

# CAMBRIDGE DEPERSONALIZATION SCALE

(Sierra & Berrios, 1996)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

SEX: male / female

(please circle as required)

SCHOOLING: primary / secondary / higher (e.g. university)

(please circle as required)

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## PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY:

This questionnaire describes strange and 'funny' experiences that normal people may have in their daily life. We are interested in their: (a) frequency, i.e. how often you have had these experiences **over the last six months** and (b) their approximate duration. For each question, please circle the answers that suit you best. If you are not sure, give your best guess.

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1. Out of the blue, I feel strange, as if I were not real or as if I were cut off from the world.

Frequency

0 = *never*

1 = *rarely*

2 = *often*

3 = *very often*

4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:

1 = *few seconds*

2 = *few minutes*

3 = *few hours*

4 = *about a day*

5 = *more than a day*

6 = *more than a week*

2. What I see looks 'flat' or 'lifeless', as if I were looking at a picture.

Frequency

0 = *never*

1 = *rarely*

2 = *often*

3 = *very often*

4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:

1 = *few seconds*

2 = *few minutes*

3 = *few hours*

4 = *about a day*

5 = *more than a day*

6 = *more than a week*

3. Parts of my body feel as if they didn't belong to me.

Frequency

0 = *never*

1 = *rarely*

2 = *often*

3 = *very often*

4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:

1 = *few seconds*

2 = *few minutes*

3 = *few hours*

4 = *about a day*

5 = *more than a day*

6 = *more than a week*

4. I have found myself **not being frightened at all** in situations which normally I would find frightening or distressing.

Frequency

0 = *never*

1 = *rarely*

2 = *often*

3 = *very often*

4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:

1 = *few seconds*

2 = *few minutes*

3 = *few hours*

4 = *about a day*

5 = *more than a day*

6 = *more than a week*

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5. My favourite activities are no longer enjoyable.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

6. Whilst doing something I have the feeling of being a "detached observer" of myself.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

7. The flavour of meals no longer gives me a feeling of pleasure or distaste.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

8. My body feels very light, as if it were floating on air.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

9. When I weep or laugh, I do not seem **to feel** any emotions at all.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

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10. I have the feeling of ***not having any thoughts at all***, so that when I speak it feels as if my words were being uttered by an 'automaton'.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

11. Familiar voices (including my own) sound remote and unreal.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

12. I have the feeling that my hands or my feet have become larger or smaller.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

13. My surroundings feel detached or unreal, as if there was a veil between me and the outside world.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

14. It seems as if things that I have recently done had taken place a long time ago. For example anything which I have done this morning feels as if it were done weeks ago.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

15. Whilst fully awake I have "visions" in which I can **see** myself outside, as if I were looking my image in a mirror.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

16. I feel detached from memories of things that have happened to me - as if I had not been involved in them.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

17. When in a new situation, it feels as if I have been through it before.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

18. Out of the blue, I find myself not feeling any affection towards my family and close friends.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

19. Objects around me seem to look smaller or further away.

**Frequency**

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

**Duration**

**In general, it lasts:**  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

20. I cannot feel properly the objects that I touch with my hands for, it feels **as if it were not me** who were touching it.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

21. I do not seem able to picture things in my mind, for example, the face of a close friend or a familiar place.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

22. When a part of my body hurts, I feel so detached from the pain that it feels as if it were 'somebody else's pain.'

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

23. I have the feeling of being outside my body.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

24. When I move it doesn't feel as if I were in charge of the movements, so that I feel 'automatic' and mechanical as if I were a 'robot'.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
 1 = *rarely*  
 2 = *often*  
 3 = *very often*  
 4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
 1 = *few seconds*  
 2 = *few minutes*  
 3 = *few hours*  
 4 = *about a day*  
 5 = *more than a day*  
 6 = *more than a week*

