

Trauma Intrusion and Coping Strategies Tracker

This document provides a framework for tracking and understanding trauma intrusions, their impact, and coping strategies. It includes a thought tracker to record situations, intrusions, distress levels, and reactions, followed by a reflection section to identify patterns and insights.



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Understanding Trauma Intrusions

Sometimes, our trauma "intrudes" into our day to day life as a flashback or memory from the past, and it can feel out of our control/not caused by our conscious mind.

This can be pretty overwhelming. We might separate or dissociate from our body or mind in that moment to help deal with the pain. You might feel like you're not in control because the experience can feel automatic and very disconnected. When we are overwhelmed, or feeling dissociated, we might not notice what we are thinking or feeling, or might not be aware of how we dealt with the situation.

Purpose of the Thought Tracker

On the first two pages, practice noticing the moment and our coping strategy helps us figure out what emotions or feelings we are disconnecting FROM, and what different coping strategies we might try instead.

On the 3rd page, do some reflecting and explore some patterns, overall themes, and new insights that come up from reviewing your thought tracker.

1

Noticing the Moment

Practice observing and recording the intrusion as it happens.

2

Identifying Coping Strategies

Recognize and document the strategies used to deal with the intrusion.

3

Exploring Emotions

Understand the emotions you might be disconnecting from during the experience.

4

Reflecting on Patterns

Analyze the recorded experiences to identify overall themes and insights.

Thought Tracker Structure

SITUATION/ TRIGGER/CAUSE	UNITS OF DISTRESS 0- 10 (0=NONE 10=THE WORST)	WHAT WAS THE INTRUSION? (EVENT, FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, BODY REACTION)	COPING STRATEGY/REACTION (BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES, THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION)
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This table structure allows you to record detailed information about each trauma intrusion experience, including the trigger, distress level, nature of the intrusion, and your coping strategy. Use the following suggestions for each column to help you identify potential patterns.

****SITUATION/ TRIGGER/CAUSE****: Record the specific event, situation, or person that triggered the intrusion. For example, a particular smell, song, or image could trigger a flashback. Also consider if there was something you were doing or thinking about just before the intrusion, or if there was a pattern you notice in your environment (e.g., being in crowded spaces). This can help you understand what situations to be more mindful of moving forward.

****UNITS OF DISTRESS 0-10 (0=NONE 10=THE WORST)****: Use this scale to rate the intensity of your distress during the intrusion. This can help you track the severity of the experience and identify patterns in how you cope. For example, do you use a particular coping strategy more when your distress level is high?

****WHAT WAS THE INTRUSION? (EVENT, FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, BODY REACTION)****: Describe the specific content of the intrusion, including any events, thoughts, feelings, or bodily sensations you experienced. This can help you understand the nature of the intrusion and identify any common themes. For example, do you often experience flashbacks of a particular event? Do you often experience physical symptoms like a racing heart or difficulty breathing?

****COPING STRATEGY/REACTION (BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES, THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION)****: Document the strategies you used to cope with the intrusion, including any actions you took, thoughts you had, and feelings you experienced. For example, did you try to distract yourself? Did you try to ground yourself in the present moment? Did you talk to someone about what was happening? This can help you identify your most effective coping strategies and develop new strategies for managing future intrusions.

Example of a Recorded Intrusion

Walked down a dark alley 7

Flashback to the time I
was robbed; became
nauseous; tingling in my
hands and arms; felt "on
alert"; anxious; wanted
to turn around and
leave.

Left, knocked someone
over on the way out by
accident; felt guilty;
felt like a failure.

This example demonstrates how to fill out the thought tracker, providing a clear picture of the situation, the intrusion experience, and the resulting reaction.



Reflection Page Structure

NOTICE ANY PATTERNS?

OVERALL THEMES BASED ON
THE PATTERNS?

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM
THIS?

The reflection page helps you analyze the recorded experiences to identify recurring patterns, overall themes, and potential insights for personal growth and healing.

Example of Reflection

Patterns

Being out alone triggers me; dark spaces trigger me; I have always left/escaped. My body reacts very strongly.

Overall Themes

Environment triggers me; I feel alone and vulnerable; this never triggers when I am with someone else; I feel overwhelmed very quickly; I don't like feeling anxious.

Learnings

I don't deal well with feeling anxious and I beat myself up for this. I feel guilty about my reactions more than the actual event that first happened. If I can react differently I might be able to get it under control

Benefits of Using the Thought Tracker



Increased Self-Awareness

By regularly recording intrusions and reactions, you develop a better understanding of your triggers and patterns.



Insight Generation

The reflection page helps you identify themes and learn from your experiences, potentially leading to new coping strategies.



Progress Tracking

Over time, you can observe changes in your reactions and distress levels, helping you gauge your progress in managing trauma intrusions.



Strategy Development

By analyzing your coping strategies, you can identify which ones are most effective and work on developing new, healthier responses to intrusions.