**Using the IUBEL Questionnaire**

**(Intolerance of Uncertainty Behaviours in Everyday Life)**

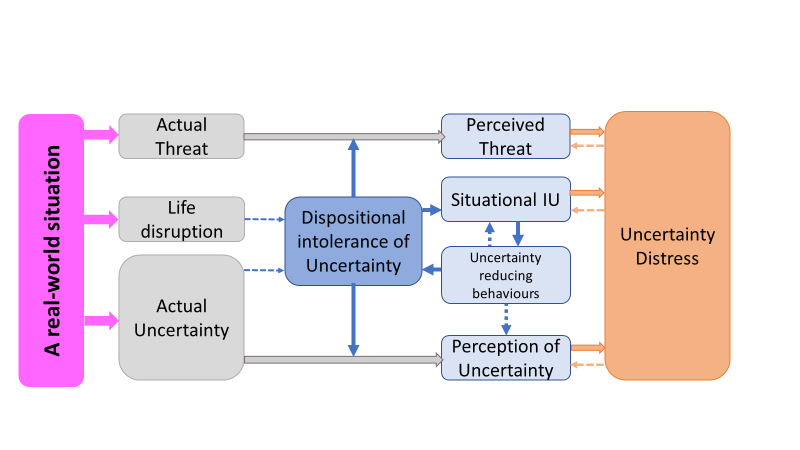
**Guide for Therapists**

Version 1.0

The uncertainty distress model is a trans-diagnostic and trans-situational framework to understand how threat and uncertainty can lead to distress including, but not limited to, anxiety.

The model is available:

Freeston, M. H., Tiplady, A., Mawn, L., Bottesi, G., & Thwaites, S. (2020). Towards a model of uncertainty distress in the context of Coronavirus (Covid-19). *the* Cognitive Behaviour Therapist. Open access available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s1754470x2000029x>

****Here is the theory driven version of the model (it has some extra arrows and boxes compared to the simpler treatment model we have used in our training) that can also be used for conceptualizing uncertainty distress and planning treatment.

The specific focus of this resources sheet is to support use of the IUBEL questionnaire. The IUBEL was developed to assess a range of behaviours people may use in response to uncertain situations. Repertoires of behavioural strategies are highly idiosyncratic, both across situations and between people. Behaviours may be deployed according to specific characteristics of the situation, sequentially as a function of imminence of the situation, or as a function of current mood state. The questionnaires can capture a range of behaviours which can inform formulation. This information will be more useful than a final score (the scales may not be truly additive). Further, correlations between any subscale and a measure of for example, IU or distress, may be modest. It may however be helpful on a case-by-case or even a situation-to-situation basis to identify the specific repertoire that someone uses in the face of uncertainty.

There are two versions, General, and Situational.

**General version:**

The general version asks people to complete the question referring more broadly to uncertain situations in general. For clinical purposes a total score is not very meaningful (unless you want to track changes in the overall repertoire over time), rather it is important to look at the behaviours that are endorsed as most frequent. For a next level of interpretation, it may be worth considering if the most frequent behaviours fall into some specific item groupings or factors. These are indicated on the page following the questionnaire. Once again factor scores are not particularly helpful, it is the more the concentration of items rated 3-4 which may be most helpful.

The General Version could be used during initial conversations about uncertainty, to help people become more aware of how they use these strategies.

**Situational version:**

The situational version asks people to first identify and describe an uncertain situation, and then asks people whether they would use each of the behaviours. This was essentially the format used by Bottesi et al., 2019 (see below) on behaviours related to a laboratory task. The rest of the format comes from another clinical tool we have developed to look at people’s bodily experience of uncertain situations. In fact, the two could be used together. Both include appraisals of the situation. Based on past experience we think it is better to obtain the appraisals at the end, otherwise people may cue into negative outcomes and so the behaviours would become responses to threat, not uncertainty. We ask about a situation that may have positive, neutral, or negative outcomes for two reasons: first this distinguishes the “not knowing” from the valence of the outcome (otherwise people normally cue into threat), and second, people who are high in IU find uncertainty about positive outcomes equally aversive.

Pepperdine, E., Lomax, C., & Freeston, M. H. (2018). Disentangling intolerance of uncertainty and threat appraisal in everyday situations. *Journal of anxiety disorders*, *57*, 31-38.

The Situational Version could either be used during initial conversations about uncertainty, to help people become more aware of how they use these strategies by cueing them to a specific situation or it could be used when planning tasks about a specific situation where in order to modify their habitual strategies they first need to become aware of them. It could also be used as part of pre-post assessment of an encounter with uncertainty (a type of behavioural experiment).

