**PTSD Assist App Content**

Complete Content

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# First Launch

Welcome to PTSD Assist! This app was developed for trauma survivors. Whether you have Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or you are concerned that you might, this app is for you. This app won’t diagnose you with PTSD or offer you treatment – only a trained professional can do that. But it can help you learn about PTSD, and it will give you tools for managing the stresses that can follow a trauma. This app is based on the current evidence-based understandings of PTSD.

To get the most out of this app, you should set some things up as soon as possible. You will need to select:

* Whether you are a currently serving ADF member or a former serving member, this will ensure the app provides you with the most relevant information about supports,
* Friends, loved ones, and/or professionals who can help when you’re feeling stressed,
* Pictures on your phone that you find comforting or funny, and
* Songs on your phone that you find relaxing or that put you in a good mood.

You can change your selections at any time by visiting Set Up.

To do this now, tap "Continue with Setup." Otherwise, tap "Skip Setup." If you skip Setup, tools in the app that use these items will not be available until you complete Setup.

# Home Screen

# Learn About PTSD

## Learn about PTSD

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Content** |
| What is PTSD?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (or PTSD) is a psychological disorder that can arise following exposure to traumatic events. These events include things like combat, disasters, terrorism, serious accidents, or physical and sexual assault. PTSD involves a range of symptoms.    Re-experiencing symptoms, in which the trauma is relived in various ways, such as having flashbacks, nightmares, or becoming very upset when reminded of the trauma.    Avoidance and numbing symptoms - Avoiding or staying away from  places  or people because they remind you of the trauma, cutting yourself off  from    others,    and/or    feeling   emotionally flat or numb.    Increased arousal - such as feeling on guard, being irritable, trouble sleeping or startling easily.    The symptoms of PTSD can lead to problems in functioning in social settings, family life, at work, or at school. |
| How PTSD develops  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | After a trauma, it’s not unusual to have painful memories and to become upset when reminded of what happened. Trauma can affect how people think about themselves, about others, the world, and the future. For most, these reactions lessen over time and thinking returns to normal. For some, however, reactions continue and may be severe enough to disrupt day to day life. How people respond to these early, normal reactions, in part, can determine if PTSD develops. For example, because memories and reminders of the trauma are painful, it makes sense to want to avoid them. However, too much avoidance can prevent a person from adequately dealing with the memories and reminders and making sense of what happened. This may mean normal trauma reactions become more lasting PTSD symptoms. |
| How common is PTSD  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Although most people recover after a trauma, it is not uncommon for people to develop PTSD. About 5% of the general Australian population will have PTSD in their lifetime, with women being more than twice as likely to develop it as men. Following a trauma, it can be expected that around 20% of women and 8% of men will develop PTSD. Certain types of trauma, such as rape and combat, can cause even higher rates. Between 5 and 20% of Australian veterans will experience PTSD. |
| Who develops PTSD  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Developing PTSD is not a sign of weakness. It’s important to remember that most people (50-75%) are exposed to a potentially traumatic event at some times during their lifetimes. Virtually anyone can develop PTSD. However, there are some factors that can make it more likely. These include being female, having a prior trauma, having been abused as a child, having a pre-existing mental health problem, and a family history of mental illness.  Reactions **during** trauma can increase your risk. Extreme reactions, on the one hand feeling numb or detached from yourself or your surroundings and on the other hand experiencing intense and prolonged anxiety, including a panic attack, are signs that the event was especially traumatic. Being seriously injured also puts one at higher risk.  Risk factors **after** trauma include lack of social support and experiencing additional life stressors (e.g., job loss, divorce). |
| How long does PTSD last  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | PTSD symptoms usually appear very soon after trauma. For most people, these symptoms go away on their own within the weeks and months after the trauma. For a significant minority some the symptoms can last for many years. PTSD symptoms can stay at a fairly constant level of severity or individuals can have periods when symptoms are not very intense and other times when symptoms are severe. PTSD symptoms can worsen during times of stress or when trauma survivors are reminded of the trauma (e.g. anniversaries). How long PTSD lasts also depends on whether effective treatment is received. |
| Related problems  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Other problems also commonly occur alongside PTSD. These include depression, other anxiety disorders, and alcohol and substance use problems. In fact, more than half of men with PTSD have alcohol problems and nearly half of women with PTSD have depression. PTSD also can reduce one’s ability to function in relationships, at work and school, and in leisure activities. In addition, people with PTSD may suffer physical symptoms and may be at increased risk of medical problems. |
| PTSD treatment  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | PTSD is treated with counselling or medication, or a combination of these. The most effective treatments for PTSD are exposure-based cognitive-behavioral therapies (CBT). These treatments involve exploring how the trauma has negatively affected one’s thinking and behavior and helping survivors respond in more adaptive ways to what happened and what it might mean. Treatment may also include helping the trauma survivor really focus (safely, and with support) on the painful trauma memories and reminders that they’ve been avoiding, learning that they can survive them and be ok. Individuals are also taught coping skills to more effectively deal with stress and manage PTSD symptoms, much like the skills available on this app.  For more information about treatment, including where to find it, see the Find Support section of this app or the Department of Veteran Affairs At Ease Website (see the Find Support Tab for links) |
| Do I have PTSD?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Only a trained mental health professional can determine if you have PTSD. However, there are self-tests, including the one on this app, which can help you decide if your symptoms require a more thorough evaluation from a professional. If you suspect that you have PTSD, talk with your doctor or schedule an appointment with a mental health professional. Also, it is important to remember that some people may develop other conditions, such as depression, after experiencing a trauma.  If your trauma was less than a fortnight ago and you are not in too much distress or having problems functioning with work, relationships or school, then you may just want to watch and wait to see if your symptoms get better on their own. Using the tools in this app can help. However if your symptoms are very distressing or if you do not seem to be getting better after a couple of weeks, seek professional help.  To take the self-assessment now, click on Assess at the bottom of the screen. |
| I have PTSD…  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | If you’ve been diagnosed with PTSD, the tools on this app may help you better manage your symptoms. However, this app is not intended or designed as a replacement for more traditional forms of psychological help. If you are currently in treatment for PTSD, it’s important to talk with your provider about using this app. Individuals with PTSD often find that having multiple tools and sources of support is a great strategy for successfully dealing with PTSD symptoms. Your health care provider can access handy guides to integrating this app into your treatment. See the find support tab for links to these resources at the Department of Veteran Affairs At Ease website.  Remember: effective treatment for PTSD is available! You don’t have to live with your symptoms forever. |

