

Worksheet

Professional Version | US English

Therapy Blueprint For PTSD



Description

A therapy blueprint is a CBT tool which summarizes the work a therapist and patient have completed together. Patients can be encouraged to think of it as ‘the first session of the rest of your life’. Therapy blueprints are one way to help clients reflect on what they have learned during therapy. They act as a way of promoting resilience by reinforcing what has been learned. Therapy blueprints also act as a form of relapse prevention – by making new knowledge more accessible, clients are more able to cope effectively with future setbacks.

The structure of a good therapy blueprint mirrors the process of therapy itself. Suggested areas for exploration include:

- **Assessment:** What were the problems? How did they develop?
- **Formulation:** What kept the problems going? Why did they not get better naturally? Were there any strategies with unintended consequences?
- **Treatment:** What new knowledge and skills did you develop? What techniques were practiced?
- **Reflection on progress:** What can you do now? Looking back (past goals), looking forward (current goals).
- **Relapse prevention:** What obstacles and setbacks can you foresee? How will you cope? What helpful strategies might you implement?

Another helpful way of conceptualizing the therapy blueprint is to think of how it represents the past (the problems, what maintained them), the present (the therapy itself, new knowledge learned and skills developed), and the future (goals, plans, and strategies to manage setbacks). Therapists will find it helpful to introduce the therapy blueprint prior to the final session, and as early as the client is willing.

The *Therapy Blueprint For PTSD* is a relapse prevention worksheet tailored for clients who are completing a course of therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It encourages a particular focus on client's changes in beliefs, behaviors, and responses to unwanted memories, over the course of therapy.

Instructions

Suggested Introduction



A therapy blueprint is a helpful way to look back over therapy, reflect on what you have learned, and think about what has been important to you. We want to catch it now while it's fresh in your mind. People often find that a therapy blueprint is a helpful reminder, once therapy is over, of things that they know are helpful for them. It's also a helpful way for us to reflect on what skills it might be important for you to keep practicing, to plan for triggers and things that might be difficult for you, and for us to set some goals for the future.

References

Wells, A. (1997). *Cognitive therapy of anxiety disorders: A practice manual and conceptual guide*. Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Therapy Blueprint For Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

A therapy blueprint is a space for you to reflect on how your difficulties developed, what kept them going, and what you learned during therapy. It can help you to plan how you are going to maintain the gains that you have made, review what warning signs you might need to remain aware of, and remember what you might find helpful should it feel like your difficulties are ever beginning to return.

The problems

What trauma(s) had you experienced and how did they affect you?

What memories and beliefs did you find particularly troublesome?

What emotions were you struggling with?

What kept them going?

Why did the PTSD not get better on its own?

What were you avoiding at the start of therapy?

What other coping strategies were you using?

Knowledge and skills

What have you learned about PTSD that has been helpful? How has therapy helped you to recover from the traumatic experiences?

What strategies or techniques did you use or learn? (e.g. exposure to my memories, facing my fears, testing my beliefs)

Describe any behavioral experiments, surveys, or site visits that you completed (in session or outside sessions).

Therapy Blueprint For Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

How I think about my trauma memories now

Consider some intrusive memories (flashbacks or nightmares) which used to trigger you. Compare what you used to think when these memories intruded with how you interpret these situations now.

Memory	How I thought <i>then</i>	How I think <i>now</i>
What intrusive memories bothered you most?	Before therapy, how did you interpret this memory?	How do you interpret this memory now?

How I think differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger strong feelings. Compare your thinking patterns before therapy and now: How did you interpret these situations then? What do these events mean to you now?

Situation	How I thought <i>then</i>	How I think <i>now</i>
What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	Before therapy, what kind of thoughts did you have in response to situations like this?	How do you interpret this kind of event now?

How I do things differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Situation	How I responded <i>then</i>	How I respond <i>now</i>
What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	Before therapy, how did you react when situations like this occurred?	What do you do if this kind of event happens now?

Therapy Blueprint For Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Reclaiming your life

What did the trauma steal from you?

What will you do now that your symptoms of PTSD are less bothersome?

What can you do to carry on reclaiming your life?

Setbacks and obstacles

What could cause a setback and how would you deal with it?

What obstacles do you anticipate might be challenging?

If you had another intrusive memory what would you need to remind yourself of?

Message to my future self

If you could send a message to your future self (something you would not want to forget) what would it be?

Therapy Blueprint For Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

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The problems

What trauma(s) had you experienced and how did they affect you?

What memories and beliefs did you find particularly troublesome?

What emotions were you struggling with?

My trauma: Sexually abused by my cousin from age 8-12, told adults but it was brushed under the carpet and not spoken about.

Beliefs: There is something bad about me which is why it happened, I must have been to blame for them (adults) to have not done anything about it.

Problems: With intimacy - flashbacks during sex, hate myself.

