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PTSD and Suicide Thoughts

Table of Contents

- Topic Overview
- Credits

Topic Overview

With post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), your symptoms can be overwhelming. You may be thinking about harming yourself, or even thinking about suicide.

Sometimes people with PTSD also have depression, panic attacks, severe anxiety, or a substance use problem. This may put you at a higher risk for suicide.

You may think that ending your life is the only solution. If you feel this way, you're not alone. Many people with PTSD have thoughts about suicide. PTSD symptoms, such as having stressful memories of your trauma, may put you at a higher risk.¹

Other things that can increase your risk for suicide include:¹

- Being male.
- Not having social support.
- Having a family history of suicide.
- Owning guns.

If you have thoughts about suicide, there are ways you can get help. Talking to someone can help you see that there are other solutions. Tell a doctor, clergy member, friend, or family member how you feel, and talk to your doctor about counseling or medicines that can help you. Getting treatment right away can help prevent suicide.

Warning signs include:

- Planning to hurt yourself or someone else.
- Talking or thinking a lot about killing yourself.
- Having a weapon that could be used for killing yourself.
- Taking a lot of drugs or alcohol.
- Feeling like you're not in control of your thoughts.
- Spending a lot of time alone.
- Giving away your possessions.
- Writing or drawing about death or suicide.

- Hearing voices that tell you to harm yourself.

If you think your spouse or a loved one is at risk for suicide:

- Learn the warning signs listed above. Take these signs seriously.
- Talk to your loved one as openly as possible. Ask questions and listen. Be supportive and caring.
- Find out if he or she has a specific plan about suicide.
- Remove things that could be used for suicide, such as a gun or knife.

If you have warning signs of suicide, go to the hospital, call 911 , or call a suicide hotline (1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-273-8255) now.

If your loved one is planning to attempt suicide, call a suicide hotline or 911 , or take your loved one to the hospital. Try to get him or her to agree not to attempt suicide.

For more information, see the topic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Credits

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Note: The "printer friendly" document will not contain all the information available in the online document. Some information (e.g. cross-references to other topics, definitions or medical illustrations) is only available in the online version.



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