



Spouse Abuse

Post-Traumatic Stress Reaction and Disorder Interpersonal Violence Diagnostic Criteria

1. Experiencing a traumatic abusive and violent event (caused by one or more individuals) that is outside of the range of usual human experience (such as sexual abuse and exploitation, assault and battery, gender and racial discrimination, hate crimes) that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone. The traumatic event may be experienced one time or over a repeated period.*
2. Changes in cognition or in the way people think about the world and themselves. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in at least three of the following ways:
 - a. Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event (**spontaneous and ruminations**)
 - b. Recurrent distressing dreams of the event
 - c. Sudden acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative and/or flashback episodes, even those that occur upon awakening or when intoxicated)
 - d. Intense psychological distress at exposure to events that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event, including anniversaries of the trauma
 - e. Interference with normal learning activities because of bad memories, attention deficits, difficulty in concentrating, or relating to teachers or supervisors
 - f. Increased ability to intensely focus on areas other than those which cause distress or pain. In extreme cases, dissociation or fragmented and multiple personalities occur.
 - g. Obsessive thoughts about the abuser(s)
 - h. Confused thinking



3. **Changes in affect demonstrated by depression-like symptoms.**
Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma or numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma) as indicated by at least **four** of the following:
 - a. Efforts to avoid thoughts or feelings associated with trauma
 - b. Efforts to avoid activities or situations that arouse recollection of the trauma
 - c. Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma (psychogenic amnesia, denial, minimization, and repression in repeated trauma)
 - d. Marked diminished interest in significant activities
 - e. Intense periods of sadness with or without crying**
 - f. Restricted range of affect (**including fear of own anger**)
 - g. Sense of a foreshortened future or death
 - h. Self-mutilation and/or suicidal ideation and attempts**
 - i. Use of alcohol or drugs to avoid feelings**
4. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal **and anxiety symptoms** as indicated by at least four of the following:
 - a. Difficulty falling or staying asleep
 - b. Difficulty in eating properly**
 - c. Irritability or outbursts of anger
 - d. Difficulty concentrating and attention disorders
 - e. Hypervigilance to cues of potential danger
 - f. Exaggerated startle response
 - g. Physiologic reactivity upon exposure to events that symbolize or resemble and aspect of the traumatic event (**somatization, psychophysiological disorders, anxiety disorders, immunological deficits, and other high stress symptoms**)
 - h. Anxiety or panic attacks
 - i. Increased fearfulness and phobic reactions
 - j. Temporary increase in activity level



5. **Changes in interpersonal relationships.** Different types of changes in relationships occur when trauma was experienced in the family, by a person in a trusted position of authority, included sexual components, and occurred more than one time. Indicated by presence of at least three of the following:
- a. Feelings of detachment or estrangement from others (feel different, lack of trust, fear of betrayal)
 - b. Isolation from friends and family
 - c. Inability to be alone (or separate from abuser)
 - d. Confusion between emotional and sexual intimacy
 - e. Sexual dysfunction (lack of sexual desire, inappropriate sexual conduct, fear of sex, sexual acting out)
 - f. Increased need for power and control over individuals less powerful than themselves (both overt and covert manipulation)
 - g. Difficulty in respecting boundaries and limits between themselves and other people
 - h. Extreme compliance and need to please others
6. Duration of less than 6 weeks get coded as a Post-Traumatic Stress Reaction (PTSR) and more than 6 weeks is coded as a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

**Measure whether trauma reaches threshold level by clinical judgment after evaluating the individual's abuse history or by using the Severity of Psychosocial Stressor Scale, as follows:*

Level 4: Severe

Single event – rape, life threatening assault, enduring circumstances (ongoing physical and sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, serious psychological harassment)

Level 5: Extreme

Being held hostage, kidnapped, near-death experiences

Level 6: Catastrophic

Ritual abuse