## Learn about Professional Care

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Description** |
| Do I need professional help?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Whether or not you need help can only be determined by you and a trained healthcare professional. However, you can go and take the self-assessment on this app to see if you are scoring in the high, medium, or low range of symptoms. You can also ask yourself these questions. If you answer yes to any of them, then you might want to seek help. • Have you felt sad or depressed most of the time for longer than two weeks? • Have you been feeling anxious or had distressing thoughts almost all the time? • Have you had trouble working or meeting your daily responsibilities?  • Have you had problems in your relationships, or trouble taking care of your family? • Have you increased your use of alcohol, illicit drugs, or prescription medications, or have you been using them to cope with your problems lately? • Are you very angry most of the time? • Do other people say they worry about you and think you should go talk to someone? • Are you having trouble sleeping most of the time? • Are you having trouble eating, or have you gained or lost a lot of weight without trying? • Have you had thoughts about suicide, hurting, or killing someone else? If you said yes to this last one, please call 000 or go immediately to the nearest hospital emergency room.  If you said yes to any of the others, you would likely benefit from talking with a health practitioner. You don’t have to wait for an emergency to speak to someone. Book in to see your general practitioner or you can call the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service 24 hours a day on 1800-011-046. |
| Why do people usually seek professional help?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | The first few weeks after a traumatic event can be hard. It is common to have trouble with life, avoid situations, feel very nervous, and have trouble sleeping. But if you don’t get better in the first month, then you should think about seeking help. Your general practitioner is generally the best place to start. People close to you mean well, but they may not be able to help you the way you need them to. Maybe you would like to talk with your friends and family, but you are away from them right now. Experiences like rape, assault, domestic violence, loss of a friend, or an operational incident may feel too private or sensitive. You may feel uneasy or unsafe to talk with someone you know.   One of the most helpful ways to feel better and get back on track is to work with a mental health professional. However, many people don’t seek counselling even though they might benefit. Professionals who specialize in working with PTSD can help you learn to manage your feelings and thoughts. They can also help you feel more relaxed about connecting with people in your daily life, pursuing your goals, and focusing on your future.   Keep in mind that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Talking to a counsellor can improve your ability to help yourself. |
| Will it really work?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Scientific evidence shows that many types of therapy and medications really are effective.  It may be hard to imagine now, but you can work through your stress. Counselling may also help ease your transition back home or into civilian life. Like many others that have received counselling, there is a very good chance that you will thank yourself later for sitting through a few uncomfortable hours.  Worried that counsellors won’t be able to help you or won’t understand what you have been through? You may be surprised to find out that they can help, and will work hard to understand you and your experiences. Counsellors are highly trained professionals. Some of them specialize in working with military personnel and veterans. They cannot help or understand you if you don’t give them a chance.  If you have a few sessions with a counsellor and you don't think it's going well, you can talk to the counsellor or your GP about what you want changed or you can ask for a different counsellor. Counsellors are interested in your recovery and will help you get the care you need. |
| PTSD treatments that work  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | The good news is that there are several types of treatment that work for PTSD.  The best evidence supports Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) for PTSD. Two types of CBT that have the most research behind them are Prolonged Exposure Therapy and Cognitive Processing Therapy.  Research also supports the use of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, or EMDR, and finally, medications called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, or SSRIs.  If you have PTSD, you can look for a therapist who uses one of these approaches. Within the Defence or DVA health care systems, many practitioners are trained in providing evidence based treatments. |
| What about practical things like scheduling appointments, costs, and transportation?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | When considering professional counselling, many people worry about practical things that may keep them from getting help. Concerns about how to find a counsellor, the cost of treatment, getting time off from work, and transportation to appointments are very common. Each is addressed briefly below. Finding a counsellor: A good place to start your search for a counsellor is to ask your doctor for a referral. You can also ask other health care professionals for suggestions. If you are a veteran, you can also call the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service to find a local provider with experience working with veterans. The number is 1800-011-046, and is available 24 hours a day. You can also check out the Find Support tab to find web links to resources for counselling and support. Cost: There may or may not be costs associated with accessing professional care. Think of taking care of your mental health is an investment in your health and well-being. It helps you live a richer, fuller life. Opportunities to access counselling under the Medicare system can be discussed with your GP. For serving Defence members, treatment and support can be accessed via Defence Health, and via referral to the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS). For eligible Ex-Defence Members, DVA offers free access to individual and group based treatment and support options via the VVCS, as well as by a variety of inpatient (hospital) based programs. It also offers services for families of Veterans. Call the VVCS to discuss your options, 24 hours a day, on 1800-011-046. Time off from work: If you need flexible appointments so you do not miss work, look for a counsellor that will work with your schedule. You want to find a good time where you won't feel rushed. Most employers will understand and help you take care of your health, whether it’s physical or emotional. Often, people work out a flexible schedule with their boss to free up time for their appointment.  Transportation: Some people have problems getting to and from appointments. If this is a problem for you, look into public transportation. Another option is to catch a ride with someone. Maybe, you can even arrange to borrow a vehicle. Consider all your options. You might be surprised at how many people will take the time to help you get to an appointment. |
| What does it mean about me if I go for help?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Remember: no one is alone in this world. People are here to help. Perhaps you believe that you should be able to handle your problems without help from others. But, people who use the sources of help around them are able to cope better than those who choose not to. Trying to cope on your own often makes things harder than needed. It can also add loneliness and isolation to your problems. You may think that needing help means that you're not normal. You may also believe that seeking help means that you are not fit to do normal things. It is common to have problems. Many people report some type of concern about their mental health after stressful experiences. Don’t feel guilty about taking time to get yourself well. You will be better able to live a fulfilling life if you are feeling better. Talking about your experiences helps you feel more in control. And getting the support you need to live your life more fully shows strength, self-respect and courage. |
| What if I'm embarrassed about seeking help?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | You don’t have to tell people that you’re working with a counsellor. You can just say you have an appointment and that it’s personal.  Try not to be upset with people that worry about you. Take it as a sign that they care and want the best for you.  Put yourself in their shoes. Think of a moment when a friend was having a hard time. Did you judge them for it, or were you glad that you could help? Friends, as well as family, want the best for you and are probably looking for ways to help.  You may think that people will make fun of you for getting help, because at one point you may have overheard someone making fun of someone in your situation. But you will come to find out that this usually isn’t true. It's normal to have problems. Many men and women who served in the military have reported some concern about their mental health after their return.  Expecting embarrassment and shame for asking for help is one of the main reasons why people, including serving members and veterans, don't receive help. You might ask yourself the following question: Is it more important for me to worry about what someone else thinks of me? Or, is it important to get the help I need to move on with my life? |
| Who can help me?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | As you think about getting care, know that there are many experts to help you. Below, you can read about the roles and duties of General Practitioners, Social Workers, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, and Pastoral Counsellors or Chaplains. |
| What does a General Practitioner do?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | A General Practitioner is also called a GP. A General Practitioner is a medical doctor with a degree to practice general medicine. This means that he or she can treat common medical problems, and may also be trained to recognize and help with common psychological problems, such as depression and anxiety. A GP may prescribe medicine to help with depression and sleep. GPs are a good first contact to help you find the services you need. They can refer you to an expert like a psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker, who can help you better address your problems. General Practitioners are very well educated and experienced. They have completed university medical training, which takes 6 years. Plus, GPs undertake post graduate specialized training after medical school which can take an additional 3 to 10 years. You can find a physician in the Defence and Department of Veterans Affairs health care systems, through recommendations from people you know, or via a referral from another health practitioner. If you need medical attention, a prescription, or a referral to a specialist, then your GP is the best place to start. |
| What does a Social Worker do?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Social workers work with people who are struggling with depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use problems. They also help people with more severe mental health issues, and family and relationship difficulties. Social workers help clients with other challenges including finding employment, housing, and government benefits, as well as counselling, which involves teaching people skills for coping and living. Social workers are not medical doctors and cannot prescribe medications. Social workers usually have a bachelor’s degree in social work that takes 4 years at university, though some social workers have masters or doctoral degrees in social work. Social workers also must complete supervised experience. Social workers often work for local agencies and local mental health programs. There are many social workers in the Defence and the Department of Veterans Affairs health care systems. You can find a social worker through advice from people you know or referrals from a doctor or other healthcare provider. If you need someone to help you get back on track with getting a job, housing, entitlements, or you just need someone who will listen and refer you to an expert, then a social worker can help. |
| What does a Psychologist do?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Psychologists work with clients who have many concerns, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use problems. Psychologists also work with singles, couples, families and groups. They help people deal with other life problems such as family and relationship problems. Registered psychologists have a range of qualifications including masters and doctoral degrees. Training in psychology takes about 6 years at university to complete, and includes supervised professional experience. Although Psychologists can be doctors, they are not medical doctors and cannot prescribe medicine. Their role is to provide assessment and counselling. There are psychologists in the community and working throughout Defence and Department of Veterans Affairs health care systems. You can find a psychologist through advice from people you know or referrals from a doctor, other health care provider, or via the Australian Psychological Society find a psychologist which is linked to under the Find Support Tab below. Eligible serving members and ex-serving members may also be able to find a psychologist via the Veterans and Veterans Families Counseling Service (VVCS). |
| What does a Psychiatrist do?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Psychiatrists treat a variety of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, substance use problems, and severe mental illnesses. Psychiatrists primarily treat patients with a variety of medications that can ease depression and anxiety, help with sleep, and help with symptoms of mental illness. Some psychiatrists also practice psychotherapy or counselling. Psychiatrists are medical doctors first, meaning that they have completed medical training. After medical training, psychiatrists also complete specialized training in psychiatry, which usually takes another 3 to 4 years. Psychiatrists work in the community and throughout the Defence and Department of Veterans Affairs health care systems. You can find a psychiatrist through advice from people you know or referrals from a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider. Your general practitioner, social worker, or psychologist can also help you make an appointment with a psychiatrist. |
| What does a Pastoral Counsellor or Chaplain do?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | A pastoral counsellor or chaplain is a member of the clergy who provides spiritual support and guidance, conducts religious services in the field, and offers support in emergency situations. Chaplains help people regardless of their faith and religious beliefs. Chaplains are not trained to provide mental health counselling, but they can refer you to a specialist like a psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker, who can help you address your emotional difficulties more thoroughly. If you are looking for spiritual guidance as part of your road to receiving professional care, then perhaps a pastoral counsellor or chaplain is a good place to start. |
| Where can I find professional care near me?  C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].png | Go to the Find Support tab to find web links to resources for counselling and support. Some of the resources are organizations and networks, like the Department of Veteran’s Affairs and Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS), and there are community care options as well. |

# Self-Assessment

#### PCL Instructions Page Help Text

The self-assessment in this app is called the PTSD Checklist or PCL. This scale has been used with people with PTSD for screening, diagnosis, and monitoring for many years and has been scientifically validated. It was originally developed in 1993 by the US National Center for PTSD. It includes 17 questions, each of which has 5 possible answers. This assessment cannot tell you if you have PTSD -- only a trained mental health provider can do that. However, it can give you some valuable information about how severe your symptoms are, and if you are getting better or worse over time. If you are worried that you might have PTSD but you have never been diagnosed, it’s important to talk with your doctor to get a referral to a mental health provider.