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25. The smell of things no longer gives me a feeling of pleasure or dislike.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
1 = *rarely*  
2 = *often*  
3 = *very often*  
4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
1 = *few seconds*  
2 = *few minutes*  
3 = *few hours*  
4 = *about a day*  
5 = *more than a day*  
6 = *more than a week*

26. I feel so detached from my thoughts that they seem to have a 'life' of their own.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
1 = *rarely*  
2 = *often*  
3 = *very often*  
4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
1 = *few seconds*  
2 = *few minutes*  
3 = *few hours*  
4 = *about a day*  
5 = *more than a day*  
6 = *more than a week*

27. I have to touch myself to make sure that I have a body or a real existence.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
1 = *rarely*  
2 = *often*  
3 = *very often*  
4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
1 = *few seconds*  
2 = *few minutes*  
3 = *few hours*  
4 = *about a day*  
5 = *more than a day*  
6 = *more than a week*

28. ***I seem to have lost*** some bodily sensations (e.g. of hunger and thirst) so that when I eat or drink, it feels an automatic routine.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
1 = *rarely*  
2 = *often*  
3 = *very often*  
4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
1 = *few seconds*  
2 = *few minutes*  
3 = *few hours*  
4 = *about a day*  
5 = *more than a day*  
6 = *more than a week*

29. Previously familiar places look unfamiliar, as if I had never seen them before.

Frequency

0 = *never*  
1 = *rarely*  
2 = *often*  
3 = *very often*  
4 = *all the time*

Duration

In general, it lasts:  
1 = *few seconds*  
2 = *few minutes*  
3 = *few hours*  
4 = *about a day*  
5 = *more than a day*  
6 = *more than a week*

**Thank you for answering all the questions!!**

## Cambridge Depersonalization Scale Scoring

[I have adapted the scoring page from the CDS available on the web:

<http://goodmedicine.org.uk/files/assessment,%20depersonalization,%20t.DOC> . The italicized language in the "Scoring" section is mine, and the rest is from the authors.-Richard A. Chefetz, M.D.]

**Definitions:** depersonalisation has been defined as 'an alteration in the perception or experience of the self so that one feels detached from, and as if one is an outside observer of, one's mental processes or body (e.g. feeling as if one is in a dream)'; and derealisation as 'an alteration in the perception or experience of the external world so that it seems strange or unreal (e.g. people may seem unfamiliar or mechanical)' (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). It seems likely that depersonalisation and derealisation are two aspects of the same type of process, both of which are assessed in the Cambridge Depersonalisation Scale.

**Experiences involved:** the depersonalisation/derealisation syndrome often involves a complex set of experiences which may include feelings of unreality, emotional numbing, heightened self-observation, changes in body experience, distortions in the experiencing of time and space, changes in the feeling of agency, feelings of having the mind empty of thoughts, memories and/or images, and an inability to focus and sustain attention.

**Explanation:** it has been suggested that these experiences arise from two simultaneous mechanisms an inhibition of emotional processing, and a heightened state of alertness (i.e. akin to vigilant attention). Emotional numbing or lack of emotional colouring of various perceptions, thoughts and images would result from the emotional processing inhibition. Feelings of 'mind emptiness', increased perceptual acuity, and feelings of lack of agency would result from the heightened alertness.

Sierra M & Berrios G. The Cambridge Depersonalisation Scale: a new instrument for the measurement of depersonalization. *Psychiatry Research* 2000; 93: 153-164

**Scoring:** add numbers for frequency and total. Add numbers for duration and total. Combine totals for score. *Scoring is not diagnostic. Typical median scores for three diagnoses in the University College London DP lab follow. Like the DES, the CDS may best be used in the post-testing interview and asking: What were you considering when endorsing this item?*

Typical Median Scores on the Cambridge Depersonalization Scale				
	# Questions Endorsed	Typical Frequency	Typical Duration	Total Score
Depersonalization Disorder	21	2-often	3-few hours	113
Anxiety Disorders	7	1-rarely	1-few seconds	20
Temporal Lobe Epilepsy	11	1-rarely	2-few minutes	44