



National Center for  
**PTSD**

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

# The Primary Care PTSD Screen for *DSM-IV* (PC-PTSD)

**Version date:** 2003

**Reference:** Prins, A., Bovin, M. J., Kimerling, R.,  
2003.

Available from <http://www.ptsd.va.gov>

**URL:** <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/screens/pc-ptsd.asp>

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## Primary Care PTSD Screen (PC-PTSD)

### Description

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The PC-PTSD is a four-item screen that was designed for use in primary care and other medical settings and is currently used to screen for PTSD in Veterans at the Veteran's Affairs. The screen includes an introductory sentence to cue respondents to traumatic events. The authors suggest that in most circumstances the results of the PC-PTSD should be considered "positive" if a patient answers "yes" to any three items. Those screening positive should then be assessed with a structured interview for PTSD. The screen does not include a list of potentially traumatic events.

### Scale

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**Instructions:**

In your life, have you ever had any experience that was so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that, in the past month, you:

1. Have had nightmares about it or thought about it when you did not want to?  
 YES  NO
2. Tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that reminded you of it?  
 YES  NO
3. Were constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?  
 YES  NO
4. Felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?  
 YES  NO

Current research suggests that the results of the PC-PTSD should be considered "positive" if a patient answers "yes" to any three items.