

Childhood Trust Events Survey (CTES-A)-Adolescent Version

The CTES-A is a newly updated, 30-item, self-report screening survey to assess an adolescent's exposure to traumatic events. Some items were derived from the Traumatic Events Screening Inventory for Children (TESI-C¹) and the UCLA PTSD Index.² The CTES also includes all the items identified as Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) in extensive research by Felitti and colleagues in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³ The ACE items address 1) whether the child has experienced personal abuse (recurrent physical abuse, recurrent emotional abuse, and sexual abuse) and 2) whether the child has lived in a household with any of the following: an alcoholic or drug user; a person who was in prison; someone who was chronically depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal; or a mother who was treated violently; or whether a child has experienced complete and lengthy separation from a parent, such as a permanent foster placement or the death of a parent. The following items from the survey are identified as ACEs:

Physical abuse:

14) Has someone in your home ever been physically violent toward you, such as whipping, kicking, or hitting hard enough to leave marks?

Emotional abuse:

5) Have you ever had a parent swear at you, insult you, put you down, or say hurtful things such as "You are no good," "You will be sent away because you are bad," or "I wish you were never born"?

Sexual abuse: (*Answering yes to 1 or both of these questions is counted as one ACE*)

24) Has someone ever touched your private sexual body parts when you did not want them to?

25) Has someone ever made you touch his or her private sexual body parts?

Alcoholic or drug user in home: (*Answering yes to 1 or both of these questions is counted as 1 ACE*)

8) Have you ever had a time in your life when you did not have the care you needed, such as not having enough to eat, being left in charge of your younger brothers or sisters for long periods of time, or being left with a grownup who used drugs?

10) Have you ever had someone living in your home who abused alcohol or used street drugs?

Family member in prison:

7) Have you ever had a family member who was put in jail or prison or taken away by the police?

Mentally ill caregiver: (*Answering yes to 1 or both of these questions is counted as 1 ACE*)

11) Have you ever had someone in your home try to hurt or kill himself/herself, such as cutting himself/herself or taking too many pills or drugs?

12) Have you ever had a family member who was depressed or mentally ill for a long time?

Domestic violence: (*Answering yes to 1 or both of these questions is counted as 1 ACE*)

16) Have you ever seen or heard family members act like they were going to kill or hurt each other badly, even if they didn't actually do it?

17) Have you ever seen or heard a family member being hit, punched, kicked very hard, or killed?

Loss/separated from caregiver: (Answering yes to 1 or both of these questions is counted as 1 ACE)

6) Were you ever completely separated from your parent(s) for a long time, such as going to a foster home, your parent living far apart from you, or never seeing your parent again?

13) Have you ever had a family member or someone else very close to you die unexpectedly?

More information on the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study can be found at www.acestudy.org.

Adolescents (aged 13 years and older) complete the Adolescent Version. The original CTES is a 26-item Child and Adolescent version for children of all ages, with a Caregiver Version that is completed for children younger than 8 years. The CTES-A is identical to the CTES except for the addition of questions 27-30 about additional traumatic events.

It is important to note that this survey is not a diagnostic instrument. It is meant to serve as a brief clinical screening tool to provide information regarding trauma exposure. The CTES does not make a formal diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder or of a traumatic experience such as child abuse. Although it may be useful to tabulate the number of ACEs for clinical purposes, there is no clinical cutoff or scoring system.

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For more information about the CTES-A, please contact Erna Olafson, at erna.olafson@uc.edu. For more information about the original CTES, the Child and Adolescent version, please contact Erica Pearl, Psy.D. at erica.pearl@cchmc.org.

1. Ribbe, D. (1996). Psychometric review of Traumatic Event Screening Instrument for Children (TESI-C). In B. H. Stamm (Ed.), *Measurement of stress, trauma, and adaptation* (pp. 386-387). Lutherville, MD: Sidran Press.

2. Pynoos, R., Rodriguez, N., Steinberg, A., Stuber, M., & Frederick, C. (1998). *UCLA PTSD Index for DSM-IV*. Unpublished manuscripts. UCLA Trauma Psychiatry Service.

3. Felitti, V.J., Anda, R.F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D.F., Spitz, A.M., Edwards, V., Koss, M.P., et al (1998). The relationship of adult health status to childhood abuse and household dysfunction. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (14), 245-258.