

# Family of Origin Developmental and Relational Trauma Assessment

## What is the value in exploring your family of origin?

Learning our developmental history can be very helpful in our healing work. In order to address our current patterns and ways of relating to ourselves and others, it is often useful to get clear on our starting place and what it was like growing up in our family. Too often, we are towing the family line without really understanding what was lost or we had to give up in order to fit into our family. Once we get clear on the past, we can then make a choice: Do I want to continue those old rules and operating instructions, or do I want to make new choices that better fit with my current values?

## Instructions

1. **Please take the time you need to complete this assessment.** Reflecting on our childhoods as adults can lead to some unexpected realizations and sometimes unpleasant recollections.
2. **Do good self care** and take breaks when needed. Some people find it helpful to complete just one or two sections at a time, and then taking a break of a few days.
3. **If you have more to share**, please create a separate document and attach it to this assessment, indicating question number and the additional information.
4. If you find you are **having trouble completing this assessment**, please discuss with your therapist, and notify the facilitator if you are planning to do a family of origin intensive.

**Note:** *If your primary caregivers in childhood do not fit the descriptions of “mother” and “father”, it is recommended that you review the entire assessment first, before completing it. Once you see the scope of the questions, you can decide how to modify it to better fit your situation. For example, if you have two mothers or were raised by a grandparent, you may choose to designate “mother” or “father” to someone who is not your biological or adoptive parent.*

*This assessment is based on the work of Pia Mellody, adapted by Jan Bergstrom, and later by Terri Delaney.*

# Family of Origin

## Developmental and Relational Trauma Assessment

Ages 0 -18 years

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

### Location and Home Stability

1. When and where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

What town and state did you grow up in? \_\_\_\_\_ How many years did you spend there? \_\_\_\_\_ If you moved, where did you move to? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you move often in your childhood? If so, how many times in 18 years? \_\_\_\_\_

### The Family Configuration

2. Identify your major caregivers – What Ethnicity are/were they?

Name	Relationship to you	Ethnicity
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

3. List the birth order of the children in your family. Use a noun or adjective to describe each person.

**Include yourself and indicate deceased siblings in the order of birth.** *(add to appendix if more sibs)*

Sibling Name	Age	Descriptive noun or adjectives
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Number of children in your family: \_\_\_\_\_ Your rank in birth order: \_\_\_\_\_

If you were adopted, at what age were you adopted? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have step-siblings, at what age were you when they joined your family? \_\_\_\_\_

4. List other adults (family, teachers, mentors, coaches) who were involved in your childhood. Use a noun or adjective to describe each person.

Adult/Relationship	Description
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Overview of Parental Information

5. Is your mother living? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ What was her birth order \_\_\_\_\_?

If your mother is deceased, how old were you at the time of her death? \_\_\_\_\_

If the person you are identifying as your mother is not your biological mother, identify your relationship to her. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Is your father living? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ What was his birth order \_\_\_\_\_?

If your father is deceased, how old were you at the time of his death? \_\_\_\_\_

If the person you are identifying as your father is not your biological father, identify your relationship to him. \_\_\_\_\_

7. If your parents were living during your childhood, were they  
separated \_\_\_\_\_ divorced \_\_\_\_\_ living together \_\_\_\_\_

If they were separated or divorced, at what age were you when they

separated \_\_\_\_\_ divorced \_\_\_\_\_

8. Did your parents re-marry? If so, when and who did you live with? \_\_\_\_\_

If your parents are living, what is their current marital status? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What were/are the educational levels and occupations of your parents?

Mother/Caregiver 1: Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation(s): \_\_\_\_\_

If you mother stayed at home, then worked, how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

Father/Caregiver 2: Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation(s): \_\_\_\_\_

If you father stayed at home, then worked, how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Spiritual Practice**

10. Do you have a spiritual practice? (If no, skip to number 12)

---

---

---

11. If you do have a spiritual practice, at what age did it become so? \_\_\_\_\_ Why?

---

---

12. What did spirituality mean in your mother's (or caregiver's) life?

---

---

---

13. What did spirituality mean in your father's (or caregiver's) life?

---

---

---

14. How did spirituality or lack of spirituality impact your childhood?

---

---

---

15. As you reflect on spirituality, are there any other thoughts important for you to express now?

---

---

---

**Birth and Parents Early Relationship**

16. Describe the physical, financial, and emotional situation of your parents at the time of your birth or adoption.

---

---

---

17. Describe the relationship that existed between your mother and father at the time of your birth or adoption.

---

---

---

18. Describe how your mother felt at the time of your birth or adoption.

---

---

---

19. Describe how your father felt at the time of your birth or adoption.

---

---

---

20.a Describe the relationship that existed between your mother and father during your childhood.

---

---

---

b. Close your eyes and imagine your parents having a conflict when you were between the ages of 8 and 12. Describe a common fight or conflict and how it ended.

---

---

---

---

---

## Childhood Memories and Your Relationship with Parents

### Childhood Memories of Your Mother/Caregiver 1

21. Before answering, close your eyes and imagine yourself as a child being in the physical presence of your **mother/caregiver 1** and now by looking back on her then, describe her with what you know today.

List nouns and adjectives to describe your **mother/ caregiver 1**:

Positive

Negative

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Are you aware of any addictions your **mother/caregiver 1** might have had? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of any mental health issues your **mother/caregiver 1** had? Did she seek treatment?

