

TRAUMA-INFORMED PAIN ASSESSMENT

This guide offers scripting examples to help clinicians assess chronic pain while honoring trauma history, mental health, and the impact of invalidation on invisible illness.

PAIN HISTORY

TRAUMA-INFORMED ADAPTATIONS

Standard Question:
“Can you rate your pain on a scale of 1-10?”

People have different pain tolerances. On a rough day, how would you describe what's hard to do, what exhausts you—and what, if anything, makes you feel *safer*?

FUNCTIONAL IMPACT
“How does your pain impact you day to day?”

Pain isn't just physical—it can affect your emotions, energy, and mood. What feels most different when you're in pain—and what helps you cope?

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE
“Has your pain led to feelings of depression or anxiety?”

When you're in pain, how do you feel about your body? Do you feel ashamed, “lazy,” unsafe, or like you're not believed?

FLUCTUATION & FATIGUE
“How often do you experience *fluctuations* in pain?”

Pain and fatigue can go up and down. What do your *good* days look like? Hard days? Who or what supports you when symptoms spike?

