

Traumatic Experience Inventory

This exploratory questionnaire describes the impact of one or more traumatic events: re-experiencing, avoidance, sense of threat, guilt and shame, disconnection and emotional overwhelm, and trust in relationships. It draws on the dimensions of posttraumatic stress disorder and complex posttraumatic stress disorder to clarify the clinical picture and choose treatment targets.

Number of questions	24 questions
Estimated duration	6 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Traumatic Experience Inventory
Target audience	Adults
Category	PTSD

Preview of the 24 questions

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

Unwanted memories of what I went through come back to me.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I try not to think about what happened.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I stay on guard, as if danger could strike at any moment.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I feel responsible for what happened.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past month, how often has this been true for you?

I feel cut off from my emotions, as if I'm numb.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Administer your questionnaires online

Send your patient a link: they answer from their phone or computer, and you receive the scored results by email.

View the questionnaire on mentaal.org ›

Scoring & interpretation

Scoring

Each statement is scored from 0 (never) to 4 (very often) based on its frequency over the past month. Each domain combines 4 statements spread throughout the questionnaire, giving a score from 0 to 16.

Reading the profile

There is no total score. Domains are ranked from most to least elevated, each with a description of what it covers and points to explore in the interview. The first three domains (re-experiencing, avoidance, sense of threat) correspond to posttraumatic stress disorder; guilt and shame, emotional overwhelm, and relationship difficulties overlap with the disturbances in self-organization described in complex PTSD. The profile helps choose between trauma-focused work and preliminary stabilization work.

Clinical cautions

Completing the questionnaire may bring back painful memories, so it is best offered at a time when a conversation can follow soon after. The introduction tells the patient that they do not have to describe the events.

Limitations

This exploratory questionnaire has not undergone psychometric validation and has no cutoffs. It supports the clinical interview and does not provide a diagnosis.

Scoring example

Scoring

Guilt and shame 12 / 16

Guilt, shame, negative beliefs about oneself or the world that have appeared or grown stronger since the event.

Areas to explore: what the person blames themselves for, what the event has changed in how they see themselves and others.

Trust and relationships 11 / 16

Difficulty trusting, a sense of distance from others, a tendency to isolate oneself.

Areas to explore: the relationships affected, trusted people, the support received after the event.

See also: Loneliness Experience Inventory.

Avoidance 7 / 16

Efforts not to think or talk about the event and to avoid what brings it to mind.

Areas to explore: the places, people, activities, and topics avoided, what avoidance costs in daily life.

Sense of threat 7 / 16

Hypervigilance, exaggerated startle, the feeling that danger could strike at any moment.

Areas to explore: the situations in which vigilance rises, safety behaviors, sleep.

Re-experiencing 6 / 16

Intrusive memories of the event, nightmares, the sense of reliving it, intense reactions to reminders.

Areas to explore: how often the memories occur and what triggers them, nightmares, physical reactions to reminders.

Disconnection and emotional overwhelm 6 / 16

Moments of detachment (unreality, numbed emotions) and emotions that are hard to soothe.

Areas to explore: episodes of disconnection and their triggers, the ways the person calms down, any risk-taking behaviors.

No validated clinical or psychometric cutoffs have been established for this test yet. The results should therefore be considered exploratory indicators, meant to support the clinical interview, not diagnostic findings.

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 Laura V. - Online Psychologist