What kept them going?

Why did the PTSD not get better on its own?

What were you avoiding at the start of therapy?

What other coping strategies were you using?

I had intrusions for so long that it just felt normal to have them.

The message I received from family was that I should just bury it and not talk about it.

Avoiding intimacy with my partner because it made me so uncomfortable, but that made me feel like I was letting him down.

Coped by using alcohol, and self-harming when self-loathing got too overwhelming.

Knowledge and skills

What have you learned about PTSD that has been helpful? How has therapy helped you to recover from the traumatic experiences?

What strategies or techniques did you use or learn? (e.g. exposure to my memories, facing my fears, testing my beliefs)

Describe any behavioral experiments, surveys, or site visits that you completed (in session or outside sessions)

I had a normal reaction to abnormal experiences.

None of it was my fault - even though I wasn't listened to.

I'm not to blame - other people wouldn't blame me (we did surveys to prove this).

Flashbacks *don't* mean that I'm going mad - they're just special memories.

Stimulus discrimination was good - it helped me to cope early in therapy.

The survey we did was an eye opener - we asked if people thought I had 'led him on' and no-one thought I had.

We did behavioral experiments which were hard but really worthwhile - I had to be the one to initiate intimacy which triggered my 'leading him on' thoughts, and I had to talk to my partner so we could negotiate ways so I didn't feel powerless.

Therapy Blueprint For Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

How I think about my trauma memories now

Consider some intrusive memories (flashbacks or nightmares) which used to trigger you. Compare what you used to think when these memories intruded with how you interpret these situations now.

Memory What intrusive memories bothered you most?	How I thought <i>then</i> Before therapy, how did you interpret this memory?	How I think <i>now</i> How do you interpret this memory now?
memory of feeling powerless during the abuse.	I can't do anything to stop it (peri) It was my fault because I didn't stop it (post).	It wasn't my fault - I was only 8 I *do* have choices now
memory of my parents' reaction when I told them.	They don't believe me. I don't matter.	It did happen. I do matter. It wasn't my fault. They handled it badly and failed me.

How I think differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger strong feelings. Compare your thinking patterns before therapy and now: How did you interpret these situations then? What do these events mean to you now?

Situation What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	How I thought <i>then</i> Before therapy, what kind of thoughts did you have in response to situations like this?	How I think <i>now</i> How do you interpret this kind of event now?
Family gatherings.	I'm the odd one out. I don't matter as much as my cousins or siblings.	my family are dysfunctional but it doesn't mean that I don't matter.
Intimacy with my partner.	This is disgusting. I want it to be over. I want it to be nice for him and I'm failing.	I can learn for this to be a way of feeling connected with my partner. I can separate now from then - it is consensual now and I'm an adult.

How I do things differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Situation What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	How I responded <i>then</i> Before therapy, how did you react when situations like this occurred?	How I respond <i>now</i> What do you do if this kind of event happens now?
If I know my partner wants to be intimate.	Get drunk.	Use my stimulus discrimination practice if I get an intrusive image - pay attention to now and what's different.
Any opportunity to know other people - or them to know me.	Withdraw and avoid getting close.	Learning to trust. Open up a bit. Go to social things.

Therapy Blueprint For Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Reclaiming your life

What did the trauma steal from you?

What will you do now that your symptoms of PTSD are less bothersome?

What can you do to carry on reclaiming your life?

Better relationships with my partner and with other people in my life.

It stole my confidence and my kindness to myself - now I can do things just for me, and I can have a chance to learn about me and what I like.

To recover I have to work out what really matters to me and do more of what I want, and less of what other people want me to do.

I am going to find out about the process of reporting historical abuse and decide whether to report it to the police.

Setbacks and obstacles

What could cause a setback and how would you deal with it?

What obstacles do you anticipate might be challenging?

If you had another intrusive memory what would you need to remind yourself of?

If I do make a complaint to the police it could bring things up that I hadn't considered. It's bound to cause friction with my family and they could make things difficult even though I don't see them much.

If I have more intrusive memories I would need to remind myself that:

- It was NOT my fault.
- It's just a flashback, and I can use grounding and stimulus discrimination.

Message to my future self

If you could send a message to your future self (something you would not want to forget) what would it be?

IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT

Nobody deserves the abuse you suffered, or the reaction you got from your family.

You are NOT a freak.

You are kind and caring - you have the qualities that you value in other people, and you have a good heart.

You need to start valuing your needs as much as everyone else's.

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Resource details

Title: Therapy Blueprint For PTSD
 Type: Worksheet
 Language: English (US)
 Translated title: Therapy Blueprint For PTSD

URL: <https://www.psychologytools.com/resource/therapy-blueprint-for-ptsd/>
 Resource format: Professional
 Version: 20230721
 Last updated by: EB

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