## PCL Feedback

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First Time** | **Score** | **Delta Since Last PCL** | **Feedback** |
| X | 17 | n/a | You do not have any symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder at this time.   However, this assessment will not pick up other problems that can be related to trauma such as depression, substance abuse, and anxiety.  If you are stressed, go see a healthcare professional, regardless of the outcome of this assessment. A professional will be able to help you understand what is going on and how you can fix it.  Even if you do not have PTSD, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care. |
| No | 17 | No change | Your score has not changed since the last time you took this assessment. You still do not have any symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.   However, this assessment will not pick up other problems that can be related to trauma such as depression, substance abuse, and anxiety.  If you are stressed, go see a healthcare professional, regardless of the outcome of this assessment. A professional will be able to help you understand what is going on and how you can fix it.  Even if you do not have PTSD, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care. |
| No | 17 | Decreased | Good news: Your score has improved since the last time you took the self-assessment. This means that you are having fewer problems than you were before.  You do not have any symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder at this time.   However, this assessment will not pick up other problems that can be related to trauma such as depression, substance abuse, and anxiety.  If you are stressed, go see a healthcare professional, regardless of the outcome of this assessment. A professional will be able to help you understand what is going on and how you can fix it.  Even if you do not have PTSD, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care. |
| x | <30 | n/a | You are having some difficulties related to your traumatic experience, but these problems most likely would not be given a diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.   However, you may still be struggling. Even mild posttraumatic stress can be distressing enough to interrupt your life. Plus, problems like depression, substance abuse, and anxiety can also happen after a trauma and may not register on a PTSD scale.   While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | <30 | increased | Your score went up since the last time you took the assessment, which means that some things are bothering you more than they were before.  You are having some difficulties related to your traumatic experience, but these problems most likely still would not be given a diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.  However, you may still be struggling. Even mild posttraumatic stress can be distressing enough to interrupt your life. Plus, problems like depression, substance abuse, and anxiety can also happen after a trauma and may not register on a PTSD scale.   While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | <30 | decreased | Good news: Your score has improved since the last time you took the self-assessment. This means that you are having fewer problems than you were before.  You are having some difficulties related to your traumatic experience, but these problems most likely would not be given a diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.  However, you may still be struggling. Even mild posttraumatic stress can be distressing enough to interrupt your life. Plus, problems like depression, substance abuse, and anxiety can also happen after a trauma and may not register on a PTSD scale.   While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | <30 | no change | Your score has not changed since the last time you took the assessment. This is not a big surprise. Symptoms like these may not change much without fully engaging in an active treatment with a healthcare provider. Even if you are in treatment, it can take a while for problems to decrease.  You are having some difficulties related to your traumatic experience, but these problems most likely would not be given a diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.  However, you may still be struggling. Even mild posttraumatic stress can be distressing enough to interrupt your life. Plus, problems like depression, substance abuse, and anxiety can also happen after a trauma and may not register on a PTSD scale.   While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| x | 30 - 49 | n/a | Many people who experience a trauma have reactions like yours, at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma.  People who have symptoms like yours can often benefit from talking to a healthcare provider. For information on where to find one, check out the Find Support section of this app. Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | 30 - 49 | increased | Your score went up since the last time you took the assessment, which means that some things are bothering you more than they were before. Many people who experience a trauma have reactions like yours at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma.  People who have symptoms like yours can often benefit from talking to a healthcare provider. For information on where to find one, check out the Find Support section of this app. Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | 30 - 49 | decreased | Good news: Your score has improved since the last time you took the self-assessment. This means that you are having fewer problems than you were before.  Many people who experience a trauma have reactions like yours. Many people who experience a trauma have this kind of reaction, at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma.  People who have symptoms like yours can often benefit from talking to a healthcare provider. For information on where to find one, check out the Find Support section of this app. Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | 30 - 49 | no change | Your score has not changed since the last time you took the assessment. This is not a big surprise. Symptoms like these may not change much without fully engaging in an active treatment with a healthcare provider. Even if you are in treatment, it can take a while for problems to decrease.  Many people who experience a trauma have reactions like yours. Many people who experience a trauma have this kind of reaction, at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma.  People who have symptoms like yours can often benefit from talking to a healthcare provider. For information on where to find one, check out the Find Support section of this app. Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| x | ≥ 50 | n/a | Your score puts you in the high range, which means that you have a lot of PTSD symptoms. If you already have spoken with a healthcare provider and have a diagnosis of PTSD, then this might not be new information. If you have never spoken with a provider before, now is probably the time to start.  Many people who experience a trauma have this kind of reaction, at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma. But once the problems have gone on for a while or they start to make it hard to function at home, school, or work, it’s time to ask for some help.  Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  There are scientifically proven treatments that really work for PTSD. Don’t suffer for any longer than you have to. For information on where to find a healthcare provider, check out the Find Support section of this app. You can also learn more about professional care in the Learn About PTSD section.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | ≥ 50 | increased | Your score went up since the last time you took the assessment, which means that some things are bothering you more than they were before.  Your score puts you in the high range, which means that you have a lot of PTSD symptoms. If you already have spoken with a healthcare provider and have a diagnosis of PTSD, then this might not be new information. If you have never spoken with a provider before, now is probably the time to start.  Many people who experience a trauma have this kind of reaction, at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma. But once the problems have gone on for a while or they start to make it hard to function at home, school, or work, it’s time to ask for some help.  Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  There are scientifically proven treatments that really work for PTSD. Don’t suffer for any longer than you have to. For information on where to find a healthcare provider, check out the Find Support section of this app. You can also learn more about professional care in the Learn About PTSD section.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | ≥ 50 | decreased | Good news: Your score has improved since the last time you took the self-assessment. This means that you are having fewer problems than you were before.  Still, your score puts you in the high range, which means that you are experiencing a lot of PTSD symptoms. If you already have spoken with a healthcare provider and have a diagnosis of PTSD, then this might not be new information. If you have never spoken with a provider before, now is probably the time to start.   Many people who experience a trauma have reactions like yours. Many people who experience a trauma have this kind of reaction, at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma. But once the problems have gone on for a while or they start to make it hard to function at home, school, or work, it’s time to ask for some help.  Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  There are scientifically validated treatments that really work for PTSD. Don’t suffer for any longer than you have to. For information on where to find a healthcare provider, check out the Find Support section of this app. You can also learn more about professional care in the Learn About PTSD section.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |
| no | ≥ 50 | no change | Your score has not changed since the last time you took the assessment. This is not a big surprise. Symptoms like these may not change much without fully engaging in an active treatment with a healthcare provider. Even if you are in treatment, it can take a while for problems to decrease.  Your score still puts you in the high range, which means that you are experiencing a lot of PTSD symptoms. If you already have spoken with a healthcare provider and have a diagnosis of PTSD, then this might not be new information. If you have never spoken with a provider before, now is probably the time to start.   Many people who experience a trauma have reactions like yours. Many people who experience a trauma have this kind of reaction, at least for the first few weeks or months after the trauma. But once the problems have gone on for a while or they start to make it hard to function at home, school, or work, it’s time to ask for some help.  Seeking help will be especially important if you think that you may have other trauma-related problems that this assessment would not identify, such as depression, substance abuse, or anxiety.  There are scientifically proven treatments that really work for PTSD. Don’t suffer for any longer than you have to. For information on where to find a healthcare provider, check out the Find Support section of this app. You can also learn more about professional care in the Learn About PTSD section.  While there is no replacement for professional face-to-face care, this app can help you learn tools for managing your stress as it comes up. If you are in treatment, this app can be a helpful add-on to face to face care.  If you ever feel like hurting yourself or someone else, touch the Find Support button below to get help right away. Otherwise, you can take this assessment once per month to see how your symptoms are changing – and hopefully getting better – over time. |

#### PCL Feedback Help Text

Although this is a scientifically validated questionnaire, the PCL is not intended for self-diagnosis or to replace a trained mental health practitioner.

However, it can give you some valuable information about how severe your symptoms are, and if you are getting better or worse over time. If you are concerned that you might have PTSD but you have never been diagnosed, make an appointment with your doctor to get a referral to a mental health practitioner.

### If a Person Has Never Taken PCL and Selects See History

Once you take the self-assessment your results will show up here as a graph. You can watch your scores change over time. This is an opportunity to get feedback on how severe your symptoms are, and if you are getting better or worse over time. Remember, no one will see your results other than you, although you can choose to share the results with your health care provider, who may then opt to make use of these results in your care.. Take the self-assessment now for more information.

#### PCL Graph Help Text

This graph shows how your scores on the self-assessment have changed over time. It is normal for your symptoms to go up and down a bit from time to time. It is most important to look for a trend over time. Lower scores mean that you have less severe symptoms. So if your line is going down, that is good news. Higher scores mean that you have more severe symptoms, so if your line is going up, you may want to check in with your provider and let him or her know (or get a provider if you don't already have one).

## Scheduling PCL

You can track your symptoms by scheduling times to take the self-assessment in the future. It is normal for your symptoms to change a bit from day to day. It is most important to look for a trend over time. So, you should not take this self-assessment more than once per week. In most cases we suggest one time per month. This will help you see if your symptoms are getting better, worse, or staying the same.

Would you like to set up a follow-up assessment now?

## PCL Too Soon

It has been less than a week since you last took the self-assessment. The questions are designed to assess your symptoms since the last time you answered, so it is not helpful to take it more than once a week.

## PCL Results Email to Practitioner

You have chosen to email the results of your PCL assessments to your health provider. This could be your General Practitioner, psychiatrist, psychologist, Social worker or counsellor. Please note that your practitioner may or may not choose to use these self-assessment results as part of your care. Opting to send the results should not be viewed as a method of alerting your provider to an emergency situation.

# Manage PTSD Symptoms

## Symptom List

Reminded of Trauma

Avoiding Reminders

Sad / Hopeless

Worried / Anxious

Angry

Disconnected from People

Disconnected from Reality

Unable to Sleep

#### Symptoms Help Text

People who have experienced traumatic events have different experiences as they recover, but the problems below are common following a trauma. You may experience some, all, or none of the following problems.  
• Reminders of trauma: Frequently having upsetting thoughts or memories about the trauma, feeling as if it’s happening again, and/or feeling very distressed when reminded of it.   
• Avoiding reminders: Making an effort to avoid thoughts, feelings, conversations, places or people because they remind you of the trauma.  
• Disconnected from people: Feeling distant from others, trouble feeling love, and/or feeling alienated and alone.  
• Disconnected from reality: Feeling disconnected from the world, other people, one’s body, or oneself—detached, “foggy,” “in a dream,” “out of body,” or as if things feel unreal.   
• Sad / Hopeless: Feeling sad, down, blue or depressed, not having interest in activities that used to be enjoyed, or in life in general, feeling a sense of meaninglessness and/or hopelessness.  
• Anxious / Worried: Being jumpy and easily startled, being tense and “on guard” most of the time.  
• Angry: Easily irritated, having angry outbursts, feeling on edge or mistrustful.  
• Trouble Sleeping: Trouble falling and/or staying asleep, having nightmares, waking in a cold sweat or in a panic.

## SUDS page:

SUDS are “Subjective Units of Distress” and are a handy way of quickly assessing your level of distress in a situation. You can rate your distress level on a scale of 0 to 10. Distress includes everything negative you are feeling, including anger, sadness, fear, and so on, all in one score. Zero means no distress at all and ten means the worst distress you could imagine.

This will help you monitor your distress levels and figure out which tools in this app work best for you.

#### Help Text for SUDS:

You can rate your distress level – including negative feelings such as stress, anger, physical tension, and more, all rolled into one – on a scale of 0 to 10. This will help you monitor your distress levels and figure out which tools work best for you. You can also use it in your daily life to check in and see how you’re doing.

It may seem strange at first, but sometimes we can get caught up in an all-or-nothing way of thinking– either I’m totally uncomfortable or I’m totally fine. The distress score can help you learn to see the shades of gray, and help you see that even when things aren’t perfect, they may be improving. It can also help you learn to recognize what triggers distress for you.

### If SUDS = 9 or 10:

That’s a very high distress level. It may be best for you to get some immediate support. Would you like to talk to someone now?

<Find Support Link>

### Re-Rate SUDS Text:

Rate your distress again on a scale of 0 to 10. Tracking your distress will allow you to learn which tools help you the most.

### SUDS Increased After Tool:

Okay, it looks like after ${tooltype} you are actually more distressed. This might be good to remember for the future, since you shouldn’t do things that don’t work for you. But remember, some of these tools take time or practice to really work, or may only relieve certain types of problems, so don’t write this one off just yet.

If a tool continues to not work for you, you may want to "give it a thumbs down" by tapping the thumbs down button the next time you're given this tool. That way, it will be less likely to come up again. Remember you can also choose tools manually and use the tool that seems to work the best for you.

Since you are still stressed, maybe you should try another tool.

### SUDS Decreased After Tool:

Great! It looks like ${tooltype} may have brought down your distress level. Try to remember this tool. Anything that works for you once can work for you again!

