



# Assessment

## 1. Why Assess?

While it may seem intuitive that people who survive a traumatic experience will be affected, individuals may respond very differently from one another. In order to ensure that appropriate services are delivered to those in need, it is important to be able to clearly define their emotional states.

## 2. When Should Assessment of a Potentially-Traumatized Individual Take Place?

Ideally, at least two assessments should take place. An initial assessment should be conducted as close to the event as possible to determine the presence of immediate effects, both psychological and physical. A follow-up assessment should take place approximately six to ten weeks after the event to determine whether symptoms have emerged (e.g., sleep disturbances, mood changes, appetite changes).

### 3. What Should a Good Assessment Cover?

A good assessment should determine the individual's immediate state, produce a hypothesis about the individual that may include a DSM-IV-TR or ICD-10 diagnosis, and a plan for follow-up care.



### 4. What Are Some Assessment Techniques?

Most assessments for PTSD include both an interview and the use of a structured inventory. The Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS; Blake, Weathers, Nagy, Kaloupek, Charney, & Keane, 1995) is a well researched measure that has been translated into several languages and guides the interviewer through questions that help determine whether an individual meets criteria for PTSD. Another suitable instrument is the Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI; Sheehan & Lecrubier, 2010), which has been translated into over thirty languages and can be administered using pencil and paper or via the Internet. A list of other assessment techniques can be found at <http://www.istss.org/AssessmentResources.htm>.

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The Seamen's Church Institute is conducting an investigation into the experiences of seafarers, including those who have been involved in experiences with piracy.

If you would be willing to speak with us, please contact Dr. Michael Stuart Garfinkle, Clinical Researcher at the Seamen's Church Institute.

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