

# What is the Nature of Your Trauma?

## Objective

To identify the specific nature of your trauma.

## What to Know

Prolonged illness, homelessness, or witnessing a terrifying event are all examples of traumatic situations. Trauma can be a single event (car accident, sexual assault, or natural disaster) or repeated events (childhood abuse and neglect). It can be chronic (combat, ongoing domestic violence, imprisonment). Some researchers believe any experience – and how it is perceived – that is stressful enough to leave you feeling helpless, powerless, out of control, overwhelmed, or profoundly unsafe can be considered traumatic.

Even though you have experienced trauma, you can move forward with your life. You can grow, become resilient, and have a meaningful life. Your life does not end because of a trauma. The first step is to understand your trauma and its consequences. In this worksheet, you will begin to explore your trauma history.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Were you directly exposed to a traumatic experience? Yes / No

If yes, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Were you a witness to a traumatic event/experience? Yes / No

If yes, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Were you told about it by a loved one? Yes / No

If yes, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Were you indirectly exposed to trauma? Yes / No

If yes, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Were you repeatedly exposed to trauma? Yes / No

If yes, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

What is the nature of your trauma? Check off the statements that apply to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ physical assault (held at gunpoint, injured in a fight, attacked with a weapon, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ serious illness or extended hospitalization

\_\_\_\_\_ military combat

\_\_\_\_\_ sexual abuse

- \_\_\_\_\_ car accident
- \_\_\_\_\_ serious work-related accident
- \_\_\_\_\_ child abuse or neglect
- \_\_\_\_\_ natural disaster
- \_\_\_\_\_ unemployment
- \_\_\_\_\_ homelessness
- \_\_\_\_\_ refugee situation
- \_\_\_\_\_ job loss
- \_\_\_\_\_ financial crash
- \_\_\_\_\_ sudden and unexpected death of a loved one

Other (describe):

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If you are able, describe what happened.

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Below is a list of problems that people sometimes have in response to trauma. Write down the appropriate number to indicate how much you have been bothered by the problem in the past month.

- 0 = not at all bothered
- 1 = a little bit bothered
- 2 = moderately bothered

3 = bothered quite a bit

4 = extremely bothered

\_\_\_\_\_ Repeated disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of the stressful experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ Repeated, disturbing dreams or nightmares.

\_\_\_\_\_ Suddenly acting or feeling as if the traumatic experience is happening again.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feeling very upset when something reminds you of the traumatic experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ Having physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating) when something reminds you of the experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ Avoiding thinking about or talking about the experience or avoiding having feelings related to it.

\_\_\_\_\_ Avoiding activities or situations because they remind you of the experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ Trouble remembering important parts of the experience.

\_\_\_\_\_ Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feeling distant or cut off from other people.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feeling emotionally numb or unable to have loving feelings for others.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feeling as if your future will somehow be cut short.

\_\_\_\_\_ Trouble falling or staying asleep.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Difficulty concentrating.

\_\_\_\_\_ Being “super alert,” watchful, or on guard.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feeling jumpy or easily startled.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Add up your score**

If you scored between 0-18, these symptoms following a trauma may not be impacting your daily life.

If you scored between 19-40, your trauma-related symptoms are having a minimal effect on your life.

If you scored between 41-60, your trauma-related symptoms are having a moderate effect on your life.

If you scored 61 points or more, your trauma-related symptoms are severely impacting your life.

