

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

### What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that can develop when something potentially traumatic happens. This is beyond a typical stressor.

#### Some Events that Trigger PTSD

- War
- Sexual assault/rape
- Car or plane crash
- Domestic violence
- Terrorist attack
- Kidnapping
- Natural disaster
- Watching someone else go through trauma.
- Sudden death of loved one. Major loss of any type.

#### Symptoms

Symptoms may appear right after the stressful event. However, the signs may not show until weeks, months or even years later. Each person is different. There are three main types of symptoms:

##### 1. Re-experiencing the tragedy.

- Sudden memories of event
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Physical reactions to reminders (i.e. pounding heart, quick breathing, sweating, nausea).

##### 2. Avoiding the event.

- Staying away from activities, places, thoughts and feelings that are reminders of the event
- Loss of interest in life
- Feeling set apart from others
- Emotionally numb

##### 3. Higher level of anxiety and emotions.

- Trouble falling asleep
- Angry and grouchy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Overreacting due to stress

### Getting Your Life Back

Treatment may help you recall and process the emotions you felt during the event. This may also help get your feelings out. It may restore your sense of control in your life. Some treatments for PTSD include:

- Trauma- focused cognitive behavioral therapy- Revisiting the event to uncover thoughts, feelings and situations that remind you of what happened.
- Family therapy- PTSD affects the whole family. It helps to talk and understand what you're going through.
- Medicine- May be given to you by your doctor to help with depression and anxiety.
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)- Includes eye movements to help with healing from trauma.
- Guided imagery/relaxation techniques- Used to help with relaxation and visualization.

### Where can I go for Help?

- Contact Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, press 1 (text 83855).
- To find a PTSD provider, contact the Anxiety and Depression Association of America: 1-240-485-1001.
- Contact Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255.