

Traumatic Events

Every therapist who specializes in treating Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Acute Stress Disorder (ASD), and other traumatic experiences that do not meet the criteria for PTSD will ask for a list of traumatic events. This helps the therapist determine which traumatic events are related and where to begin treatment, ensuring that your treatment process goes as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

Completing this form (on a computer or by printing it out) will save both you and your therapist valuable time during sessions.

How do I complete this exercise?

The best way to do this is as follows:

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
2. Focus on the traumatic event and try to recall as many details as possible. This may bring up a range of negative emotions, such as sadness, fear, anger, or disgust.
3. Once you have recalled as many details as possible, rate the distress of the event on a 0–10 scale, with 0 being neutral and 10 being extremely distressing. Note: It is important to base your rating on how upsetting the event makes you feel during this exercise, not how you felt when it originally happened.
4. Write down:
 - How old you were when the traumatic event took place.
 - What happened* (briefly).
 - The main emotions and physical sensations you experience when recalling the event.

* Some people prefer not to disclose specific details of what happened. If this is the case, you can assign the event a neutral name instead. That works just as well.

Examples:

#	Age	Event	0-10	Main Emotion	Physical Sensation
1	7	Car accident. My dad, mom, and I were driving to my aunt when another car hit us. My mom died.	10	Sadness	Chest, heart
2	8-10	Being bullied by Jake and his friends. They stole my lunch money and were beating me up regularly.	8	Anger, Fear	Stomach, neck, back
3	12	I will call this: Bedroom	10	Shame, Disgust	Private parts

Event #1 is a single event and happened when he was 7 years old. At this moment, it is really upsetting: 0-10: 10. The main emotion is sadness (and perhaps this person feels some anger as well). When he thinks of this event, he feels a sensation in his chest and heart.

Event #2 is less upsetting at this moment. The event took place over a longer period of time, but it is unclear whether this happened at ages 8, 9, and 10 or somewhere between 8 and 10. It is not a problem if someone can't remember the exact age. There are two main emotions: anger and fear.

Event #3 is very upsetting: 0-10: 10, and the person doesn't want to give more details than necessary. The therapist can refer to this traumatic event by naming it "Bedroom."

#	Age	Event	0-10	Main Emotion	Physical Sensation
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					