

## PCL: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Checklist

The PCL is a standardized self-report rating scale for PTSD comprising 17 items that correspond to the key symptoms of PTSD. Two versions of the PCL exist:

- 1) PCL-M is specific to PTSD caused by military experiences
- 2) PCL-C is applied generally to any traumatic event

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

### ***How is the PCL completed?***

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

### ***How is the PCL Scored?***

- 1) Add up all items for a total severity score

or

- 2) Treat response categories **3–5** (*Moderately* or above) as symptomatic and responses **1–2** (below *Moderately*) as non-symptomatic, then use the following DSM criteria for a diagnosis:
  - Symptomatic response to at least 1 “B” item (Questions 1–5),
  - Symptomatic response to at least 3 “C” items (Questions 6–12), and
  - Symptomatic response to at least 2 “D” items (Questions 13–17)



## PCL (Side Two)

### ***Are Results Valid and Reliable?***

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

### ***Who Completes the Form?***

- Military personnel indicating potentially serious post-deployment health concerns on DD Forms 2796 or 2844 may benefit from further evaluation using the PCL
- Patients reporting other signs of PTSD during primary care exams or other health care visits may benefit from further evaluation using the PCL

### ***What Additional Follow-up is Available?***

- All military health system beneficiaries with health concerns they believe are deployment-related are encouraged to seek medical care
- Patients should be asked, “**Is your health concern today related to a deployment?**” during all primary care visits
- If the patient replies “**yes,**” the provider should follow the Post-Deployment Health Clinical Practice Guideline (PDH-CPG) and supporting guidelines available through the DHCC and [www.PDHealth.mil](http://www.PDHealth.mil)

