TRAUMA-INFORMED CLINICAL FORMULATION, SHAME RESILIENCE, & RECOVERY PROTOCOL

Trauma-Related Shame Level & Functional Impact Questionnaire

Structured Clinical Assessment of Internalized Shame, Concealment, & Relational Impact (Past 30 Days)

KLASEY CONSULTING

Clinical Rationale & Scope: Unlike guilt (*"I made a mistake"*), trauma-related shame is a pervasive, painful belief that one is fundamentally defective, unworthy, or ruined as a result of traumatic experiences **(Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Wilson et al., 2006)**. Elevated trauma shame maintains posttraumatic distress, fuels secrecy, drives substance use or self-harm coping, and blocks help-seeking **(SAMHSA, 2014)**. Assessing both the intensity and daily functional impact of shame enables compassionate, targeted clinical intervention.

Client Name / Chosen Name & Pronouns: _____	**Assessment Date / Age:** _____
Clinician / Provider Name & Role: _____	**Emotional Safety & Grounding Reviewed:** _____

Part 1: Trauma-Informed Administration & De-Shaming Standards

1. **Normalize Shame as a Common Trauma Response:** Frame shame as a protective adaptation the nervous system uses to make sense of overwhelming events—never as evidence of personal defectiveness.
2. **Do Not Require Trauma Details to Complete the Scale:** Clients rate how strongly shame affects them today without needing to disclose or recount specific traumatic memories.
3. **Monitor Somatic Freeze or Withdrawal Cues:** Because discussing shame can trigger gaze aversion, collapse, or shutting down, pace collaboratively and offer grounding breaks **(SAMHSA, 2014)**.

Part 2: Trauma-Related Shame & Functional Impact Scale (Past 30 Days)

For each statement below, check the box that best reflects how often or strongly you have experienced this over the **past 30 days**: **0** = Not at all, **1** = Several days / Mild, **2** = More than half the days / Moderate, **3** = Nearly every day / Severe.

Assessment Item & Clinical Dimension	0 None	1 Mild	2 Mod	3 Sev
Domain 1: Internalized Self-Blame, Defectiveness, & Worthlessness				
1.1 "Because of painful things I have been through, I feel fundamentally flawed, damaged, or unworthy of care and respect." Measures core global self-condemnation and internalized defectiveness beliefs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2 "I blame myself for traumatic events I experienced or believe I should have prevented what happened to me." Identifies trauma-related self-blame and hindsight distortion.	☐	☐	☐	☐

© 2026 Klasey Consulting | Trauma-Related Shame Level & Functional Impact Questionnaire

Assessment Item & Clinical Dimension	0 None	1 Mild	2 Mod	3 Sev
1.3 "I feel disgust toward myself or my body, or feel 'contaminated' when reminded of past trauma." Captures embodied/somatic shame and self-disgust common after interpersonal or boundary-violating trauma.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Domain 2: Concealment, Secrecy, & Relational Withdrawal				
2.1 "I work hard to hide my struggles or past experiences because I fear that if people truly knew me, they would judge or reject me." Assesses protective concealment and fear of social exposure or rejection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2 "When shame hits, I shut down, avoid eye contact, isolate myself from safe people, or feel an urge to disappear." Measures behavioral withdrawal and dorsal-vagal shutdown responses triggered by shame.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Domain 3: Functional Impact on Daily Life, Coping, & Help-Seeking				
3.1 "Feelings of shame hold me back from speaking honestly in therapy/medical visits, asking for help, or setting healthy boundaries." Evaluates clinical treatment barriers and self-advocacy impairment caused by shame.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2 "To numb or escape painful feelings of shame, I turn to coping behaviors that hurt me (such as substance use, disordered eating, self-harm, or self-sabotage)." Identifies high-risk secondary coping mechanisms driven by acute shame spirals.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3 "Overall, how much has shame interfered with your relationships, work/school, self-care, or sense of hope over the past month?" Provides a global functional impairment index across daily life domains.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Total Trauma Shame Score (Sum of Items 1.1–3.3, Range 0–24): _____ | Highest-Impact Domain(s): _____				

Part 3: Score Interpretation & Trauma-Informed Clinical Response

Score Tier & Severity Level	Clinical Formulation & Recommended Interventions
0–6: Low / Situational Shame (Minimal functional disruption)	Reinforce existing self-compassion and relational supports; monitor for situational shame spikes during anniversaries or new stressors.
7–15: Moderate Trauma Shame (Noticeable relational / emotional impact)	Provide psychoeducation distinguishing guilt from trauma-induced shame, externalize perpetrator/systemic responsibility, and integrate self-compassion and somatic grounding skills **(Wilson et al., 2006)**.
16–24: Severe / Pervasive Shame (High impairment or item 3.2 ≥ 2)	Prioritize relational safety, pacing, and non-judgmental connection before trauma narrative processing. Screen for acute self-harm/substance risk (Item 3.2) and build a collaborative shame-interruption safety plan **(SAMHSA, 2014)**.

Client Reflections, Shame Triggers, & Shame-Resilience Care Plan

Practice Standards & References

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2014). *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services* (Treatment Improvement Protocol [TIP] Series, No. 57). HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4801.
2. Tangney, J. P., & Dearing, R. L. (2002). *Shame and Guilt*. Guilford Press.
3. Wilson, J. P., Droždek, B., & Turkovic, S. (2006). Posttraumatic shame and guilt. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 7(2), 122–141.

Clinical & Originality Notice: *All assessment items and scoring tiers in this questionnaire are original clinical prompts developed for educational and intake use, informed by published trauma-shame scholarship (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Wilson et al., 2006) and public federal guidance (SAMHSA TIP 57). No copyrighted or proprietary third-party scales are reproduced herein.* *© 2026 Klasey Consulting. All rights reserved.*

Partner with Klasey Consulting

Interested in trauma-informed clinical tools, shame-resilience curriculum consultation, or workforce trainings on trauma recovery? Contact us at **info@klaseyconsulting.com** to learn more about our trainings and consultation services.

KLASEY KC CONSULTING