22. List nouns and adjectives to describe your **stepmother/other caregiver** if you had one:

Positive

Negative

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Are you aware of any addictions your **stepmother/other caregiver** might have had? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of any mental health issues your **stepmother/ caregiver** had? Did she seek treatment?

23. Describe the happiest memories with your **mother/ caregiver 1**.

---

---

---

---

24. Describe a time or times in your life that you felt "invisible" with your **mother/ caregiver 1**.

---

---

---

25. Describe the three worst times you remember with your **mother/ caregiver 1**.

What was your **Age** at the time and what **Emotions** did you have **then and now**?

a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

b) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

c) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

26. Describe the three worst times you remember with your **stepmother/other caregiver** *if you had one*. What was your **Age** at the time and what **Emotions** did you have **then and now**?

a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

b) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

b) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

27. What did you want from your **mother/caregiver 1** you never received, or she never did for you?

---

---

---

---

28. As a child, what did you do to get approval from your **mother/ caregiver 1**?

---

---

---



## Childhood Memories of Your Father

29. Before answering, close your eyes and imagine yourself as a child being in the physical presence

List nouns and adjectives to describe your **father / caregiver 2**:

Positive

Negative

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Are you aware of any addictions your **father/caregiver 2** might have had? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of any mental health issues your **father/caregivers** had? Did they seek treatment?

List nouns and adjectives to describe your **stepfather/other caregiver** if you had one:

Positive

Negative

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Are you aware of any addictions your **stepfather/other caregiver** might have had? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of any mental health issues your **stepfather/ caregiver** had? Did they seek treatment?

30. Describe the happiest memories with your **father/caregiver 2**.

---

---

---

---

31. Describe a time or times in your life that you felt “invisible” with your **father/caregiver 2**.

---

---

---

---

32. Describe the three worst times you remember with your **father/caregiver 2**.

What was your **Age** at the time and what **Emotions** did you have **then and now**?

a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

b) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

c) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

33. Describe the three worst times you remember with your **stepfather/other caregiver** if you had one. What was your **Age** at the time and what **Emotions** did you have **then and now**?

a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

b) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

c) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

34. What did you want from your **father/caregiver 2** that you never received, or he never did for you?

---

---

---

35. As a child, what did you do to get approval from your **father/caregiver 2**?

---

---

---

## Your Childhood Experiences

36. Describe your **earliest memory**. What was your age at the time? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

37. Did you have any severe or chronic **childhood/adolescent illnesses**, medical conditions or **anyone else in your family**? If so, what were they?

---

---

---

38. How did you learn about **sexuality** growing up?

---

---

---

39. What is your **sexual orientation and gender identity**? When did you discover this?

---

---

---

40. What role did **race/ethnicity** play in your life growing up? Did you grow up with families of the same/similar race and ethnicity as your family, or was your family different in some way? How did your family acknowledge this (or not)? And what was the impact on you?

---

---

---

40. What role did **social class/economic status** play in your life growing up? Did you grow up with families of the social class/economic status as your family, or was your family different in some way? How did your family acknowledge this (or not)? And what was the impact on you?

---

---

---

42. What did your family teach you about your **family's worth** and your place in the neighborhood/world? That your family was better or worse than other families, or equally worthy?

---

---

---

42. Describe any **significant issues you had with your siblings**. Did you compete? Who took care of whom? Did you harm a sibling or did they harm you? What was the impact on you?

---

---

---

---

---

43. Did your parents **single out one or more siblings** (negatively or positively) or compare you? Which sibling(s) and what was the impact on you?

---

---

---

---

44. Did your parents help you with **friendships and social experiences with peers**? Did they model or teach you social skills? Did they help you to resolve conflicts with peers?

---

---

---

---

45. Did you have any **significant experiences with peers**? Bullying? Social ostracization or being excluded? If so, did your parents provide support and assistance? How were they involved (or not)?

---

---

---

---

46. Describe yourself as a child. From the **ages of 5-10** years old.

---

---

---

---

47. Describe yourself as a teenager. From the **ages of 11-18** years old.

---

---

---

---

48. Describe the three worst memories in your **childhood** and the persons who traumatized you.  
What was your **age** at the time and what **emotions** did you have **then and now**?

a) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

b) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

c) Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotions Then \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

49. Describe **feelings you had as a child and adolescent**. These may include feelings such as being sad, mad, glad, or scared or feeling of shame, guilt, empty, and/or lonely.

---

---

---

---

---

50. Identify the people in your life that **you felt close to** in your childhood, and why?

---

---

---

---

51. Identify the **places or animals you felt safe with** in your childhood, and why?

---

---

---

52. As a child, was it **easy or difficult to make friends**? Why?

---

---

---

53. As a child, did you have **nicknames**? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If you had nicknames, what were your nicknames and who gave them to you? How did you feel about them?

---

---

# Current Relationship with Major Caregivers

54. Describe the relationship you have with your **mother/caregiver 1** today.

---

---

---

---

---

55. Describe the relationship you have with your **father/caregiver 2** today.

---

---

---

---

---

56. If you had **other major caregivers, identify the major caregiver(s)** and describe your current relationship (s) today.

---

---

---

---

57. If your parents could listen to you today, what would you want to talk to them about? What would you **want them to understand** about your life growing up? What would you want from them now?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**58.** After completing this assessment and reflect on what you wrote, what stands out to you now?

Please share any **reflections** that you have now, after completing this process.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**59. Additional information.** Please add any additional information or sections that did not contain enough room for your response. Feel free to add additional pages if needed.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---