***Intolerance of Uncertainty Behaviours in Everyday Life***

***(IUBEL)***

***Version 1.0.***

***© Mark Freeston, 2015, Newcastle University***

*Permission is given for use in routine clinical practice and supervision. Do not distribute or reproduce without permission. Please contact* [*mark.freeston@ncl.uk*](mailto:mark.freeston@ncl.uk) *for all information about its use*

***Please cite as:***

*Clifford, M., Hardcastle, R., Lambert, E., Beckwith, H., Bottesi, G., Wilkins, F., Mclean, F., & Freeston M. H. (2015). Development of a measure of Intolerance of Uncertainty Behaviours in Everyday Life (IUBEL). Technical report available from* [*mark.freeston@ncl.uk*](mailto:mark.freeston@ncl.uk)*, Newcastle University.*

**Development:**

The IUBEL was developed between 2013 and 2015 at Newcastle University over a series of projects by Mary Clifford, Rebecca Hardcastle, Emma Lambert, Helen Beckwith, Gioia Bottesi, Fran Wilkins, Faye Mclean & Mark Freeston. The original conceptual model is described by Sankar et al. (2017). This proposed five factors, namely, under-engagement, over-engagement, dither, flip-flop and impulsivity.

*Sankar, R., Robinson, L., Honey, E., & Freeston, M. (2017). ‘We know intolerance of uncertainty is a trans-diagnostic factor but we don’t know what it looks like in everyday life’: A systematic review of intolerance of uncertainty behaviours. Clinical Psychology Forum, 296, 10-15.*

The IUBEL uses accessible language. It should be considered exploratory at the moment. We have developed it sequentially through item generation, a first set of piloting, then data collection where it was used against idiosyncratic situations in different domains. Subsequently, we made a generic version, reduced the number of items and piloted again which resulted in the current version. The factors did not emerge exactly as planned. Twenty-two items in the current version were from the previous version, two have been added to reinforce two factors.

We have identified the following factors, three as originally conceptualized, the others were reinterpreted: Over-prepare; Partial-engagement; Impulsive; Monitor; Over-engage; Under-engage. Flip-flopping remains conceptually but is not measured directly, but involves switching between different strategies, namely Over-prepare and Over-engage Vs. Impulsiveness and Over-engage. Interestingly, the two remaining strategies, namely, Partial-engagement and Monitor

Gioia Bottesi (University of Padua) has translated it into Italian and published one study.

*Bottesi, G., Carraro, E., Martignon, A., Cerea, S., & Ghisi, M. (2019). “I’m Uncertain: What Should I Do?”: An Investigation of Behavioral Responses to Everyday Life Uncertain Situations. International Journal of Cognitive Therapy, 12, 55-72.* [*https://doi.org/10.1007/s41811-019-00040-y*](https://doi.org/10.1007/s41811-019-00040-y)*.*

**Intolerance of Uncertainty Behaviours in Everyday Life**

**IUBEL -General Version**

Many situations in life have an element of uncertainty, that is not knowing what will happen. How much depends on the situation, and novel situations, whether new but will be re-encountered or complete “one offs” are likely to be more uncertain. Some people embrace uncertainty whereas others dislike it intensely. People use a variety of behaviours in the face of uncertainty. This questionnaire is about the behaviours that people may use in the face of an uncertain situation.

By an uncertain situation we mean something hasn’t happened yet where there are possibilities of positive, neutral, or negative outcomes. We know that even when there are no negative outcomes, only positive to varying degrees, some people will still find the uncertainty uncomfortable. It is a situation where the outcome cannot yet be known.

**Place rate how much you use each of these strategies in uncertain situations using the following scale.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Never** | **Rarely** | **Sometimes** | **Often** | **Very frequently** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I approach the situation half-heartedly or in a roundabout way | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I become a control freak | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I churn the situation over and over in my mind | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I constantly reassure myself about the situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I distract myself from the situation by doing various other things | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I do the first thing that comes into my mind to get it out to the way | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I find out as much as I can about the situation (internet, family, friends, professional services) | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I focus completely on the situation to the exclusion of all other things | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I get sick of thinking about the situation and make an impulsive decision to be done with it | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I have back-up plans or a fall-back strategy | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I just give up | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I keep a constant eye on the situation without doing anything about it | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I keep away from anything that will remind me of the situation, or force me to deal with it | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I know what to do but wait until the time is right to take action | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I make a plan and start to do something, then stop | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I make a quick decision, even though I know it may not be the best course of action | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I plan everything in great detail | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I prepare myself for all eventualities | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I put off doing something about it until the last minute | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I put off thinking about it until later | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I run through everything I know about the situation again and again | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I track the situation but don't act until I have to | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I try and ignore the situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I'd rather do anything now than do nothing at all | 0 1 2 3 4 |

