



Figure 1. Venn diagram of the overlap between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) core symptoms, PTSD-associated symptoms, disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified (DESNOS)/complex PTSD, borderline personality disorder (BPD), and major depressive disorder (MDD).

TRAUMA

- Irritability, quick to anger
- Increased edginess and agitation
- Avoidance of reminders of trauma
- Feelings of fear, helplessness, uncertainty, or vulnerability
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Dissociation, feelings of unreality or 'being outside ones' body'
- Continually feeling on alert.
- Heightened need to control environment and or other people
- Unusually reckless, aggressive, or self-destructive behaviour
- Attachment problems
- Body memories
- Relational control of self or with others
- Emotional numbing
- Urges to isolate and withdraw from other people
- Intrusive memories related to traumatic experience (flashbacks)
- **Occurs because of life experience**

OVERLAP

- Difficulty focusing
- Easily distracted
- Often doesn't seem to listen
- Disorganisation
- Tense hyperactivity
- Restless
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low frustration tolerance
- Difficulty understanding or expressing personal needs
- Low self-esteem
- Forgetfulness and spacing out
- Impulsivity
- Feelings of shame and guilt
- Mood regulation difficulties

ADHD

- Difficulty sustaining attention
- Struggling to follow instructions
- Difficulty with organisation
- Fidgeting or squirming
- Difficulty waiting or taking turns
- Talking excessively
- Losing things necessary for tasks or activities
- Interrupting or intruding upon others
- Low frustration tolerance
- Poor planning
- Mood regulation difficulties
- Problems completing tasks
- Poor time management
- Hyperfocus on specific interests and activities
- **A neurodevelopmental disorder that exists across the lifespan**

Anxiety and Information Processing

Anxiety is not just an emotion. It is a brain-based information processing style. Anxious brains think differently than less-anxious brains.



Symptom of functional disorder	Causes	
	PTSD	ADHD
Hyperactivity	<p>Fear of event repetition; Alertness – state of readiness; Increase in tension and irritability; Responding with fear to stimuli associated with trauma; Lowered activity of anterior part of cingulated cortex – area of the brain inhibiting amygdala and other regions responsible for response to experienced fear;</p>	Neurobiological conditions;
Attentional disorders	Result of concentration on searching for and identifying dangers;	Neurobiological conditions (low resilience to distractors, problems with inhibition of automatic reactions);
Impulsiveness	<p>Result of increased readiness; Defense reactions; Overreacting to stimuli associated with trauma;</p>	Neurobiological conditions, deficits in respect of inhibition of reactions;
Anxiety	<p>Need for security; Fear of losing a parent; Increased separation anxiety; Lowered activity of anterior part of cingulated cortex – area of the brain inhibiting amygdala and other regions responsible for response to experienced fear;</p>	<p>Attentional disorders – poor attention shifting, resulting in concentration on stimuli eliciting unrest, inadequate attentional strategies based on the need for protection from potential danger; Thinking rigidity and tendency to persevere connected with operational memory deficits; Increased emotional reactivity observed in quick occurrence of emotional response and its high intensity;</p>
Aggressive behaviors	<p>Fear of torturer; Lack of trust towards the world and people; Attempt at defending oneself; Attitude to avoid harm and ensuring one's security; Open hostility, anger, which result from lack of control over one's life;</p>	Secondary to problems with inhibition of reactions; being result of irregularities in respect of functioning of social relations (need to dominate and control), lack of cooperation skills, reaction to rejection by social group;
Sleep disorders	<p>Nightmares (not only about event content) as symptom of reliving; Difficulties falling asleep and restless sleep as alertness symptom;</p>	Possible difficulties with falling asleep connected with intensified level of motor and emotional system arousal;
Problems with learning	<p>Brain partially limits cognitive-developmental functions and focuses on survival function; Intrusive imaginations of negative event result in increased activation of neural</p>	They are divided into two groups: (1) Problems connected with mastering taught material and using gained knowledge resulting from attentional deficits,

Trauma Reaction Cards Checklist

Client Name: _____

Date: _____

Behavior Reactions

<input type="checkbox"/> Hitting	<input type="checkbox"/> Arguing	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Listening /Defiance
<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Cursing	<input type="checkbox"/> Breaking Things
<input type="checkbox"/> Running away	<input type="checkbox"/> Crying	<input type="checkbox"/> Outbursts of anger
<input type="checkbox"/> School Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Lying	<input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom Problems
<input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding people, places, things, or sensations related to the trauma	<input type="checkbox"/> Acting younger than you are	<input type="checkbox"/> Isolating yourself from others
<input type="checkbox"/> Hurting your own body	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe sexual practices	<input type="checkbox"/> Trying to end your life
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking out your feelings on people you care about	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealing	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with eating
<input type="checkbox"/> Trusting others too quickly/ Inappropriate boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/> Tantrums	<input type="checkbox"/> Using drugs/alcohol/cigarettes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty separating from caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble getting along with others
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Body Reactions

