



EARLY LIFE EVENTS SCALE

This scale is designed to explore your memories of your childhood. Research suggests that early experiences play a role in later psychological difficulties. Below are a set of questions that tap various aspects of early life. Read each question carefully and rate how true each statement is for you. To do this, circle a number under each statement.

	Completely untrue	Very occasionally true	Sometimes true	Fairly true	Very true
	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I often had to give in to others at home				
	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I felt on edge because I was unsure if my parents might get angry with me				
	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I rarely felt my opinions mattered much				
	1	2	3	4	5
4.	There was little I could do to control my parents' anger once they became angry				
	1	2	3	4	5
5.	If I didn't do what others wanted I felt I would be rejected				
	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I felt able to assert myself in my family				
	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I felt very comfortable and relaxed around my parents				
	1	2	3	4	5
8.	My parents could hurt me if I did not behave in the way they wanted				
	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I felt an equal member of my family				
	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I often felt subordinate in my family				
	1	2	3	4	5
11.	My parents exerted control by threats and punishments				
	1	2	3	4	5



12 I often had to go along with others even when I did not want to

1 2 3 4 5.

13 In order to avoid getting hurt I used to try to avoid my parents

1 2 3 4 5

14 The atmosphere at home could suddenly become threatening for no obvious reason

1 2 3 4 5

15 I experienced my parents as powerful and overwhelming

1 2 3 4 5



EARLY LIFE EVENTS SCALE

DESCRIPTION

Early Life Experiences Scale (ELES)

This scale was developed by Gilbert et al., (2003) to measure emotional memories in one's family, linked to recall of feeling devalued, frightened and having to behave in a subordinate way. Whereas many recall of early life ask about recalling specific experiences or how one parent acted towards one this scale asks about memories of personal feelings.

This 15-item scale asks participants to rate on a five-point measure (ranging from 1 = Completely untrue, to 5 = Very true) how frequently each statement was true for them. Three items were reversed in order to minimize any response bias. The scale can be used as a single construct or as three separate subscales: recall of feelings of *threat* (e.g. "I experienced my parents as powerful and overwhelming"); feeling *(un)valued* (e.g. "I felt very comfortable and relaxed around my parents"); and *submissiveness* (e.g. "I often had to give in to others at home"). Gilbert et al., (2003) found Cronbach's alphas of .89 for threat, .85 for submissiveness, .71 for (un)valued and .92 for the total score.

SCORING

Reverse score the following items

eles6 eles7 eles9

then sum the items into 3 subscales as follows:

Unvalued = eles6r + eles7r + eles9r .

Submissiveness = eles1 + eles2 + eles3 + eles5 + eles10 + eles12 .

Threatened = eles4 + eles8 + eles11 + eles13 + eles14 + eles15 .

REFERENCE

Gilbert, P., Cheung, M.S.P., Grandfield, T., Campey, F. & Irons, C. (2003). Recall of threat and submissiveness in childhood: Development of a new scale and its relationship with depression, social comparison and shame. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 10, 108-115.