If a tool continues to work for you, you may want to "give it a thumbs up" by tapping the thumbs up button the next time you're given this tool. That way, it will be more likely to come up again. The tool will also be saved in “Favorites.” Remember you can also choose tools manually and use the tool that seems to work the best for you.

### SUDS Stays the Same After Tool:

Okay, it looks like after ${tooltype} you have the same amount of distress. It’s possible that this is good enough for you – after all, nothing got worse! – or maybe you were hoping for a bigger improvement. But remember, some of these tools take time or practice to really work, or may only relieve certain types of problems, so don’t write this one off just yet.

If you feel like it, you could certainly try another tool now.

## Manage My PTSD Tool Classes

Note: the user never sees the below decision tree, but this is in the background, informing which tools come up.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Manage My Stress Tool Classes** | **Re-experiencing** | **Avoidance** | **Social Isolation** | **Dissociation** | **Sad/Hopeless** | **Anxiety** | **Anger** | **Sleep** |
| Relaxation Exercises (breathing, PMR, visualization) | x | x |  | x |  | x | x | x |
| RID | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Change your perspective (cognitive handles) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |  |
| Grounding | x |  |  | x |  | x |  | x |
| Make a Plan to Reduce Isolation |  |  | x |  | x | x |  |  |
| Take a Time Out |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |  |
| Help Falling Asleep (sleep hygiene tips) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |
| Schedule Pleasant Events |  |  | x |  | X | x |  |  |
| Seek Support | x | x | x | x | X | x | x |  |
| Distract from Intense Emotions | x |  |  |  | X | x | x |  |
| Soothe Yourself | x |  |  | x | X | x |  | x |
| Inspiring Quotes | x | x | x | x | X | x |  | x |

## Favorites

You have not yet selected any favorites. If you like a tool, select the "thumbs up" button and that tool will show up here in the future.

## Relaxation Exercises

### Deep Breathing Exercise Pre-Exercise Text

Slowing down and deepening your breathing can help you calm down when you feel distress. Put on your headphones or go somewhere private and quiet to be led through the exercise.

### C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].pngDeep Breathing Exercise Audio

To prepare, sit down and make yourself comfortable so that you can practice along as you listen to and watch the demonstration, Later, when you practice, you can do this exercise sitting, standing up, or lying down- whatever works for you.

Although this exercise should be safe for almost anyone, if you do have difficulty breathing or feel out of breath, or begin to feel dizzy, nervous or out of control, you can adjust your breathing pace, or go back to breathing normally. The goal is just to slow down a bit to allow your system to relax.

Place one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Breathe in by taking air deep into your stomach. Allow your stomach to expand out while your shoulders and chest stay relaxed.

Now breathe out slowly, allowing the air you exhale to deflate your stomach. Pause naturally. You may find it easier to breathe through your nose, but do what is comfortable for you.

Breathe in by taking air deep into your stomach. Allow your stomach to expand while your shoulders and chest stay relaxed. Breathe out slowly; allowing the air you exhale to deflate your stomach. Breathe slowly but naturally.

Breathe in by taking air deep into your stomach; say the number “one” to yourself. Allow your stomach to expand while your shoulders and chest stay relaxed. Breathe out slowly; allowing the air you exhale to deflate your stomach, saying the word “relax” to yourself. Keep your breathing smooth and easy.

Breathe in by taking air deep into your stomach; think the number “two.” Again, allow your stomach to expand while your shoulders and chest stay relaxed… Breathe out slowly, saying the word “relax.”

Breathe in deeply; think the number “three.” Breathe out slowly; allowing the air you exhale to deflate your stomach, “relax.” Focus only on your breathing and the words.

Breathe in deeply; think the number “four.” Breathe out slowly, “relax.” Focus only on your breathing; focus on relaxing.

Breathe in deeply; think the number “five.” Breathe out slowly, “relax.” Focus only on your breathing. Try to keep your breathing rhythmic.

Breathe in deeply, “six.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Continue to breathe “seven.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Focus on your breath and breathe in “eight.” Now breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in. now counting your breaths backward from eight. Breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in deeply using your diaphragm ”seven.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in deeply “six.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in deeply “five.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in deeply “four.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in deeply “three.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in deeply “two.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Breathe in deeply “one.” Breathe out ”relax.”

Well done. Even as you end this exercise, you can continue to allow your breathing to be deeper and slower. Take your time as you open your eyes and bring your attention back to your surroundings.

#### Deep Breathing Help

This activity will guide you through a brief exercise in which you take slower, deeper breaths to help you relax. Taking slow, deep breaths helps you balance the carbon dioxide and oxygen in your blood. This calms your nervous system, creating a "relaxation response." Deep breathing exercises can help manage stress and insomnia, focus the mind, and improve health.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation Pre-Exercise Text

You are about to be led through a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. You will progress through each of your major muscle groups, tensing and relaxing as you go. This exercise takes about 9 minutes. It has accompanying audio, so you will need to find a quiet place or put on your headphones now. Sit down in a comfortable chair or lay down. Do not do this exercise while driving.

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation Audio

 To prepare, sit down and make yourself comfortable. Please note that if you have injuries. such as back pain, or a knee injury, you should avoid tensing muscles that might affect that injury.

To begin, close your eyes and take a deep breath into your stomach… then exhale with a sigh… Again, take a deep breath, and imagine clean air going down your throat and filling your lungs… and then exhale with a sigh. Take another deep breath, and as you release it, think the word “relax” silently to yourself. Allow your breath to be smooth and rhythmic, inhaling and exhaling at a pace that is comfortable for you. As you continue to breathe, continue to say the word “relax” to yourself, slowly and calmly, each time you breathe out. As you do this, imagine that the tension throughout your body begins to melt away.

To begin, clench both your fists and bend your elbows, drawing your forearms and hands up toward your shoulder, tightening your biceps to do so. Hold the muscles in your hands and arms tight, and notice the sensations of pulling, discomfort, and tightness. Hold the tension while you take a deep breath into your stomach…. And then slowly exhale as you release the muscles of your hands and arms. Let your hands and fingers relax completely, and let your arms become limp at your side or in your lap. Feel the sensation of relaxation as the tension drains away from your arms and hands, and allow the muscles to become looser and looser. You may notice that they feel heavier, and warmer. Breathing slowly in and out, thinking the word “relax” each time you breathe out.

Now bring your attention to your face, and tighten your forehead, the muscles around your eyes, and your jaw by squeezing your eyes tight, clenching your jaw, and wrinkling your forehead and nose. Feel the wrinkling and pulling sensations across your forehead and the top of your head, feel the tightness around your eyes and cheeks, and the tension in your jaw…hold that tension and take a deep breath into your stomach… And then slowly exhale as let your face relax completely. Feel the muscles in your forehead becoming smooth and limp, the muscles of your cheeks and eyes softening, and your jaw relaxing. Let your lips part slightly and let your jaw hang loose. Notice the tension melting away, feel your muscles becoming softer, more relaxed, and feel the warmth and lightness that replaces the tension that was there before. Continue to breathe slowly and gently, thinking the word “relax” each time you exhale.

Tighten your shoulders by raising them up as if you were going to touch them to your ears. Tensing without straining, feel the tension in your shoulders radiating down into your back and up into your neck and the top of your back. Hold that, notice those sensations and take a deep breath into your stomach… And then slowly exhale as you relax your shoulders. Let your shoulders droop down and let your neck relax completely, feeling very relaxed. Notice the contrast between the tightness you felt, and the relaxation you feel now. Let your head relax as if there is nothing holding it except the support behind it. Feel the sense of relaxation around your neck and shoulders as you let the tension drain away, continuing to breathe slowly and deeply.

Now bring your attention to your stomach. Tighten the muscles of your stomach by pulling your stomach and toward your spine tightly. Hold that pose, feel the sensation of the tension, hold it while you take a deep breath… And then slowly exhale as you relax your muscles. Imagine a wave of relaxation spreading through your stomach. Allow the muscles of your stomach to be soft and relaxed, letting go more and more. Notice the difference between the tension you felt, and the relaxation you feel now. Let any remaining tension melt away, continuing to breathe gently in and out, feeling yourself become calmer and more relaxed.

Now tighten your buttocks by squeezing them together, and at the same time squeeze the muscles of your thighs. You can lift your feet up to help tense your leg muscles. Notice the sensations of pulling, tightness, and constriction. Hold of that tension and focus on it, and take a deep breath… And then slowly exhale as you relax your buttocks and thighs. Allow your muscles to relax completely, and to let any tension drain away… Melting away. Feel how the muscles of your hips and legs feel different now than they did when you were clenching them. Really notice the difference. Continue to let go further and further, experiencing an even deeper relaxation. Breathing in and out slowly and gently…in and out.

Now tighten the muscles of your calves and your feet as you flex your feet, pulling your toes toward you. Flex these muscles carefully to avoid a cramp. Continue to flex your feet, feeling the muscles of your calves, feet and toes tighten and pull. Hold the tension for another second and take a deep breath… And now slowly exhale. Release. As your muscles relax, notice how the sensations in your calves and feet change, perhaps feeling softer, or warmer, or lighter. Really noticed how the sensations of tension are different from the sensations of relaxation you are now experiencing. With each breath allow more tension to drain from your calves, relaxing more and more deeply. Continue to breathe slowly, thinking the word relax every time you exhale. Continuing to let any remaining tension drain away. Breathing in and out… In and out.

Relax…Relax. Now your whole body is feeling relaxed and comfortable. Feel that sense of warmth and calmness spread over your whole body, continuing to breathe naturally, smoothly and steadily, letting the breath in and out…slowly and regularly, thinking the word relax every time you breathe out….breathing in and out…in and out.

As you continue to breathe, imagine a wave of relaxation slowly spreading throughout your body, starting at your head and gradually penetrating all your muscles, all the cells of your body, all the way down to your toes. Allow yourself to relax completely, continuing to breathe slowly and smoothly, sinking into that feeling of relaxation and noticing how it feels, so that you will be able to access it and recreate it again later, on your own.

In a moment, I’m going to count backwards from five to one. As I do you will gradually feel more and more alert. When I get to three, open your eyes, and when I get to one you will feel alert and refreshed and ready for the rest of your day. Five…four…beginning to shift your body, feeling a bit more awake now…three…opening up your eyes…two…a bit more awake now…one…now you are feeling refreshed, alert, and relaxed.

