

PTSD CHECKLIST – CIVILIAN VERSION (PCL-C)

Name (*Print*): _____ Date: _____

INSTRUCTIONS TO PATIENT: Below is a list of problems and complaints that people sometimes have in response to stressful life experiences. Please read each one carefully, put an "X" in the box to indicate how much you have been bothered by that problem *in the last month*.

No.	Response	Not at all (1)	A little bit (2)	Moderately (3)	Quite a bit (4)	Extremely (5)
1.	Repeated, disturbing <i>memories, thoughts</i> , or <i>images</i> of a stressful experience from the past?					
2.	Repeated, disturbing <i>dreams</i> of a stressful experience from the past?					
3.	Suddenly <i>acting</i> or <i>feeling</i> as if a stressful experience were <i>happening</i> again (as if you were reliving it)?					
4.	Feeling <i>very upset</i> when <i>something reminded</i> you of a stressful experience from the past?					
5.	Having <i>physical reactions</i> (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, or sweating) when <i>something reminded</i> you of a stressful experience from the past?					
6.	Avoid <i>thinking about</i> or <i>talking about</i> a stressful experience from the past or avoid having <i>feelings</i> related to it?					
7.	Avoid <i>activities</i> or <i>situations</i> because they <i>remind you</i> of a stressful experience from the past?					
8.	Trouble <i>remembering important</i> parts of a stressful experience from the past?					
9.	Loss of <i>interest in things that you used to enjoy</i> ?					
10.	Feeling <i>distant</i> or cut off from other people?					
11.	Feeling <i>emotionally numb</i> or being unable to have loving feelings for those close to you?					
12.	Feeling as if your <i>future</i> will somehow be <i>cut short</i> ?					

13.	Trouble <i>falling</i> or <i>staying asleep</i> ?					
14.	Feeling <i>irritable</i> or having <i>angry outbursts</i> ?					
15.	Having <i>difficulty concentrating</i> ?					
16.	Being “ <i>super alert</i> ” or watchful on guard?					
17.	Feeling <i>jumpy</i> or easily startled?					

PCL-M for DSM-IV (11/1/94) Weathers, Litz, Huska, & Keane National Center for PTSD – Behavioral Science Division

Total Severity Score				
Symptomatic Response				

Below are suggested cut-off score ranges based on prevalence and setting characteristics. Consider scores on the low end of the range if the goal is to screen for PTSD. Consider scores on the high end of the range if the goal is to aid in diagnosis of PTSD.

Suggested PCL cut-off scores

Estimated prevalence of PTSD	Suggested PCL cut-off score
Below 15% (Primary care)	30-35
16-39% (DVA primary care, specialized medical clinics)	36-44
Above 40% (Specialist mental health clinics)	45-50

NB: these recommendations are general and approximate and are not intended to be used for legal or policy purposes. Research is needed to establish optimal cut-off scores for a specific population.

The PCL is a standardized self-report rating scale for PTSD comprising 17 items that correspond to the key symptoms of PTSD. Two versions of the PCL exist: 1) PCL-M is specific to PTSD caused by military experiences and 2) PCL-C is applied generally to any traumatic event.

The PCL can be easily modified to fit specific time frames or events. For example, instead of asking about “the past month,” questions may ask about “the past week” or be modified to focus on events specific to a deployment.

How is the PCL completed?

The PCL is self-administered Respondents indicate how much they have been bothered by a symptom over the past month using a 5-point (1–5) scale, circling their responses. Responses range from 1 Not at All – 5 Extremely

How is the PCL Scored?

1. Add up all items for a total severity score

Or

2. Treat response categories 3–5 (Moderately or above) as symptomatic and responses 1–2 (below Moderately) as non-symptomatic, then use the following DSM criteria for a diagnosis:

- Symptomatic response to at least 1 “B” item (Questions 1–5),
- Symptomatic response to at least 3 “C” items (Questions 6–12), and
- Symptomatic response to at least 2 “D” items (Questions 13–17)

Are Results Valid and Reliable?

Two studies of both Vietnam and Persian Gulf theater veterans show that the PCL is both valid and reliable (Additional references are available from the DHCC)