

Instrument Title: The Depressive Life Experiences Scale (DLES)  
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# Scoring Instructions for the Depressive Life Experiences Scale (DLES)

The Depressive Life Experiences Scale is a self-administered questionnaire that allows respondents to indicate those depressive life experiences which they have recently experienced. The items on the DLES were selected on the basis of the results reported by Snell et al. (1989). These investigators had subjects discuss the types of events, experiences, hassles, and problems that depress them. Forty-eight experiences were discussed with sufficient frequency to warrant including them on a scale measuring depressive life experiences. In the Snell et al. (1989) investigation, three conceptual dimensions were found to characterize the 48 depressive experiences: (1) an interpersonal versus personal conflict dimension, (2) a social inactivity versus social friction dimension, and (3) a personal versus impersonal dimension. The DLES subscales used in the present investigation were derived from the quadrants which result when the three dimensions are crossed with each other (i.e.,  $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$  possible subscales). Since two of the quadrants were not represented with depressive life experience items, six rather than eight subscales were included in the current version of the Depressive Life Experiences Scale. These six subscales assessed the following distinct categories of depressogenic experiences: (1) the social exits scale, with 5 items (e.g., SEPARATION: being separated from friends or loved ones), (2) the interpersonal disharmony scale, with 6 items (e.g., CRITICISM: a critical judgment from a person; someone finding fault with you or disapproving of you), (3) the personal inertia subscale, with 7 items (e.g., BOREDOM: being in a dull or uninteresting situation; experiencing a state of ennui), (4) the personal frustrations scale, with 5 items (e.g., LACK OF PREPARATION: being inadequately prepared or having made inadequate plans), (5) the personal inadequacies scale, with 6 items (e.g., LOSS OF FACE: committing some blunder or error, with attending loss of face), and (6) the others' misfortunes scale, with 6 items (e.g., DEPRESSED PEOPLE: being exposed to sad and unhappy people; being around people feeling depressed). Items not assigned to specific scales were regarded as filler items. The subjects were asked to rate how frequently they had experienced the 48 depressive life experiences on the DLES during three time periods: the past three months, the past year, and the past five years.

A 5-point Likert scale with appropriate anchors was used to record their responses (blank = not at all; 1 = one time; 2 = two times; 3 = three times; 4 = four times; 5 = five or more times). After providing this "frequency of occurrence" information, the subjects were then asked to indicate the depressive intensity of the 48 depressive experiences at the time of their occurrence. These ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from extremely depressing (1) to not at all depressing (5), later reversed-scored so that higher numbers corresponded to more intense depressive affect (i.e., depressive intensity). The frequency ratings for the items on each subscale were summed to create six (6) separate frequency measures. In addition, the depressive intensity ratings for the items on each subscale were summed to create six (6) separate intensity measures.

The resulting frequency and intensity measures associated with each of the six subscales were also multiplied together to create an overall "impact score" for each of the six subscales (i.e., frequency scores  $\times$  intensity scores = impact scores). In summary, each of the six DLES subscales was scored so as to create a frequency, an intensity, and an impact score. Higher scores on these measures corresponded to (1) greater frequency of the depressive experiences, (2) more intense depressive distress, and (3) a more severe overall impact, respectively.

## The Depressive Life Experiences Scale (DLES) Scoring Instructions

The Depressive Life Experiences Scale (DLES) consists of six subscales (the items are listed below). The article by Snell, Hawkins, and Belk (1990) describes on page 607 how to derive scores for the DLES. Three types of scores may be computed for each subscale: (a) "frequency" scores, (b) "depressive intensity" scores, and (c) overall "impact" scores. The "frequency" scores are computed by summing the "frequency" responses of the items assigned to each respective subscale. The "depressive intensity" scores are computed by summing the "depressive intensity" responses of the items assigned to each respective subscale (subscales items are first recoded). The "depressive

impact" score for each subscale is computed by first multiplying the "frequency" score (i.e., how often the event occurred) by the "depressive intensity" score (i.e., "not at all depressed" to "extremely depressed") for each item on a subscale and then summing these resulting products.

1. The Social Exit Subscale: 3, 4, 14, 15, 17, and 30.
2. The Interpersonal Disharmony Subscale: 1, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 19.
3. The Personal Inertia Subscale: 13, 29, 36, 37, 40, 43, and 47.
4. The Personal Frustrations Subscale: 20, 27, 34, 35, and 44.
5. The Personal Inadequacies Subscale: 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, and 45.
6. The Others' Misfortunes Subscale: 31, 32, 38, 39, 41, and 42.

