

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC)

The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC) is a 20-item self-report depression inventory with possible scores ranging from 0 to 60. Each response to an item is scored as follows:

- 0 = “Not At All”
- 1 = “A Little”
- 2 = “Some”
- 3 = “A Lot”

However, items 4, 8, 12, and 16 are phrased positively, and thus are scored in the opposite order:

- 3 = “Not At All”
- 2 = “A Little”
- 1 = “Some”
- 0 = “A Lot”

Higher CES-DC scores indicate increasing levels of depression. Weissman et al. (1980), the developers of the CES-DC, have used the cutoff score of 15 as being suggestive of depressive symptoms in children and adolescents. That is, scores over 15 can be indicative of significant levels of depressive symptoms.

Remember that screening for depression can be complex and is only an initial step. Further evaluation is required for children and adolescents identified through a screening process. Further evaluation is also warranted for children or adolescents who exhibit depressive symptoms but who do not screen positive.

See also

Tool for Families: Symptoms of Depression in Adolescents, p. 126.

Tool for Families: Common Signs of Depression in Children and Adolescents, p. 147.

REFERENCES

Weissman MM, Orvaschel H, Padian N. 1980.

Children’s symptom and social functioning self-report scales: Comparison of mothers’ and children’s reports. *Journal of Nervous Mental Disorders* 168(12):736–740.

Faulstich ME, Carey MP, Ruggiero L, et al. 1986.

Assessment of depression in childhood and adolescence: An evaluation of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC). *American Journal of Psychiatry* 143(8):1024–1027.

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC)

Number _____

Score _____

INSTRUCTIONS

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or acted. Please check how *much* you have felt this way during the *past week*.

| DURING THE PAST WEEK | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|--|------------|----------|-------|-------|
| 1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. I did not feel like eating, I wasn't very hungry. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. I wasn't able to feel happy, even when my family or friends tried to help me feel better. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. I felt like I was just as good as other kids. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. I felt like I couldn't pay attention to what I was doing. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

| DURING THE PAST WEEK | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|---|------------|----------|-------|-------|
| 6. I felt down and unhappy. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. I felt like I was too tired to do things. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. I felt like something good was going to happen. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 9. I felt like things I did before didn't work out right. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 10. I felt scared. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

| DURING THE PAST WEEK | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|---|------------|----------|-------|-------|
| 11. I didn't sleep as well as I usually sleep. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 12. I was happy. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 13. I was more quiet than usual. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 14. I felt lonely, like I didn't have any friends. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 15. I felt like kids I know were not friendly or that they didn't want to be with me. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

| DURING THE PAST WEEK | Not At All | A Little | Some | A Lot |
|--|------------|----------|-------|-------|
| 16. I had a good time. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 17. I felt like crying. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 18. I felt sad. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 19. I felt people didn't like me. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 20. It was hard to get started doing things. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |