INTERPERSONAL REACTIVITY INDEX (IRI)

Reference:

Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. *JSAS Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 10*, 85.

Description of Measure:

Defines empathy as the "reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another (Davis, 1983)."

28-items answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Does not describe me well" to "Describes me very well". The measure has 4 subscales, each made up of 7 different items. These subscales are (taken directly from Davis, 1983):

Perspective Taking – the tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others

Fantasy – taps respondents' tendencies to transpose themselves imaginatively into the feelings and actions of fictitious characters in books, movies, and plays

Empathic Concern – assesses "other-oriented" feelings of sympathy and concern for unfortunate others

Personal Distress – measures "self-oriented" feelings of personal anxiety and unease in tense interpersonal settings

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44*, 113–126.

The past decade has seen growing movement toward a view of empathy as a multidimensional construct. The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980), which taps four separate aspects of empathy, is described, and its relationships with measures of social functioning, self-esteem, emotionality, and sensitivity to others is assessed. As expected, each of the four subscales displays a distinctive and predictable pattern of relationships with these measures, as well as with previous unidimensional empathy measures. These findings, coupled with the theoretically important relationships existing among the four subscales themselves, provide considerable evidence for a multidimensional approach to empathy in general and for the use of the IRI in particular.

Pulos, S., Elison, J., & Lennon, R. (2004). Hierarchical structure of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. *Social Behavior and Personality, 32*, 355-360.

The hierarchical factor structure of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) (Davis, 1980) inventory was investigated with the Schmid-Leiman orthogonalization procedure (Schmid & Leiman, 1957). The sample consisted of 409 college students. The analysis found that the IRI could be factored into four first-order factors,

corresponding to the four scales of the IRI, and two second-order orthogonal factors, a general empathy factor and an emotional control factor.

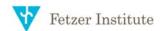**Scale (taken from** mailer.fsu.edu/~cfigley/Tests/**IRI**.RTF)**:**

INTERPERSONAL REACTIVITY INDEX

The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate letter on the scale at the top of the page: A, B, C, D, or E. When you have decided on your answer, fill in the letter next to the item number. READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING. Answer as honestly as you can. Thank you.

ANSWER SCALE:

A	B	C	D	E
DOES NOT				DESCRIBES
DESCRIBE ME				VERY
ME WELL				WELL

1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me. (FS)

2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me. (EC)

3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view. (PT) (-)

4. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems. (EC) (-)

5. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel. (FS)

6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease. (PD)

7. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it. (FS) (-)

8. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision. (PT)

9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them. (EC)

10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation. (PD)

11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective. (PT)

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12. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me. (FS) (-)

13. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm. (PD) (-)

14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal. (EC) (-)

15. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments. (PT) (-)

16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters. (FS)

17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me. (PD)

18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them. (EC) (-)

19. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies. (PD) (-)

20. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen. (EC)

21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both. (PT)

22. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person. (EC)

23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character. (FS)

24. I tend to lose control during emergencies. (PD)

25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while. (PT)

26. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me. (FS)

27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces. (PD)

28. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place. (PT)

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NOTE:(-) denotes item to be scored in reverse fashion

        PT = perspective-taking scale
        FS = fantasy scale
        EC = empathic concern scale
        PD = personal distress scale

        A = 0
        B = 1
        C = 2
        D = 3
        E = 4

Except for reversed-scored items, which are scored:

        A = 4
        B = 3
        C = 2
        D = 1
        E = 0

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