

THE SPECTRUM OF Rat Fear, Anxiety, and Stress

SEVERE SIGNS - FIGHT/AGGRESSION (FAS LEVEL 5)

- Arched back, puffed fur, walking on toes
- Huffing (fast, strong exhale, may be repeated)
- Leaping onto and chewing bars
- Fighting, chasing cagemates
- A fast bite, breaking skin

SEVERE SIGNS (FAS LEVEL 4)

- Rough and puffed up fur
- Whiskers spread
- Chewing on cage (escape-related)
- Scream (longer in duration, high in volume)
- Overgrooming, bald patches, barbering self or cagemates
- Prolonged freezing, active flight and escape attempts
- Hiding constantly

MODERATE SIGNS (FAS LEVEL 3)

- Tucked limbs, hunched/tight posture
- Rapidly rotating ears
- Wide eyes, may be able to see the blue sclera
- Squeak (short, low to medium volume, may be repeated)
- Tentative movement, slow exploration
- Sudden grooming (self or others)
- Attempting to cover a stressor with bedding material (defensive burying)
- Frequent bouts of hiding during active periods
- Avoidance, squirming or escape attempts during handling
- Frequent, brief bouts of flight or freeze

MILD/MODERATE SIGNS (FAS LEVEL 2)

- Ears rotating rapidly
- Slow, brief mouth exploration of human skin with tooth contact, no pinching
- Occasional, brief bouts of flight or freezing, quick recovery
- Snatching treat and fleeing
- Decreased interest in offered treats without freeze or flight

MILD/SUBTLE SIGNS (FAS LEVEL 1)

- Ears high on head
- Extending body and neck forward to sniff
- Might approach people and explore environment

RELAXED (FAS LEVEL 0)

- Soft eyes or eyelids
- Soft and loose body posture: open, even weight distribution
- Loose ears towards the side, slightly back, may be darkened pink color
- Exploration of environment (climbing, sniffing, etc.)
- Tooth grinding (bruxing) with soft eyes and body
- Rapid tooth grinding and vibrating eyes (boggling)
- Approach humans offering treats



FAS LEVEL 4-5

FAS LEVEL 2-3

FAS LEVEL 0-1

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