#### Progressive Muscle Relaxation Help

This exercise will guide you, either sitting comfortably or lying down, through tensing and relaxing a sequence of muscle groups. This allows muscles to relax more deeply than usual. This exercise can help decrease heart rate and blood pressure, slow breathing, decrease muscle tension, and clear thinking.

This exercise is also great because over time you can train yourself to really know what tense muscles feel like and what relaxed muscles feel like. Then, when you recognize that your muscles are tense or becoming tense you can immediately switch your muscles to the more relaxed state because you have trained yourself to know how relaxed muscles feel.

### Positive Imagery Pre-Exercise Text

You are about to be led through a relaxation exercise focused on visualizing something pleasant. This exercise takes about 4 minutes. It has accompanying audio, so you will have to find a quiet place or put on your headphones now.

### C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].pngPositive Imagery #1: Country Road Audio

First, remove distractions. Turn off the telephone. Let others know not to bother you.

Make yourself comfortable so that your thoughts are on the image and nothing else.

Sit or lie down in a quiet, comfortable place.

Then, mentally scan your body for tense muscles. If you find a muscle is tense or clenched, relax it. During the imagery exercise, involve all your senses in your image—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.

Get completely focused. The more focused you are, the better.

Close your eyes or lower your gaze.

Imagine yourself walking along an old country road. The sun is warm on your back. The birds are singing. The air is calm and fragrant.

After a few steps, you come across an old gate. The gate creaks as you open it and go through. You find yourself in an overgrown garden, flowers growing where they have seeded themselves, vines climbing over a fallen tree, green grass, and shade trees.

Breathe deeply, smelling the flowers. Listen to the birds and insects. Feel the gentle breeze, warm against your skin.

You walk leisurely up a gentle slope behind the garden and come to a wooded area where the trees become denser; the sun is filtered through the leaves. The air feels mild and a bit cooler. You become aware of the sound of a nearby creek. You breathe deeply of the cool and fragrant air several times, and with each breath, you feel more refreshed.

Soon, you come upon the creek. It’s clear and clean as it tumbles over the rocks and some fallen logs. You follow the path along the creek for a way. The path takes you out into a sunlit clearing where you discover a small and picturesque waterfall. There is a rainbow in the mist.

You find a comfortable place to sit for a while, a perfect spot where you can feel completely relaxed.

You feel good as you allow yourself to just enjoy the warmth and solitude of this peaceful place.

It’s now time to return. You walk back down the path, through the cool trees, out into the sun-drenched overgrown garden, one last smell of the flowers, and out the creaky gate.

You leave this secret retreat for now and return down the country road, then back to the room. However, you know that you may visit this place whenever you wish.

### C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].pngPositive Imagery #2: Forest Scene Audio

First, remove distractions. Turn off the telephone. Let others know not to bother you.

Make yourself comfortable so that your thoughts are on the image and nothing else.

Sit or lie down in a quiet, comfortable place.

Then, mentally scan your body for tense muscles. If you find a muscle is tense or clenched, relax it. During the imagery exercise, involve all your senses in your image—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.

Get completely focused. The more focused you are, the better.

Close your eyes or lower your gaze.

Imagine that you are walking down a path into a lush forest. As you walk along the path you completely take in the sights, sounds, smells, and feel of the place. All around you are trees, grasses, mossy ground cover, and fragrant flowers. You hear the soothing sounds of birds chirping and the wind as it gently blows through the treetops. You smell the rich dampness of the forest floor, the smells of moist vegetation and new growth. Through gaps in the treetops you see the sun high in a cloudless, blue sky. The sun is dispersed through the canopy of the treetops and filters down onto the forest floor, creating intricate patterns of light and shadow. With each breath you take in this place you feel a deep sense of peace and relaxation.

You soon come to a clearing. There are several flat rocks in the clearing surrounded by soft moss. A small stream runs among the rocks. You lie back on one of the rocks or on the cushiony moss and put your feet into the cool water. You feel the warm sun and a gentle, light breeze through your hair and across your skin. The sparkling clear water rushes around the multicolored rocks, making little whirlpools and eddies. You put your hand into the water and lift a handful to your lips. The water is cool and refreshing. You close your eyes and listen to the water trickling around the rocks. You bathe in the warm sun and feel as though you are floating, relaxing deeper and deeper.

You let yourself sink further into relaxation, while continuing to be aware of the sights, smells, sounds, and feel of the forest around you. You allow yourself to let go of any concerns or worries and to feel completely refreshed and rejuvenated in this place.

When you’re ready, imagine that you slowly get up and leave the clearing. As you walk back down the path through the forest, fully take in this place and realize that you may return whenever you wish by the same path. Each time you enter this place you will feel relaxed and at peace.

### C:\Users\cashr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\PDPRGCF7\MC900440402[1].pngPositive Imagery #3: Beach Scene Audio

First, remove distractions. Turn off the telephone. Let others know not to bother you.

Make yourself comfortable so that your thoughts are on the image and nothing else.

Sit or lie down in a quiet, comfortable place.

Then, mentally scan your body for tense muscles. If you find a muscle is tense or clenched, relax it. During the imagery exercise, involve all your senses in your image—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.

Get completely focused. The more focused you are, the better.

Close your eyes or lower your gaze.

In your mind’s eye you see yourself descending down a long, narrow, wooden stairway toward a beautiful, inviting beach. Your bare feet feel the rough weathered steps, and with each step, you feel more and more tension gently melting away from your body. As you continue down the stairway, you notice the ocean is a deep shade of blue with the fine white crests of the waves sweeping towards the shore. You reach the end of the stairway and step down, sinking into the warmth. As you soak in the warmth of the sun, a soothing sensation of relaxation gently melts through your entire body. The gentle sounds of the water lapping up onto the beach calm your mind and allow you to feel even more relaxed.

You begin walking slowly toward the edge of the water and feel the warm sun on your face and shoulders. The salty smell of the ocean air invigorates you, and you take in a deep breath... breathe slowly out... and feel more relaxed and refreshed. Finally, you reach the water’s edge and you enjoy the gentle waves as they flow over your toes and ankles. You watch the surges glide smoothly towards you, gently sweeping around your feet, and the trails of ocean water that flow slowly back out again. The cool water feels soft and comforting as you enjoy a few moments allowing yourself to gaze out on the far-reaching horizon. Overhead, you notice two birds gracefully soaring high above the ocean waters, and you can hear their soft cries becoming faint as they glide away. And all of these sights, sounds, and sensations allow you to let go and relax more and more.

After a moment you begin strolling down the beach at the water’s edge. You feel a warm gentle breeze pressing lightly against your back, and with every step you feel yourself relaxing more and more. As you walk down the beach you notice the details of sights and sounds around you, and the soothing sensation of the sun, the gentle breeze, and the sand below your feet.

As you continue your leisurely walk down the beach, you notice a colorful beach chair resting in a nice peaceful spot where the powdery soft sand lies undisturbed. You approach this comfortable-looking beach chair, then you sit down, lie back, and settle in. You take in a long deep breath, breathe slowly out, and feel even more relaxed and comfortable resting in your chair. For a few moments more, let yourself enjoy the sights and sounds of this beautiful day on the beach. And, when you feel ready, gently bring your attention back to the room, still letting yourself feel relaxed and comfortable sitting where you are.

#### Positive Imagery Help Text (for all 3 PI options)

This exercise will guide you in imagining a pleasant scene in order to reduce stress and help you relax. With this guided imagery, you can relax your muscles and breathe more deeply while you focus on the relaxing scene in order to relax more deeply.

## RID Tool

The RID Tool is for times when you have been triggered by a reminder, or of, a past trauma. You will be led through three steps to manage your distress.

### Relax Instructions:

Take 30 seconds to **Relax** by breathing in and out slowly. As you breathe in think the word “let,” and as you breathe out think “go.”

### Identify:

Go back over the last few minutes or hours and **Identify** what reminder of your trauma you encountered. Triggers can be internal, like thoughts or memories, or external, like conversations or situations or things we encounter in the world (e.g., a particular person or place). Figuring out what triggered you can be tricky sometimes. Do not worry if you cannot identify the trigger, just focus on relaxing and talking yourself down.

Once you identify the trigger if you can, it is important to remind yourself that it is just a reminder and not the actual trauma happening again, despite how your mind and body may be reacting. Really notice how the current trigger is different from your trauma. Remind yourself of those differences again and again.

### Identify Example Text:

What triggered you?

Drove under a bridge.

How is your current situation different from the traumatic experience?

In Australia, not Iraq. Civilians on the highway. Driving my own car.

### Decide:

The final step is to **Decide** what to do now. If you feel stressed now, you can try to decrease the trigger’s power by deciding to stay in the situation – i.e. not try to avoid or escape that trigger. Most people quickly realize that they **can** handle it and that their stress will actually go down the longer they stick it out. If the trigger made you very angry, your best bet is to decide to take a time out. If you are in danger of hurting yourself or others, seek support and don’t take any chances.

Decide Example Text:

What will you decide to do?

D: Go back a few times and drive under the bridge until it doesn’t bother me as much.

#### RID Help

When you’re triggered or reminded of terrible things that have happened, your mind not only believes that you’re in danger, your mind and your body act like you're right back in the traumatic situation. These lightning fast, automatic reactions are helpful at the time of the actual event because they keep you safe in dangerous situations. But now your automatic reactions to triggers are no longer helpful because in the ‘here and now’ you're not in any actual danger.

You use the RID tool to stay focused and cope with your triggers. Remember, triggers confuse your brain and your body into thinking that you’re back in the original situation. You must clear away that confusion in order to manage your responses.

RID has three steps: The first step, the R in RID, is to Relax or calm yourself. The second step, the I in RID, is to identify what’s triggering you and how it’s different from your original trauma. And the third step, the D in RID, is to decide how to respond to the trigger. Doing these three things when you’re triggered can be very helpful.

## Change Your Perspective (Cognitive Handles)

Note that the user never sees this chart, but it is in the background determining which cognitive handle is offered.

