

INTERNATIONAL TRAUMA EXPOSURE MEASURE (ITEM)

OVERVIEW: The *International Trauma Exposure Measure* (ITEM) is a new checklist developed to capture traumatic life events, and their associated features, in a manner consistent with the definition of a traumatic event in the 11th version of the International Classification of Diseases.

The ITEM measures exposure to different traumatic life events across different developmental periods (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood); frequency of exposure to one's most distressing traumatic event; and the main emotion associated with one's most distressing traumatic event. The ITEM is freely available to the research and clinical communities and may be used without permission.

Please note that the ITEM uses educational descriptors to aid respondents to accurately identify the period of their life in which their trauma occurred. The educational descriptors used in this example are appropriate for the Irish context in which the scale was developed. These descriptors should be amended for the context in which you wish to use the ITEM.

The reference for the ITEM is as follows:

Hyland, P., Karatzias, T., Shevlin, M., McElroy, E., Ben-Ezra, M., Cloitre, M., & Brewin, C. R. (2021). Does requiring trauma exposure affect rates of ICD-11 PTSD and complex PTSD? Implications for DSM-5. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 13, 133-142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000908>

International Trauma Exposure Measure

Instructions: We are interested to know if you experienced any of the following traumatic life events during different periods of your life. Please read each description of a traumatic event, and tell us if you experienced each event in childhood, adolescence, and/or adulthood.

	Did this event happen...		
	before or during your time in primary school (up to age 12)	during your time in secondary school (between ages 13-18)	after your time in secondary school (after the age of 18)
1. You were diagnosed with a life-threatening illness.			
2. Someone close to you died in an awful manner.			
3. Someone close to you was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness or experienced a life-threatening accident.			
4. Someone threatened your life with a weapon (knife, gun, bomb etc.)			
5. You were physically assaulted (punched, kicked, slapped, mugged, robbed etc.) by a parent or guardian.			
6. You were physically assaulted (punched, kicked, slapped, mugged, robbed etc.) by someone other than a parent or guardian.			
7. You were sexually assaulted (anal, vaginal, or oral penetration, or any contact with sexual parts) by a parent or guardian.			
8. You were sexually assaulted (anal, vaginal, or oral penetration, or any contact with sexual parts) by someone other than a parent or guardian.			
9. You were sexually harassed (unwanted sexualized comments or behaviours).			

10. You were exposed to war or combat (as a soldier or as a civilian).			
11. You were held captive and/or tortured.			
12. You caused extreme suffering or death to another person.			
13. You witnessed another person experiencing extreme suffering or death.			
14. You were involved in an accident (e.g., transportation, work, home, leisure) where your life was in danger.			
15. You were exposed to a natural disaster (e.g., hurricane, tsunami, earthquake) where your life was in danger.			
16. You were exposed to a human-made disaster (e.g., terrorist attack, chemical spill, public shooting) where your life was in danger.			
17. Another person stalked you.			
18. You were repeatedly bullied (online or offline).			
19. You were humiliated, put down, or insulted by another person.			
20. You were made to feel unloved, unwelcome, or worthless.			
21. You were neglected, ignored, rejected, or isolated.			
22. Any other event not listed (please specify). -----			

1. Please tell us which event you found the most distressing by entering the number that corresponds to that event from the list above: _____

2. If you experienced this event more than once, please tell us approximately how many times you experienced this event? _____

3. How long ago did this event occur?

- Less than one month ago
- 1-6 months ago
- 6-12 months ago
- 1-5 years ago
- 6-10 years ago
- More than 10 years ago

4. What is the main emotion that you associate with this event?

- Fear
- Anger
- Disgust
- Sadness
- Shame
- Guilt

- No emotion



Scoring instructions: The ITEM can be scored in multiple ways depending on one's goals.

- ✓ A total score for the number of different childhood trauma events can be computed by summing all events that occurred 'up to the age of 12'.
- ✓ A total score for the number of different adolescent trauma events can be computed by summing all events that occurred 'between ages 13-18'.
- ✓ A total score for the number of different adulthood trauma events can be computed by summing all events that occurred 'after the age of 18'.

- ✓ Lifetime exposure to an event is indicated if a person experienced that event in any developmental period.
- ✓ A total score for the number of different lifetime trauma events can be computed by summing all events that occurred during any developmental period.

- ✓ Lifetime traumatic exposure is indicated if any event (ITEM1 – ITEM21) at any developmental is endorsed.