**IUBEL – Items Loading on Each Factor**

**Information for Therapists**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | ***Item*** | ***Factor*** | ***Label*** |
| 1 | I just give up | 1 | Under-Engage |
| 2 | I run through everything I know about the situation again and again | 2 | Over-Engage |
| 3 | I plan everything in great detail | 6 | Over-Prepare |
| 4 | I keep away from anything that will remind me of the situation, or force me to deal with it | 1 | Under-Engage |
| 5 | I know what to do but wait until the time is right to take action | 3 | Monitor |
| 6 | I get sick of thinking about the situation and make an impulsive decision to be done with it | 4 | Impulsivity |
| 7 | I track the situation but don't act until I have to | 3 | Monitor |
| 8 | ***I have back-up plans or a fall back strategy*** | ***6*** | ***Over-Prepare*** |
| 9 | ***I distract myself from the situation by doing various other things*** | ***1*** | ***Under-Engage*** |
| 10 | ***I do the first thing that comes into my mind to get it out to the way*** | ***4*** | ***Impulsivity*** |
| 11 | I become a control freak | 2 | Over-Engage |
| 12 | I put off thinking about it until later | 1 | Under-Engage |
| 13 | I'd rather do anything now than do nothing at all | 4 | Impulsivity |
| 14 | I prepare myself for all eventualities | 6 | Over-Prepare |
| 15 | I make a plan and start to do something, then stop | 5 | Partially-Engage |
| 16 | I constantly reassure myself about the situation | 3 | Monitor |
| 17 | I approach the situation half-heartedly or in a roundabout way | 5 | Partially-Engage |
| 18 | ***I churn the situation over and over in my mind*** | ***2*** | ***Over-Engage*** |
| 19 | I make a quick decision, even though I know it may not be the best course of action | 4 | Impulsivity |
| 20 | I try and ignore the situation | 1 | Under-Engage |
| 21 | ***I put off doing something about it until the last minute*** | ***5*** | ***Partially-Engage*** |
| 22 | ***I keep a constant eye on the situation without doing anything about it*** | ***3*** | ***Monitor*** |
| 23 | I focus completely on the situation to the exclusion of all other things | 2 | Over-Engage |
| 24 | I find out as much as I can about the situation (internet, family, friends, professional services) | 2 | Over-Engage |

Note: The six items in bold can be used a six-item scale for research purposes.

**Intolerance of Uncertainty Behaviours in Everyday Life**

**IUBEL -Situational Version**

Many situations in life have an element of uncertainty, that is not knowing what will happen. How much depends on the situation, and novel situations, whether new but will be re-encountered or complete “one offs” are likely to be more uncertain. Some people embrace uncertainty whereas others dislike it intensely. People use a variety of behaviours in the face of uncertainty. This questionnaire is about the behaviours that people may use in the face of an uncertain situation.

By an uncertain situation we mean something hasn’t happened yet where there are possibilities of positive, neutral, or negative outcomes. It is a situation where the outcome cannot yet be known.

**Please think of an uncertain situation that hasn’t happened yet, one where there could be a good outcome, or one that is neutral (OK, acceptable) or one that could be considered a bad outcome. The key issue is that you just don’t know yet.**

**Please briefly describe the situation:**

**Place rate how much you use each of the following strategies to when dealing with this situation using the following scale.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Never** | **Rarely** | **Sometimes** | **Often** | **Very frequently** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I approach this situation half-heartedly or in a roundabout way | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I become a control freak | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I churn this situation over and over in my mind | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I constantly reassure myself about this situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I distract myself from this situation by doing various other things | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I do the first thing that comes into my mind to get it out to the way | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I find out as much as I can about this situation (internet, family, friends, professional services) | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I focus completely on this situation to the exclusion of all other things | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I get sick of thinking about this situation and make an impulsive decision to be done with it | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I have back-up plans or a fall-back strategy | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I just give up | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I keep a constant eye on this situation without doing anything about it | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I keep away from anything that will remind me of this situation, or force me to deal with it | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I know what to do but wait until the time is right to take action | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I make a plan and start to do something, then stop | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I make a quick decision, even though I know it may not be the best course of action | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I plan everything in great detail in this situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I prepare myself for all eventualities in this situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I put off doing something about it until the last minute in this situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I put off thinking about it until later in this situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I run through everything I know about this situation again and again | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I track this situation but don't act until I have to | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | I try and ignore this situation | 0 1 2 3 4 |
|  | In this situation, I'd rather do anything now than do nothing at all | 0 1 2 3 4 |

Please continue on next page

**Please answer the following questions about this situation:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Now rate the following questions by circling the corresponding number:** | **Not at all** | **A bit** | | **Moderately** | | | **Very/ A lot** | **Extremely/ Completely** | |
| How uncertain do you feel? | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 |
| How much does this uncertainty bother you? | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 |

Now please briefly describe

Possible **positive** outcome:

Possible **neutral** outcome (OK, good enough, acceptable…):

Possible **negative** outcome:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Now rate the following questions by circling the corresponding number:** | **Not at all** | **A bit** | | **Moderately** | | | **Very/ A lot** | **Extremely/ Completely** | |
| How **positive** do you think the **positive** outcome could be? | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 |
| How likely is the **positive** outcome? | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 |
| How **negative** do you think the **negative** outcome could be? | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 |
| How likely is the **negative** outcome? | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 |
| How likely is the **neutral** outcome? | 0 | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | | | 4 |