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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



What is PTSD?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, otherwise known as PTSD, is an anxiety disorder that can be caused due to a terrifying event or ordeal where grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. During this event a person may think that their life or the lives of others' are in danger. Some of these events that may cause PTSD include: violent personal assaults, natural or human-caused disasters, accidents, or military combat.¹ Persons may feel not only afraid, but that they have no control over what is happening.²

How does PTSD develop?

Persons with PTSD have lived through a very traumatic life experience, whether to them personally, or a close relative or friend, which causes them to feel fear, see horrible things, and feel hopeless. These emotions are so strong that they may cause changes in the brain that will result in PTSD.² It is estimated that 7.7 million American adults have PTSD, but may occur at any age, including childhood. It is also thought that PTSD may run in families.³

Why do some people develop PTSD and others don't?

It is not entirely clear why some persons develop PTSD and others do not. Some of the things that may depend on this include the following:²

- How intense the trauma was or how long it lasted
- How close you were to the event
- How much control you felt during the event
- How strong your reaction was
- How much help you received after the event

Signs and Symptoms:

Contact Us

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30-5:00pm. Evening hours are available on a limited basis.

(540) 989-6605 or 800-699-9396

Nights and weekends call RESPOND:

(540) 776-1100 or 800-541-9992

Advantage EAP does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned.

- Persistent frightening thoughts or memories of the event
- Emotionally “numb” or detached
- Sleep problems or nightmares
- Closed off to friends or family they were once close to
- Easily startled
- Reliving the event
- Feeling jittery, always alert, or on the look out for danger
- Avoiding situations that remind you of the event
- Constantly overreacting
- Large gap between intellectual awareness and emotional response
- Flooded by feelings with no control over emotions

These signs or symptoms usually start soon after the traumatic event, but occasionally for some may not happen until months or years later. If the symptoms last longer than 4 weeks, cause great distress, or interfere with your work or home life you should see counseling as soon as possible.²

How can PTSD be treated?



Treatment of PTSD is very effective when trying to gain a feeling of control of your life. Learning to cope with PTSD and its symptoms can help to better not only your life now, but also if the problem should arise again.³

Therapy is a critical part of dealing with PTSD. Therapy can help you learn more about why you have certain feelings and thoughts, as well as how to replace them with more positive and realistic thinking. Through therapy you can learn ways to cope so that you do not feel overwhelmed by thoughts and feelings related to your traumatic experience.³

References:

1. National Institute of Mental Health, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>
 2. National Center for PTSD, What is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/fact_shts/fs_what_is_ptsd.html
 3. Mayo Clinic, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/>
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