extensive change. Response: _____
F2. Since the initial report, how much change in your actual decisions or behavior do you attribute to this episode? 0 = none; 10 = very extensive change. Response: _____
F3. Describe any actual change, when it occurred, and whether it is still present. If no change occurred, say so.

_____
_____

F4. How do you evaluate the consequences so far? beneficial / adverse / mixed / no consequences / uncertain
F5. How confident are you that this episode contributed to the change you described? 0 = not confident; 10 = extremely confident. Response: _____ / NA if no change
F6. What other circumstances may have contributed to the change?

_____

F7. Has new information changed your description of the events or your explanation of the correspondence? Describe the new information and when you learned it.

_____
_____

F8. How many additional similar episodes have you noticed since the initial report? Cumulative count: _____ / uncertain
Use the same similarity description as P2, or explicitly record how it changed. Record dates when possible. At 30 days, include episodes already reported at 7 days; researchers must deduplicate the cumulative reports.

_____

Appendix B Researcher coding and reporting protocol

Documentation and explanatory status

Keep participant reports and researcher judgments in separate fields. Record coder ID, coding date, and evidence available at that date. For each episode component, distinguish a contemporaneous record, retrospective corroboration, participant recollection alone, or uncertain provenance. A record corroborates only the information it actually contains. Do not classify the entire episode as objectively verified because one component has a timestamp.
Record direct links and potential common influences in separate yes/no/uncertain fields, with a short evidential rationale. For the overall assessment, use any applicable descriptive code: documented direct link; plausible shared influence; no link identified in the available record; insufficient information. Do not convert these codes to an acausality score. Preserve initial codes when later information prompts an update, and document the reason for the change.

Quantitative and qualitative records

Retain exact or estimated event intervals with their units and precision. Store occurrence time, recognition time, and reporting time separately. Keep the direction of the sequence and distinguish zero delay from unknown delay. Recurrence counts require the observation window, matching criterion, and source of the count. Preserve narrative explanations alongside categorical codes.
Enter item responses as recorded. Use separate missingness labels for no response, U, and NA. Do not compute an MDSS total, an eight-domain average, or diagnostic classifications. The several items within a domain remain candidates for empirical evaluation; no domain average is recommended at this stage. Report item distributions and missingness before considering any study-specific model.

Study design and reporting

Specify eligibility, recruitment, reporting instructions, observation period, follow-up schedule, primary variables, and analysis plan before confirmatory data collection. State whether the sample contains retrospective reports, prospective diary episodes, or both. Report the number of participants and episodes separately, with the distribution of episodes per participant. Account for this nesting in inference and participant-level validation splits.
A daily diary check-in should record whether the form was completed, whether any correspondence was noticed, how many episodes were logged, and relevant monitoring effort. A missing check-in is not a day with zero episodes. An event reporting rate should use observed participant-days and be described as a rate of reports, with its sampling limits stated.
For independent coding, specify training, coding rules, the subset double-coded, the agreement statistic, and uncertainty estimates. Resolve discrepancies through a documented process while retaining the original ratings for agreement analysis. Report departures from the protocol and changes to item wording. Any probability calculation or test of temporal clustering must state its own model and assumptions separately from the MDSS profile.