

PCL Scoring

There are several ways in which to score the **PTSD Checklist (PCL)**. Perhaps the easiest way to score the PCL is to add up all the items for a total severity score. A total score of 44 is considered to be PTSD positive for the general population while a total score of 50 is considered to be PTSD positive in military populations. A second way to score the PCL is to treat “moderately” or above (responses 3 through 5) as symptomatic and anything below “moderately” (1 and 2) as non-symptomatic. Then use the DSM scoring rules to make a diagnosis. That is:

- You need an endorsement of at least 1 B item (question #s 1-5)
- You need an endorsement of at least 3 C items (question #s 6-12)
- You need an endorsement of at least 2 D items (question #s 13-17)

However, please note that it is then possible to get a PTSD diagnosis with a total score of 29, which would be very low. It may therefore be best to use a combination of the two approaches. That is, the requisite number of items within each cluster are met at a 3 or above AND the total score is above the specified cut point.