Each time a handle is offered, text on the screen says:

Changing the way you think can change the way you feel. Concentrate on this more helpful thought:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Change your Perspective - Cognitive Handles** | **Re-experiencing** | **Avoidance** | **Social Isolation** | **Dissociation** | **Sad/Hopeless** | **Anxiety** | **Anger** | **Sleep** |
| This is a hassle, not a horror. |  |  |  |  | x | x | X | x |
| I have been through many hard things in my life and survived. | x | x | x |  | X | x | X |  |
| I can tolerate this. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X | X |
| I will survive even if I don't sleep at all tonight. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |
| This situation is different than what happened to me and I'm going to be fine. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am right here, right now. |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| This may seem hard now, but it will get easier and easier over time. | x | X |  |  | X | x | X |  |
| When this is over, I’ll be glad I did it. |  | x | x |  |  | x |  |  |
| I’ve done this before, so I know I can do it again. |  | x | x |  | x | x |  |  |
| I know I’m in a safe place, even though my mind is telling me something else. | x | x |  |  |  | x |  |  |
| I can feel my heart beating and my feet on the floor. I am alive and okay. | x |  |  | x | x | x |  |  |
| I’ve been through worse before and made it through safely. | x | x |  |  | x | x | X |  |
| My body is reacting to a memory. Right now I am safe. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I don't have to feel comfortable all the time. That just proves I am human. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| This emotion will come and go. I will feel differently in twenty minutes. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| I am able to respond effectively. |  |  |  | x | x | x | X |  |
| I have been through this before and been just fine. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| This is another challenge that I will figure out and face. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| These emotions are telling me something. They won't hurt me. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| I am human. I can make mistakes. No one is perfect. |  | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| I am able to protect myself. | x | x | x |  |  | x | X |  |
| Slow down. I know there is more than one choice I can make. | x | x |  |  |  | x |  |  |
| I can ask others for help. | x | x | x |  | x | x |  |  |
| I have made the right decision before. | x | x |  |  |  | x |  |  |
| My thoughts are just thoughts; they’re not always right. Don’t believe everything you think. | x | x | x | x | x | x | X |  |
| I am strong. I am safe now. | x | x | x | x |  | x | X |  |
| This feeling will pass. | x | x |  | x | x | x | X |  |
| I will not feel this way forever. I have felt differently before and will feel differently soon. | x | x |  | x | x | x | X |  |
| I am in a safe place. | x | x | x | x |  | x | X |  |
| The emotions I feel right now are giving me information about how I feel but they’re not necessarily based on facts. | x | x |  |  | x | x | X |  |
| If I don't fight my emotions, they will go down on their own. | x | x |  |  | x | x | X |  |
| I am a decent person. |  |  | x |  | x | x |  |  |
| It is okay if it takes me time to figure this out. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| There is always time to learn. |  | x | x |  | x | x |  |  |
| Learning will give me more options in the future. |  | x | x |  |  | x |  |  |
| There are times when I will fall back into old patterns. I just need to catch myself and get back on track with what's effective. | x | x | x |  | x | x | X |  |
| It’s not always like this. There are times I have felt pretty amazing, too. |  | x |  |  | x | x |  |  |
| I know that I deserve love. |  |  |  |  | x | x |  |  |
| I am my own unique person: special, talented, and worthwhile. |  | x |  |  | x | x |  |  |
| One night of poor sleep is not the end of the world. |  |  |  |  | x | x | X | x |
| This tossing and turning at night will pass. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |
| Nightmares are disturbing, but they're not real. I am safe. | x |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |
| Although it feels like I will never get a good night’s sleep, I have in the past and I will in the future. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |
| Although I am anticipating a poor night's sleep, it could be fine…I have slept well before. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |

#### Change Your Perspective Help

The Change Your Perspective tools provide reminders that can help give you hope and confidence. We all have a constant stream of thoughts running through our minds—this is called self-talk. *Negative* self-talk, like believing that things are terrible or that the worst is about to happen can stress your body and keep you on alert all the time. These *positive* self-talk reminders give you something you can hold on to; they can help you think more realistically, and may even help you manage situations more effectively.

## Grounding

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grounding Activity Title** | **On-Screen Instructions (Text for User)** |
| Feel feet on floor | Focus all of your attention on your feet. Feel the floor  under them. |
| Texture of a Pebble | Focus all of your attention on the feel of a pebble or coin in your hand. |
| Breathing | Sit quietly and focus all of your attention on your in-breath and then your out-breath. |
| The Space Around You--Colors | Look around and focus your attention on the colors around you, noticing as many colors as you can. |
| The Space Around You--Smells | Focus all of your attention on the smells in your environment. |
| The Space Around You--Sounds | Focus on and listen carefully to the many sounds in your environment. |
| The Space Around You--Temperature | Focus all of your attention of the temperature of the air on your skin. |
| Eating | While you are eating, focus all of your attention on the sensations of the food in your mouth while you chew very slowly. |
| Brushing your teeth | Brush your teeth and focus your attention on all of the sensations, tastes, and smells of this activity. |
| Walking | Walk slowly, focusing your attention on what it feels like to take each step. |
| Object | Pick up any small object off the ground and focus all of your attention on the texture of the object and the feel of it in your hand. |
| Pet an animal | Pet an animal that is quiet and calm. Focus all of your attention on the sensations on your hand. |
| Attach yourself to the earth | With your feet shoulder width apart, close your eyes and imagine that you are growing roots into the earth, making you strong and stable. |
| Ice Cube | Grab an ice cube and focus all of your attention on the sensations that go with it, cold, wet, and tingling. |
| Name what you see | Look around you and name what you see. Start with large objects, then move to smaller and smaller objects. |
| Focus on touch | Rub your hands together, clap your hands. Focus all of your attention on the feelings and sounds that you experience. |
| Reorientation | Remind yourself where you are, what today's date is, when were you born, and what you did yesterday. |
| Call a friend | Call a friend and discuss some activity you did together recently. |
| Past success | Remember what you did to successfully get past a previous painful experience. |
| Baby steps | Ask yourself and answer: What would be a small sign that things are getting a little better? |
| Suck on a peppermint | Slowly suck on a mint and describe the taste and your reaction in detail to yourself. |
| Stamp your feet on the ground | Stamp your feet on the ground. Feel the force. Hear the sounds. Notice. |
| Feel your clothes on your skin | Pay attention to the sensation of your clothes touching your skin. |
| Feel your hands | Put your hands together and notice the sensations of the skin-on-skin contact. |
| Hear Others | Tune into the voices of others around you. Only pay attention to the sounds of others’ voices. |

#### Grounding Help

These exercises are simple strategies to help distract and detach from intense emotional pain, or, on the other hand, to help you reconnect to your body or self if you feel disconnected, numb, ‘foggy’ or detached. The grounding strategies in each section are geared specifically for the symptom you selected.

## Reduce Isolation Activities

|  |
| --- |
| **Reduce Isolation Activities** |
| Go for a walk |
| Go fishing |
| Have tea or coffee at home |
| Go out for tea or coffee |
| Have a meal at home |
| Go out for a meal |
| Go to a museum or gallery |
| Go to a musical, dance or other performance |
| Go to the park |
| Have a picnic |
| Go to the gym |
| Go to the beach |
| Go to a lake |
| Go out in a boat or canoe |
| Go for a drive |
| Go for a bike ride |
| Golf |
| Play tennis |
| Go for a run |
| Take your dog(s) out |
| Take a day trip out of town |
| Go to the movies |
| Go shopping |
| Go window shopping |
| Kick a footy with a friend |
| Play cards |
| Play chess or another board/strategy game |
| Play basketball |
| Sit and talk |
| Have a snack and talk |
| Work on a project together |
| Run errands together |
| Go to a party or gathering |
| Go to a yoga class |
| Go to a meditation class |
| Go get ice cream |
| Take your kid(s) to the playground |

#### Reduce Isolation Help

These exercises are suggestions and strategies to help you reconnect with others. Often people who have been through trauma will prefer to be by themselves but at the same time may wish to be close to others again. But, being social may feel stressful or irritating, making it hard to reconnect with others. Possibly, other people complain about your being distant even though you are not bothered by it. This may be because they care about you and would like to be closer to you. If your isolation is causing problems for your relationships or you want to feel more connected, these exercises and tips can help you begin to reconnect to the people in your life.

## Inspirational Quotes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quote** | **Speaker** |
| Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it. | Helen Keller |
| You are not responsible for being down, but you are responsible for getting up. | Jesse Jackson |
| No feeling is final. | Ranier Maria Rilke |
| Not to laugh, not to lament, not to judge, but to understand. | Baruch Spinoza |
| And the trouble is, if you don’t risk anything, you risk even more. | Erica Jong |
| Don’t compromise yourself. You are all you you’ve got. | Janis Joplin |
| You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection. | Buddha |
| What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say?... There are so many silences to be broken. | Audre Lorde |
| …be attentive to what is arising within you, and place that above everything else…What is happening in your innermost self is worthy of your entire love; somehow you must find a way to work at it. | Ranier Maria Rilke |
| Never, never, never, never, never give up. | Winston Churchill |
| Watch your thoughts; they become your words. Watch your words; they become your actions. Watch your actions; they become your habits. Watch your habits; they become your character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny. | Frank Outlaw |
| Do what you can, with what you have, where you are. | Theodore Roosevelt |
| Let your heart guide you. It whispers, so listen closely. | Molly Goode |
| Life is never what one dreams. It is seldom what one desires, but for the vital spirit and the eager mind, the future will always hold the search for buried treasure and the possibility of high adventure. | Ellen Glasgow |
| It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak, the other to hear. | Henry David Thoreau |
| When you do a thing, do it with all your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your personality. Be active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. | Ralph Waldo Emerson |
| The future depends on what we do in the present. | Mohandas K. Gandhi |
| If we change within, our outer life will change also. | Jean Shinoda Bolen |
| Perhaps the truth depends on a walk around the lake. | Wallace Stevens |
| A loving heart is the truest wisdom. | Charles Dickens |
| Each of us is two selves, and the great challenge of life is to try to keep that higher self in command. | Martin Luther King Jr. |
| In the time of your life, live. | William Saroyan |
| Life is not what it’s supposed to be. It’s what it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference. | Virginia Satir |
| The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person's determination. | Tommy Lasorda |
| Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end. | Scott Adams |
| The fact is, that to do anything in the world worth doing, we must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can. | Robert Cushing |
| Follow your honest convictions, and stay strong. | William Thackeray |
| Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom. | Aristotle |
| Your real influence is measured by your treatment of yourself. | A. Bronson Alcott |
| Energy and persistence conquer all things. | Benjamin Franklin |
| Fear less, hope more, eat less, chew more, whine less, breathe more, talk less, say more, hate less, love more, and good things will be yours. | Swedish Proverb |
| I have learned that the greater part of our misery or unhappiness is determined not by our circumstance but by our disposition. | Martha Washington |
| The only journey is the journey within. | Ranier Rilke |
| Every day do something that will inch you closer to a better tomorrow. | Doug Firebaugh |
| The happiest life is that which constantly exercises and educates what is best in us. | Hamerton |
| If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves. | Thomas Edison |
| Go back a little to leap further. | John Clarke |
| I failed my way to success. | Thomas Edison |
| Don't waste your life in doubts and fears: spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation for the hours or ages that follow it. | Ralph Waldo Emerson |
| It is the trouble that never comes that causes the loss of sleep. | Chas. Austin Bates |
| When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us. | Helen Keller |
| The more difficulties one has to encounter, within and without, the more significant and the higher in inspiration his life will be. | Horace Bushnell |
| Years teach us more than books. | Berthold Auerbach |
| Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. | Helen Keller |
| If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes. | St. Clement of Alexandra |
| Men's best successes come after their disappointments. | Henry Ward Beecher |
| The best way out is always through. | Robert Frost |

#### Inspirational Quotes Help

These quotes may offer inspiration and new perspectives for trauma survivors.

