

Instructions for Administration of the Children's Dissociative Experiences Scale and Posttraumatic Symptom Inventory.

The first two items (A. & B.) are practice items, with which the interviewer can train the child about how the measure works and make sure that the child understands what is being asked and what the answers mean. The interviewer should say something like:

"By each number, there are sentences about two boys/girls. After we read the two sentences, please choose which of the two boys/girls is more like you. After you pick the one that is more like you, then think about whether you are a lot like that boy/girl or just a little like him/her. When you decide, check the line that fits you best. For each number, you can only check one line. Let's try a couple."

The interviewer should read the two practice items aloud with the child. To make sure that the child understands the task, give hypothetical examples that fit all possible answers for these two items and ask the child which line would fit each of them, e.g., on item A., "If I really love to eat ice cream, am I more like Jimmy/Sally or Ricky/Jane? Am I a lot like him/her or a little like him/her? Which line should I check? If I don't really like ice cream that much, but I eat it once in a while, am I more like Jimmy/Sally or Ricky/Jane? Am I a lot like him/her or a little like him/her? Which line should I check?" Make sure to give examples that fit each of the possible responses.

After going over the first two items, the child should be able to respond to the rest of the measure. Do not check the lines for the child. Inform the child that, "Some of the sentences have hard words in them or are a little confusing. If you don't know what a word means or a sentence is hard to understand, be sure to ask me about it." Because some of the items are quite long and complex, the measure appears to be most effective when all items are read aloud by the examiner. Try to maintain the same intonation on both anchor sentences and to convey that all responses are normal. The exceptions to this are the social desirability items (#20, #28, #36). For these items, your tone of voice should pull for the less socially desirable response. The measure works best for children age 8 and above, but many 7-year-olds can use it as well. Children often need the words "startle" and "fib" defined for them. It usually takes 10-15 minutes to complete the measure.

To compute the total score, combine the CDES & CPTSI scores (i.e., the total of all responses except items 20, 28, & 36.) A total score of 43 was the cutoff for Definite PTSD derived in the original study, and subsequent clinical use of the measure suggests that this is a valid cut point. Totals in the mid-30's appear to be related to substantial subthreshold PTSD symptoms. A Fake score of 5 or higher should raise concerns and a 7 or higher suggests that the responses are not valid and that the child is likely to under-report symptoms in response to other measures or clinical interview.

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