INTERPERSONAL SUPPORT EVALUATION LIST (ISEL)

Reference:
Cohen, S., & Hoberman, H. (1983). Positive events and social supports as buffers of life
change stress. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 13*, 99-125.

Description of Measure:

A 40-item scale made up of four subscales. The subscales are:
1.) Tangible Support
2.) Belonging Support
3.) Self-esteem Support
4.) Appraisal Support.

Participants rate each item's statement on how true or false they believe it is for
themselves. All answers are given on a 4-point scale ranging from "Definitely True" to
"Definitely False".

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Dunkel-Schetter, C., Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1987) Correlates of social support
receipt. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53, 71-80

Psychological correlates of social support receipt were examined in an investigation
of stress and coping among 150 middle-aged community residents. Subjects were
interviewed monthly for 6 months, each time concerning a specific stressful situation
in the previous month. Social support received and methods of coping were assessed
each time, as well as other variables. Factors hypothesized to be associated with
support receipt were person predispositions, appraisal patterns with regard to
specific stressful encounters, and coping strategies used. Each was most strongly
associated with a particular type of social support. Person predispositions related
most strongly to emotional support received, appraisal factors related most strongly
to aid, and coping strategies related most to informational support received.
Furthermore, of the three sets of variables, the individual's ways of coping appeared
to be most strongly associated with all types of social support received. Two
implications are explored. First, we suggest that the three types of social support
studied represent different constructs with different antecedents and consequences.
Second, we argue that coping behavior provides interpersonal cues regarding what is
wanted or needed in a stressful situation and that the members of the social
environment respond accordingly.

Taylor, S. E. & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*, 193-210

Many prominent theorists have argued that accurate perceptions of the self, the world, and the future are essential for mental health. Yet considerable research evidence suggests that overly positive self-evaluations, exaggerated perceptions of control or mastery, and unrealistic optimism are characteristic of normal human thought. Moreover, these illusions appear to promote other criteria of mental health, including the ability to care about others, the ability to be happy or contented, and the ability to engage in productive and creative work. These strategies may succeed, in large part, because both the social world and cognitive-processing mechanisms impose filters on incoming information that distort it in a positive direction; negative information may be isolated and represented in as unthreatening a manner as possible. These positive illusions may be especially useful when an individual receives negative feedback or is otherwise threatened and may be especially adaptive under these circumstances.

Cohen S., Mermelstein R., Kamarck T., & Hoberman, H.M. (1985). Measuring the functional components of social support. In Sarason, I.G. & Sarason, B.R. (Eds), *Social support: theory, research, and applications.* The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.

In the last several years, we have been interested in the role social supports play in protecting people from the pathogenic effects of stress. By social supports, we mean the resources that are provided by other persons (cf. Coehn & Syme, 1985). Although others have investigated and in some cases found evidence for a "buffering" hypothesis—that social support protects persons from the pathogenic effects of stress but is relatively unimportant for unexposed individuals, there are difficulties in interpreting this literature. First, there are almost as many measures of social support as there are studies. Hence it is difficult to compare studies and to determine why support operates as a stress buffer in some cases, but no in others. Second, in the vast majority of work, support measures are used without regard to their psychometric properties or their appropriateness for the question under study. For example, studies using measures assessing the structure of social networks (e.g., how many friends do you have?) are seldom distinguished form those addressing the functions that networks might serve (e.g., do you have someone you can talk to about personal problems?). In fact, in many cases, structural and functional items are thrown together into single support indices resulting in scores that have little conceptual meaning. In the context of the limitations of earlier work, we developed our own social support instrument to study the support buffering process. This chapter describes the questions we wanted to address, the assumptions we needed to make in order to develop an instrument that addressed these questions, the instrument itself, its psychometric properties, and data on the relationship between support and well-being that has been collected by ourselves and others with this instrument.

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Scale:

INSTRUCTIONS: This scale is made up of a list of statements each of which may or may not be true about you. For each statement check "definitely true" if you are sure it is true about you and "probably true" if you think it is true but are not absolutely certain. Similarly, you should check "definitely false" if you are sure the statement is false and "probably false" is you think it is false but are not absolutely certain.

1. There are several people that I trust to help solve my problems.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

2. If I needed help fixing an appliance or repairing my car, there is someone who would help me.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

3. Most of my friends are more interesting than I am.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

4. There is someone who takes pride in my accomplishments.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

5. When I feel lonely, there are several people I can talk to.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

6. There is no one that I feel comfortable to talking about intimate personal problems.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

7. I often meet or talk with family or friends.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

8. Most people I know think highly of me.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

9. If I needed a ride to the airport very early in the morning, I would have a hard time finding someone to take me.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

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10. I feel like I'm not always included by my circle of friends.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

11. There really is no one who can give me an objective view of how I'm handling my problems.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

12. There are several different people I enjoy spending time with.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

13. I think that my friends feel that I'm not very good at helping them solve their problems.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

14. If I were sick and needed someone (friend, family member, or acquaintance) to take me to the doctor, I would have trouble finding someone.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

15. If I wanted to go on a trip for a day (e.g., to the mountains, beach, or country), I would have a hard time finding someone to go with me.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

16. If I needed a place to stay for a week because of an emergency (for example, water or electricity out in my apartment or house), I could easily find someone who would put me up.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

17. I feel that there is no one I can share my most private worries and fears with.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

18. If I were sick, I could easily find someone to help me with my daily chores.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

19. There is someone I can turn to for advice about handling problems with my family.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

20. I am as good at doing things as most other people are.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

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21. If I decide one afternoon that I would like to go to a movie that evening, I could easily find someone to go with me.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

22. When I need suggestions on how to deal with a personal problem, I know someone I can turn to.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

23. If I needed an emergency loan of $100, there is someone (friend, relative, or acquaintance) I could get it from.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

24. In general, people do not have much confidence in me.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

25. Most people I know do not enjoy the same things that I do.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

26. There is someone I could turn to for advice about making career plans or changing my job.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

27. I don't often get invited to do things with others.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

28. Most of my friends are more successful at making changes in their lives than I am.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

29. If I had to go out of town for a few weeks, it would be difficult to find someone who would look after my house or apartment (the plants, pets, garden, etc.).
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

30. There really is no one I can trust to give me good financial advice.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

31. If I wanted to have lunch with someone, I could easily find someone to join me.
____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

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32. I am more satisfied with my life than most people are with theirs.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

33. If I was stranded 10 miles from home, there is someone I could call who would come and get me.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

34. No one I know would throw a birthday party for me.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

35. It would me difficult to find someone who would lend me their car for a few hours.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

36. If a family crisis arose, it would be difficult to find someone who could give me good advice about how to handle it.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

37. I am closer to my friends than most other people are to theirs.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

38. There is at least one person I know whose advice I really trust.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

39. If I needed some help in moving to a new house or apartment, I would have a hard time finding someone to help me.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

40. I have a hard time keeping pace with my friends.
 ____definitely true (3) ____definitely false (0)
 ____probably true (2) ____probably false (1)

Scoring:

Items 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 39, and 40 are reverse scored.
Items 1, 6, 11, 17, 19, 22, 26, 30, 36, and 38 make up the Appraisal Support Subscale
Items 2, 9, 14, 16, 18, 23, 29, 33, 35, and 39 make up the Tangible Support Subscale
Items 3, 4, 8, 13, 20, 24, 28, 32, 37, and 40 make up the Self-Esteem Support Subscale
Items 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 21, 25, 27, 31, and 34 make up the Belonging Support Subscale.
All scores are kept continuous.