

Life Events Checklist: Examples of how to ask clients

Here are four examples of how to ask clients if they would be willing to complete the Life Events Checklist with you. We have found that it is important to let clients know that participation is voluntary and inform them that completing the screening tool could bring up difficult memories.

I have a trauma screening tool called the Life Events Checklist that I would like to complete with you if you are willing. It is completely voluntary and includes general and specific questions about trauma that you may have experienced, witnessed, learned about or that doesn't apply to you. I can read each question, and we can do it together or you can complete it entirely on your own, in your own time. Is this something you'd be willing/interested in doing?

This is a tool we can use together to help me better understand some of the experiences you have been through in your life. There may be some difficult questions, and please know that you do not have to answer or talk about anything that does not feel comfortable or safe. Safety is the most important consideration when we talk about your experiences, and many of these events are considered traumatic, so please let me know how you are feeling as we go through the questions.

If you're up for it, I have a worksheet that the Coalition has started to use with clients. This is completely voluntary, so please feel to answer only the questions that you feel comfortable with. The worksheet is called the "Life Events Checklist" and lists several different forms of trauma many of our clients have experienced throughout their lifetime. It serves as a tool to help us know how to better serve clients who have experienced trauma. How do you feel about completing such a tool?

Part of the information we like to screen for is about trauma. I have a brief survey I'd like to go through with you to determine what kind of traumatic experiences you may have endured in your life. This helps me as we work together therapeutically. This survey is optional, and if you decide to complete it, you can decide what would make you most comfortable. You can read each prompt and complete the survey quietly, and we can discuss it afterwards, or we can go through it question by question together since it could bring up some difficult memories.

I have found that a lot of people with whom I have worked have had some not-so-great things happen to them in their lives. Sometimes these events continue to affect us even if they happened a long time ago, and it can help me to understand you better when I know what kinds of events you have survived. We can fill it out together, you can fill it out alone, you can take it home and bring it back, or you can look it over and decide, "I don't want to fill it out at all." You might start it, and decide, "I don't want to think about these things." You might fill it out because you want me to understand what has happened to you in your life. Whatever you decide is fine by me. What are your thoughts about this? (If they agree then I go over the instructions, and I remind them that we can talk more about the events or not at all. It's up to them).