## Time Out

Sometimes the most effective thing to do is take time out. This is especially helpful if your anger is escalating and you might do something hurtful or with consequences that you’d later regret. The goal is to avoid making a hard situation worse.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time Out Strategy Title** | **On-Screen Instructions (Text for User)** |
| Go for a walk | Go for a walk. |
| Do some deep breathing for 10 minutes or more | Do some deep breathing for 10 minutes or more. |
| Exercise (bike, hike, lift weights, swim, run) | Exercise (bike, hike, lift weights, swim, run). |
| Do some yard work or gardening | Do yard work or gardening. |
| Tell yourself something empowering, like "I can handle this without losing my temper." | Tell yourself something empowering, like "I can handle this without losing my temper." |
| Draw or paint | Draw or paint. |
| Call a friend or loved one for support | Call a friend or loved one for support and fresh perspectives. |
| Call your therapist for support | Call your therapist for support. |
| Stretch and take slow, deep breaths | Stretch and take slow, deep breaths. |
| Remind yourself that you can cope with this. | Remind yourself that you can cope with this. |
| Meditate | Meditate. |
| Pray | Pray. |
| Think of how someone you trust would advise you. | Think of how someone you trust . What would they tell you to do? |
| Spend time with a pet. | Spend time with a pet. |
| Take a shower or a bath to relax. | Take a shower or bath to relax. |
| Think about how you want to be an example to others in your life- children, etc. | Think about how you can be an example to children and others in your life right now. |

#### Time Out Help

This exercise allows you to take a break from a situation that is heating up before you (or someone else) do something you’ll regret. Time out is a time-limited break from a conflict (often 10-15 minutes) that helps people manage their anger so that they can resolve their conflicts more effectively. The time out exercise offers more instructions and guidance on how and when to take a time out, and what to do to help you cool down during your time out.

## Falling Asleep

|  |
| --- |
| **On-Screen Instructions (Text for User)** |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Only go to bed when you are sleepy. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: If you are in bed for 20 minutes and are still not asleep, get up and do something else (without exposing yourself to bright light or a computer/phone/TV screen). |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Listen to relaxing music. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Read something soothing. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Have a cup of decaffeinated tea. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Have a cup of warm milk. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Take some slow, deep breaths through your nose-- do this for 10 minutes. You can use the breathing tool on this app if you would like. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Have a light snack if you are hungry- try something low in sugar and alcohol-free. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Make sure the room is cool. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Try wearing earplugs if there is noise in your environment. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: If there is light in your environment, try a blindfold. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Make sure the room is dark. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Try taking a warm bath an hour or 2 before bed. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Make sure you are comfortable and clothing is not constraining. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Avoid watching the clock. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Let your mind wander. Don't focus too much on the process of falling asleep. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: If you find yourself worrying, get up and write your worries down, then let them go. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Picture a calming safe place: picture yourself by a river, a lake, or in a meadow. Imagine the scene, the sights and sounds and smells, as you drift off. You can use the positive imagery tool on this app if you would like. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Feel all the muscles of your body relax, as if sinking into the mattress. You can use the progressive muscle relaxation tool on this app if you would like. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Avoid nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol in the evenings. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Avoid too much salt in your food. This can cause you to wake-up thirsty throughout the night.  Tip for Falling Asleep: Turn off the TV and computer 30 minutes before bedtime. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Develop a relaxing bedtime routine. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Get up and have a glass of water. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Ensure that your sheets are clean and that your pillow and mattress are comfortable and supportive. |
| Tip for Falling Asleep: Try not to worry about falling asleep; just allow it to happen. |

#### Falling Asleep Help

These strategies include tips for falling asleep right now, as well as advice for managing insomnia so that you can fall asleep more easily on a regular basis. People who have experienced a trauma often have a hard time falling or staying asleep, or struggle with nightmares. These strategies, along with some of the relaxation exercises in this app, can help you relax and sleep better.

## Plan Something Pleasant

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pleasant Event Title** | **On-Screen Instructions (Text for User)** |
| Take a bath | Take a relaxing bath. |
| Plan a trip | Plan a trip. |
| Go to the movies | Go to the movies. |
| Take a walk | Take a walk. |
| Go for a run | Go for a run. |
| Watch funny videos | Watch funny videos. |
| Watch a movie | Watch a movie. |
| Read a magazine | Read a magazine. |
| Read a book | Read a book. |
| Spend time with a friend | Spend time with a friend. |
| Remember a fun vacation | Remember a fun vacation. |
| Eat something delicious | Eat something delicious. |
| Practice yoga | Practice yoga. |
| Take care of projects around the house | Take care of projects around the house. |
| Remember someone being kind to you | Remember someone being kind to you. |
| Put on clothes that make you feel good | Put on an outfit that makes you feel good. |
| Practice a martial art | Practice a martial art. |
| Garden | Garden. |
| Go for a swim | Go for a swim. |
| Exercise | Exercise. |
| Go to a party | Go to a party. |
| Play a sport | Play a sport. |
| Call a friend | Call a friend. |
| Call a family member | Call a family member. |
| Go camping | Go camping. |
| Sing around the house | Sing around the house. |
| Buy yourself flowers | Buy yourself flowers. |
| Pray | Pray. |
| Go to church/temple/mosque | Go to church/temple/mosque. |
| Go to the beach | Go to the beach. |
| Go skating | Go skating. |
| Go fishing | Go fishing. |
| Go biking | Go biking. |
| Go for a motorcycle ride | Go for a motorcycle ride. |
| Paint or draw | Paint or draw. |
| Knit or do needlepoint | Knit or do needlepoint. |
| Go for a drive | Go for a drive. |
| Cook dinner for someone | Cook dinner for someone. |
| bake something | Bake something. |
| Go out for ice cream | Go out for ice cream. |
| Play a musical instrument | Play a musical instrument. |
| Do arts and crafts | Do arts and crafts. |
| Make a gift for someone | Make a gift for someone. |
| Buy yourself music | Buy yourself music. |
| Go to a bookstore | Go to a bookstore. |
| Go hiking | Go hiking. |
| Watch sports on tv | Watch sports on tv. |
| Write a poem or story | Write a poem or story. |
| Buy clothes | Buy clothes. |
| Go sightseeing | Go sightseeing. |
| Get a manicure/pedicure | Get a manicure/pedicure. |
| Play tennis | Play tennis. |
| Play golf | Play golf. |
| Watch children play | Watch children play. |
| Go to a live show or play | Go to a live show or play. |
| Go see live music | Go see live music. |
| Watch tv | Watch TV. |
| Go out to dinner | Go out to dinner. |
| Cook for yourself | Cook for yourself. |
| Sew, knit or crochet | Sew, knit or crochet. |
| Join a book club | Join a book club. |
| Go to a coffee shop to read and have coffee/tea | Go to a coffee shop to read and have coffee/tea. |
| Have coffee and read the paper | Have coffee and read the paper. |
| Buy someone a gift | Buy someone a gift. |
| Complete a task | Complete a task. |
| Go watch horse racing or auto racing | Go watch horse racing or auto racing. |
| Take photographs | Take photographs. |
| Read the paper | Read the paper. |
| Write a letter | Write a letter. |
| Play with animals | Play with animals. |
| Dance | Dance. |
| Go for a picnic | Go for a picnic. |
| Meditate | Meditate. |
| Take a trip to the mountains | Take a trip to the mountains. |
| Go to the ocean/lake/river | Go to the ocean/lake/river. |
| Play cards | Play cards. |
| Do a puzzle | Do a puzzle. |
| Play sudoku | Play sudoku. |
| Do a crossword puzzle | Do a crossword puzzle. |
| Play pool | Play pool. |
| Buy yourself a small gift | Buy yourself a small gift. |
| Talk on the phone | Talk on the phone. |
| Go to a museum | Go to a museum. |
| Light candles | Light candles. |
| Listen to the radio | Listen to the radio. |
| Get a massage | Get a massage. |
| Take a sauna/hot tub | Take a sauna/hot tub. |
| List 5 things you like about yourself | List 5 things you like about yourself. |
| Buy yourself a book | Buy yourself a book. |
| Go bowling | Go bowling. |
| Kick a footy | Find a friend to kick a footy with |
| Take a class (language, dance) | Take a class (language, dance). |
| Do woodworking | Do woodworking. |
| Volunteer at a soup kitchen | Volunteer at a soup kitchen. |
| Volunteer at an animal shelter | Volunteer at an animal shelter. |
| Think about someone you love | Think about someone you love. |

#### Plan Something Pleasant Help

This exercise will guide you in choosing and planning enjoyable activities in order to increase the amount of pleasure in your life. Especially if you’re feeling down, it can be hard to get motivated to do the things that would usually be fun or give you a feeling of accomplishment. However, research shows that making an effort to do these things even when you don’t feel like it can ultimately improve your mood.

## Seek Support

### First time in:

When dealing with life stress, support from people you know and trust can be absolutely vital. Whether you are facing a small annoyance or a serious crisis, getting help from others is one of the most effective ways to make sure that you manage the situation and yourself as well as possible.

