

## Signs and Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

0 = Not at all; never. 1 = sometimes; a little. 2 = Moderately. 3 = strongly; nearly all the time.

Rating	Symptoms
Y / N	<p>Have you experienced or witnessed a traumatic or life-threatening event such as an assault, rape, seeing someone badly injured or killed, combat, accidents, or natural or man-made disasters?</p> <p>If patient responds yes, proceed with the following questions.</p> <p>Have you recently experienced any of the following <b>physical responses</b>:</p> <p>_____ • Excessive alertness, on the look-out for signs of danger            _____ • Easily startled by movements or noise            _____ • Difficulty sleeping</p> <p>Have you recently experienced any of the following <b>emotional responses</b>:</p> <p>_____ • Feeling numb, detached or cut-off from other people            _____ • Fear of the event happening again, or something else bad happening to you            _____ • Easily irritated with others            _____ • Difficulty concentrating            _____ • Feeling guilty about what you did (or did not do), or simply surviving better than others            _____ • Feeling distress when reminded of any aspect of the event</p> <p>Have you been reminded of or <b>re-experienced</b> the event in any of the following ways:</p> <p>_____ • Intrusive thoughts and memories of the event            _____ • Visual images of the event            _____ • Nightmares            _____ • Felt like you were reliving the event</p> <p>Have you experienced any of the following <b>behavioural responses</b>:</p> <p>_____ • Avoidance of places or activities that are reminders of the event            _____ • Avoiding thoughts and feelings associated with the event            _____ • Wanting to be alone and feeling detached from others            _____ • Difficulty remembering important aspects of the event            _____ • Feeling uninterested in your usual activities (for example, work or family commitments)</p>

## **Guidelines for use**

It is normal to experience many of these symptoms following a traumatic event. For many people these symptoms will subside shortly after the event.

If a patient scores greater than 6 and has been experiencing these symptoms for greater than one month, this indicates high symptom levels and a probable diagnosis. The client will probably benefit from a referral to a fully qualified clinical psychologist skilled in trauma.

If a patient scores between 1-6 and has been experiencing these symptoms for less than one month then we suggest that you monitor and reassess in another month.

Patients may benefit from psycho-education on how to manage psychological trauma (see our information sheet on “Managing psychological Trauma”) and relaxation exercises. They may need advice about avoiding alcohol or major decisions at this time.

National **treatment guidelines** for PTSD suggest that CBT is the treatment of choice. Early ‘debriefing’ is not necessarily helpful. SSRI’s can be helpful (sertraline has the most research support), although benzodiazepines are contraindicated.

If you wish to discuss treatment with a fully qualified psychologist, you can call  
Basten & Associates, Clinical Psychologists on 9891-1766.  
Chatswood Sydney Westmead  
[www.bastenpsychology.com.au](http://www.bastenpsychology.com.au)