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**Measure:** Severity of Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms—Child Age 11–17  
(National Stressful Events Survey PTSD Short Scale [NSESSS])

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# Severity of Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms—Child Age 11–17\*

## \*National Stressful Events Survey PTSD Short Scale (NSESSS)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the traumatic event that you experienced: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the traumatic event: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** People sometimes have problems after extremely stressful events or experiences. How much have you been bothered during the PAST SEVEN (7) DAYS by each of the following problems that occurred or became worse after an extremely stressful event/experience? **Please respond to each item by marking (✓ or x) one box per row.**

							Clinician Use
		Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely	Item score
1.	Having “flashbacks,” that is, you suddenly acted or felt as if a stressful experience from the past was happening all over again (for example, you reexperienced parts of a stressful experience by seeing, hearing, smelling, or physically feeling parts of the experience)?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
2.	Feeling very emotionally upset when something reminded you of a stressful experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
3.	Trying to avoid thoughts, feelings, or physical sensations that reminded you of a stressful experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
4.	Thinking that a stressful event happened because you or someone else (who didn’t directly harm you) did something wrong or didn’t do everything possible to prevent it, or because of something about you?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
5.	Having a very negative emotional state (for example, you were experiencing lots of fear, anger, guilt, shame, or horror) after a stressful experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
6.	Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy before having a stressful experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
7.	Being “super alert,” on guard, or constantly on the lookout for danger?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
8.	Feeling jumpy or easily startled when you hear an unexpected noise?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
9.	Being extremely irritable or angry to the point where you yelled at other people, got into fights, or destroyed things?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
<b>Total/Partial Raw Score:</b>							
<b>Prorated Total Raw Score: (if 1-2 items left unanswered)</b>							
<b>Average Total Score:</b>							

## Instructions to Clinicians

The National Stressful Events Survey PTSD Short Scale (NSESSS) is a 9-item measure that assesses the severity of posttraumatic stress disorder in children ages 11–17 following an extremely stressful event or experience. The measure was designed to be completed by the child upon receiving a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder (or clinically significant posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms) and thereafter, prior to follow-up visits with the clinician. Each item asks the child receiving care to rate the severity of his or her posttraumatic stress disorder **during the past 7 days**.

## Scoring and Interpretation

Each item on the measure is rated on a 5-point scale (0=Not at all; 1=A little bit; 2=Moderately; 3=Quite a bit, and 4=Extremely). The total score can range from 0 to 36, with higher scores indicating greater severity of posttraumatic stress disorder. The clinician is asked to review the score of each item on the measure during the clinical interview and indicate the raw score for each item in the section provided for “Clinician Use.” The raw scores on the 9 items should be summed to obtain a total raw score. In addition, the clinician is asked to calculate and use the **average total score**. The **average total score** reduces the overall score to a 5-point scale, which allows the clinician to think of the severity of the child’s posttraumatic stress disorder in terms of none (0), mild (1), moderate (2), severe (3), or extreme (4). The use of the average total score was found to be reliable, easy to use, and clinically useful to the clinicians in the DSM-5 Field Trials. The **average total score** is calculated by dividing the raw total score by number of items in the measure (i.e., 9).

**Note:** If 3 or more items are left unanswered, the total score on the measure should not be calculated. Therefore, the child should be encouraged to complete all of the items on the measure. If 1 or 2 items are left unanswered, you are asked to calculate a prorated score. The prorated score is calculated by summing the scores of items that were answered to get a partial raw score. Multiply the partial raw score by the total number of items on the NSESSS—PTSD (i.e., 9) and divide the value by the number of items that were actually answered (i.e., 7 or 8). The formula to prorate the partial raw score to Total Raw Score is:

$$\frac{\text{(Raw sum x 9)}}{\text{Number of items that were actually answered}}$$

If the result is a fraction, round to the nearest whole number.

## Frequency of Use

To track changes in the severity of the child’s posttraumatic stress disorder over time, the measure may be completed at regular intervals as clinically indicated, depending on the stability of the child’s symptoms and treatment status. Consistently high scores on a particular domain may indicate significant and problematic areas for the child that might warrant further assessment, treatment, and follow-up. Your clinical judgment should guide your decision.