

# Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

## What is it?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a disorder that occurs when a person either experienced or witnessed an extremely traumatic, tragic, or terrifying event. This event results in feelings of intense fear, hopelessness, or horror. People who have PTSD will re-experience the trauma, and avoid or ignore reminders of the trauma. People with PTSD have persistent symptoms of increased arousal and may feel stressed or frightened, even when they are not in danger.



### Did you know?

An estimated 3.6% of U.S. adults had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the past year.

## What factors increases risk?

- Living through dangerous events and traumas
- Getting hurt, or seeing another person hurt, or a dead body
- Childhood trauma
- Feeling horror, helplessness, or extreme fear
- Little or no support after the event
- Dealing with extra stress after the event
- Having a history of mental illness or substance abuse

## What factors promote recovery after trauma?

- Seeking support from others (friends and family)
- Finding a support group
- Learning to feel good about one's own actions in face of danger
- Having positive coping strategy, or a way to get through event
- Being able to act and respond effectively despite feeling fear

## What are the symptoms?

### Re-experiencing

- Flashbacks
- Bad dreams
- Frightening thoughts

### Avoidance

- Staying away from people, places, events, or objects that are reminders
- Avoiding thoughts or feelings related to event

### Arousal and reactivity

- Easily startled
- Feeling tense or "on edge"
- Difficulty sleeping
- Anger outbursts

### Cognition & Mood

- Trouble remembering key features of event
- Negative thoughts about oneself and world
- Distorted feelings like guilt or blame
- Loss of interest in enjoyable activities

## What are the diagnosis criteria and treatment options?

One needs to experience all of the following for at least 1 month to be diagnosed:

- At least one re-experiencing symptom
- At least one avoidance symptom
- At least two arousal and reactivity symptom
- At least two cognition and mood symptoms

Basic treatment include:

- Antipsychotic Medications
- Psychotherapy
  - Exposure therapy
  - Cognitive restructuring



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