Set up your support network by selecting trusted people from your contact list or adding them in manually. If you are currently in counselling or therapy, make sure that your provider is one of the people on your support network.

#### Seek Support Help

This activity will guide you in reaching out for support. Reaching out for support can be difficult when you’re feeling down or upset; however, having good support is strongly related to improved mood and mental health, and may be an important part of your recovering from trauma.

## Distract Yourself

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Distraction Tools Text** | **On-Screen Instructions (Text for User)** |
| Woodworking | Brainstorm, start, or continue with a project, working with your hands. |
| Watch a sports game | Turn on your favorite sporting event and let yourself get into it. |
| Go for a walk around the block | Moving your legs, even just walking around the block, helps to foster a different perspective. |
| Play with children. | Remember those little ones in your family that just crack you up? Go spend time with them. |
| Go for a run. | Go for a run to raise your heart rate, clear your mind, and release some tension in your muscles. |
| Read favorite comic book | Laughing and going into another world would be good for you right now. Take a load off and read a comic book. |
| Watch a funny movie | It's hard to be upset when watching your favorite movie comedy. |
| Cook a meal and eat it | Cook your favorite meal and savor every bite. |
| Take a mental holiday | Allow your mind to take a holiday from your problems. |
| Chop wood | Get some of that energy out by chopping wood, and then relax in front of the fireplace. |
| Facebook | Get on Facebook and connect with your friends virtually. What are other people up to these days? |
| Draw a picture | Draw a picture and be creative! |
| Mold clay | Molding clay allows your hands to create a masterpiece or to just mix the colors. |
| Write poetry | Express yourself with your poetic words. Put it down on paper. |
| Do a jigsaw puzzle | Worried you are falling to pieces? Get a puzzle and have fun putting the pieces together. |
| Do Sudoku/crossword | Play sudoku or do a crossword. |
| Clean your room | Clean and straighten up your surroundings. |
| Walk your dog | Walk your dog…he needs a break, too. |
| Rubik’s cube | Remember Rubik’s cube?! Looks simple, yet it’s mystifying. Get busy with your hands and mind. |
| Go shopping | See what’s new at the mall or your favorite shopping centre. You can even shop around online! |
| Call a friend | Pick up the phone and see what your friends are up to. Connecting with them will distract you from your own mind. |
| Email a distant friend | There's no better time to catch up with a friend via e-mail. |
| Do a home project | Work on that project you have been saving for a rainy day. |
| Sing along to the radio | Turn on your radio and sing in the car. Or just blast it at home and belt it out. |
| Do something for someone else | Feel better about yourself by doing something nice for someone else. |
| Plan your next vacation | Nothing like having a trip to look forward to in the future. Get started planning a holiday. |
| Scribble/doodle on paper | Just pick up a pen and put it down on the paper. See what you create. |
| Alphabetize your bookcase/spice rack | Use your mind to organize your books or spice rack. It can be nice to have some order when your emotions feel chaotic! |
| Count to 100 | Counting to 10 not enough to cool you down? Try higher…say, 100? |
| Make as many words out of your full name as possible | Word scramble your full name and see how many words you can make out of it! |
| Go fishing | Catch some fish in the local pond or creek. |
| Volunteer | Volunteer and do something nice for someone else. It will make you feel good! |
| Go to a museum | Be inspired by the works of others at a museum. |
| Ask someone to tell you a funny story | Ask someone to tell you a funny story. There’s nothing like hearing the adventures of others. |
| Play pool | Play some pool, sink them, and have fun! |
| Watch your favorite television show | Watch some of your favourite TV shows. |
| Call a long distance friend | Time to check in with a friend. Who haven't you talked to in a bit? |
| Make funny faces in the mirror | Crack yourself up by making funny faces in the mirror. |
| Think about the future | Imagine those times in your life you are excited about: finishing school, falling in love, going on your next adventure. |
| Write thank you cards | Express gratitude and write to others to let them know you appreciate them thinking of you. |
| Take a nap | Take a break and let yourself just sleep and recharge for a few minutes. |
| Put your troubles in an imaginary shoebox on the shelf for a bit | Imagine packing your troubles up and storing them away—you can come back to them later. |
| YouTube | Find something funny to laugh at on YouTube. |
| Go to a friend's house | Go somewhere else, like a friend's house, to hang out. |

#### Distract Yourself Help

These are suggested activities to help you distract yourself from overwhelming emotions and the situations that may be triggering them. Distracting yourself may not completely make your feelings go away, but it can make surviving them a little easier.

# Find Support

## Get Support Right Now

<Crisis resources>

## Set Up My Support Network

When dealing with life stress, support from people you know and trust can be absolutely vital. Whether you are facing a small annoyance or a serious crisis, getting help from others is one of the most effective ways to make sure that you manage the situation and yourself as well as possible.

Set up your support network by selecting trusted people from your contact list or adding them in manually. If you are currently in counselling or therapy, make sure that your provider is one of the people on your support network.

<add contacts>

## Find Professional Care:

## Ex-Defence Members, Veterans & Community Members

### If you are in crisis:

Call 000 to be connected to emergency responses.

Go to your nearest Emergency Room

### If you just want to talk:

Call the 24/7 Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800-011-046. During business hours you will be transferred to the nearest VVCS office in your state. After hours you will be connected with professional telephone counsellors at Veteran’s Line for immediate assistance, and you can opt to be connected to your local VVCS office for follow-up support.

### To locate a mental health care provider

The Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) can connect you to a mental health service provider (psychologist, or social worker) with specific experience in helping people with PTSD and other difficulties with post traumatic mental health. VVCS specializes in supporting Defence members, Ex-Defence members and the families of Veterans. They provide individual and group based treatment options, and can advise about relevant community and inpatient (hospital) treatment and support options, as well as accessing psychiatry services. Call the 24/7 Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800-011-046.

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/health_programs/vvcs/pages/index.aspx>

### To locate a mental health care provider in the community

If you do not have a Defence background, or would prefer to access a community service provider your best place to start is with your General Practitioner, who can provide you with a referral to a psychologist, social worker or psychiatrist.

To find a psychologist you can also use the Australian Psychological Society’s Find A Psychologist website here: <http://www.psychology.org.au/ReferralService/About/>

A list of mental health trained social workers can be found at [www.aasw.asn.au/membersdirectory](http://www.aasw.asn.au/membersdirectory).

If hospitalisation is required, there are veteran specific mental health wards and treatment programs. To find out their location call DVA on 133 254 or 1800 555 254.

You also may wish to consider psychosocial and/or vocational rehabilitation services early on in your treatment. DVA can offer extensive rehabilitation services for entitled veterans ([www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitation](http://www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitation)).

## Find Professional Care:

## Currently Serving Defence Members

### ADF Joint Health Command is responsible for all healthcare services for the ADF member including preparation for and support to deployed members.

### If you need immediate help:

If an ADF member needs urgent treatment when away from the workplace, they should call 1800 IM SICK (1800 467 425). The [IM SICK line](http://www.defence.gov.au/health/contacts/i-imsick.htm) is a toll free, all-hours service that allows ADF personnel to discuss health concerns over the phone and receive immediate advice as to where they need to go to receive appropriate investigations and treatment.

This number should not be used as a substitute for 000 emergency services.

### If you just want to talk:

Call the all-hours support line 1800-011-046. The All-hours Support Line (ASL) is a confidential telephone service for ADF members and their families that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The ASL is designed as a triage line, which simply means that it is there to help you access ADF or civilian mental health services more easily. Services that you can access include psychology, medical, social work, and chaplain services.

Defence Family members can also call the [Defence Community Organisation’s Family Helpline 1800 624 608](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/Contact_us.htm" \o "Defence Family Helpline 1800 624 608), for a range of supports and programs for families and children of Defence members.  
- [www.defence.gov.au/dco](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/" \t "_blank)

### To locate a mental health care provider

INSERT DEFENCE INTERNAL PROCEDURE HERE

Defence members may also choose to be referred to the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) to access a mental health service provider (psychologist, or social worker). Eligible Defence members can also self-refer to VVCS. VVCS specializes in supporting Defence members, Ex-Defence members and the families of Veterans. They provide individual and group based treatment options, and can advise about relevant community and inpatient (hospital) treatment and support options, as well as accessing psychiatry services. It is important that your Defence medical officer is aware that you are accessing services from VVCS. Call the 24/7 Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800-011-046.

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/health_programs/vvcs/pages/index.aspx>

### To locate a mental health care provider in the community

If you do not have a Defence background, or would prefer to access a community service provider your best place to start is with your General Practitioner, who can provide you with a referral to a psychologist, social worker or psychiatrist.

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# About

PTSD Assist is a mobile phone application for people with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and those interested in learning more about PTSD.

This application provides:

* Education about PTSD
* A self-assessment
* Tools for managing distress associated with Posttraumatic Stress
* A direct connection to crisis support and
* Information about professional treatment.

It can be used as a stand-alone education and symptom management tool, or to augment face-to-face care with a healthcare professional.

US PTSD Coach Project Team:

* Julia E. Hoffman, Psy.D.
* Laura H. Wald, Ph.D.
* Eric Kuhn, Ph.D.
* Carolyn Greene, Ph.D.
* Josef I. Ruzek, Ph.D.
* Kenneth Weingardt, Ph.D.

PTSD Assist has been adapted for Australian users by the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defence.

<ACPMH LOGO>

<DVA LOGO>

<DEFENCE LOGO>

This app is based on the US. PTSD Coach App, which was a collaborative effort between the VA’s National Center for PTSD and the DoD’s National Center for Telehealth and Technology.

<NCPTSD LOGO>

<T2 LOGO>

# Set Up

#### Set Up Help

In order to get the most out of this app, you should select some items that you already have on your device that you find soothing or pleasant. These items will be provided to you when you are in need of tools to manage your distress.

You will need to select:

* Whether you are a serving ADF member or an ex- ADF member
* Friends, loved ones, or professionals from your contact list that can help you when you are feeling stressed (including your primary mental health care provider in case you choose to share information from this app with them to assist in your care)
* Pictures on your phone that you find comforting or funny
* Songs on your phone that you find soothing or that remind you of happy times

You can change your selections at any time by visiting Set Up.