<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling like you are re-experiencing the trauma	<input type="checkbox"/> Being on guard or constantly alert	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling disconnected from your body
<input type="checkbox"/> Jumpy or Easily Startled	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with eating	<input type="checkbox"/> Hyperactive
<input type="checkbox"/> Body Feeling Shaky	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling short of breath	<input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares
<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble with sleep	<input type="checkbox"/> Bellyaches/Nausea	<input type="checkbox"/> Headaches
<input type="checkbox"/> Low energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Body Feeling of Panic	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Body or muscles tense	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Feelings Reactions

<input type="checkbox"/> Guilty	<input type="checkbox"/> Having worries	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad
<input type="checkbox"/> Angry	<input type="checkbox"/> Nervous/anxious	<input type="checkbox"/> Moody/Irritable
<input type="checkbox"/> Ashamed	<input type="checkbox"/> Depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpless
<input type="checkbox"/> Numb	<input type="checkbox"/> Betrayed	<input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless about Future
<input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	<input type="checkbox"/> Easily Upset	<input type="checkbox"/> Not caring about others
<input type="checkbox"/> Not enjoying the things used to	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling different from others	<input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Brain & Thinking Reactions

<input type="checkbox"/> "Everyone is unsafe"	<input type="checkbox"/> Not trusting others	<input type="checkbox"/> "It's my fault" or blaming self
<input type="checkbox"/> "The world is a bad place"	<input type="checkbox"/> "I am bad"	<input type="checkbox"/> Memories/Flashbacks
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty Concentrating/ Focusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Forgetting parts of the trauma	<input type="checkbox"/> Tring to keep feelings/ thoughts of trauma out of head
<input type="checkbox"/> Thinking nothing good will ever happen	<input type="checkbox"/> Thinking about the safety of loved ones	<input type="checkbox"/> Thoughts about what happened pop into you head
<input type="checkbox"/> Thinking about the trauma often	<input type="checkbox"/> Thinking about dying/ wanting to die	<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures of what happen pop into your head
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM: PRECISION REGULATION

** WHAT TO LOOK FOR **

	LETHARGIC Parasympathetic I (PNS I)	CALM Parasympathetic II (PNS II) <i>Ventral Vagus</i>	ACTIVE/ALERT Sympathetic I (SNS I)	FLIGHT/FIGHT Sympathetic II (SNS II)	HYPER FREEZE Sympathetic III (SNS III)	HYPO FREEZE Parasympathetic III (PNS III) <i>Dorsal Vagus Collapse</i>
		◀ "Normal" Life ▶			◀ Threat to Life ▶	
PRIMARY STATE	Apathy, Depression	Safe, Clear Thinking, Social Engagement	Alert, Ready to Act	React to Danger	Await Opportunity to Escape	Prepare for Death
AROUSAL	Too Low	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme Overload	Excessive Overwhelm Induces Hypoarousal
MUSCLES	Slack	Relaxed/toned	Toned	Tense	Rigid (deer in the headlights)	Flaccid
RESPIRATION	Shallow	Easy, often into belly	Increasing rate	Fast, often in upper chest	Hyperventilation	Hypo-ventilation
HEART RATE	Slow	Resting	Quicker or more forceful	Quick and/or forceful	Tachycardia (very fast)	Bradycardia (very slow)
BLOOD PRESSURE	Likely low	Normal	On the rise	Elevated	Significantly high	Significantly low
PUPILS, EYES, EYE LIDS	Pupils smaller, lids may be heavy	Pupils smaller, eyes moist, eye lids relaxed	Pupils widening, eyes less moist, eye lids toned	Pupils very dilated, eyes dry, eye lids tensed/raised	Pupils very small or dilated, eyes very dry, lids very tense	Lids drooping, eyes closed or open and fixed
SKIN TONE	Variable	Rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Less rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Pale hue, despite skin color (blood flow to muscles)	May be pale and/or flushed	Noticeably pale
HUMIDITY	Skin	Dry	Dry	Increased sweat	Increased sweat, may be cold	Cold sweat
	Mouth	Variable	Moist	Less moist	Dry	Dry
HANDS & FEET (TEMPERATURE)	May be warm or cool	Warm	Cool	Cold	Extremes of cold & hot	Cold
DIGESTION	Variable	Increase	Decrease	Stops	Evacuate bowel & bladder	Stopped
EMOTIONS (LIKELY)	Grief, sadness, shame, disgust	Calm, pleasure, love, sexual arousal	Anger, shame, disgust, anxiety, excitement, sexual climax	Rage, fear	Terror, may be dissociation	May be too dissociated to feel anything
CONTACT WITH SELF & OTHERS	Withdrawn	Probable	Possible	Limited	Not likely	Impossible
FRONTAL CORTEX	May or may not be accessible	Should be accessible	Should be accessible	May or may not be accessible	Likely inaccessible	Inaccessible
INTEGRATION	Not likely	Likely	Likely	Not likely	Impossible	Impossible
RECOMMENDED INTERVENTION	Activate, Gently Increase Energy	Continue Therapy Direction	Continue Therapy Direction	Put on Brakes	<i>Slam on Brakes</i>	<i>Medical Emergency CALL PARAMEDICS</i>

Observe client states: To modulate arousal with brakes. Adjust in yourself: To think clearly & prevent vicarious trauma & compassion fatigue.

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