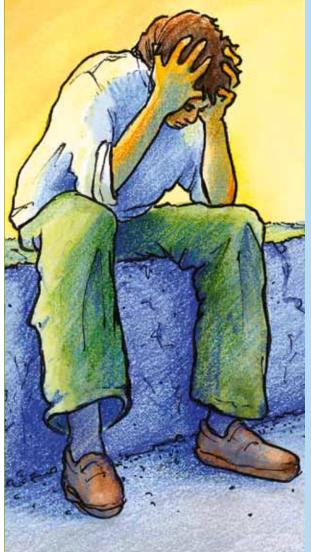
10 Things Everyone Should Know About Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



Living through a frightening or disturbing experience can cause people to develop a condition called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In fact in any given year, more than 5 million people in the U.S. suffer from PTSD. This condition can be very difficult, but treatment can help.

1. PTSD is a medical condition.

- It can develop after a person experiences or witnesses a traumatic event.
- Some things that may lead to PTSD include violent crime like rape or assault, military combat, accidents, and natural disasters.
- Anyone can develop PTSD. Men, women and children of all ages can be affected.

2. Recognize the symptoms of PTSD.

- People with PTSD may have recurring nightmares or thoughts about the trauma. These may be so vivid that it feels like they are reliving the event.
- They may have sudden outbursts of anger or feelings of mistrust or guilt.
- PTSD can cause depression, anxiety and problems sleeping. People with PTSD

may be unable to feel their emotions at all.



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3. PTSD may cause physical symptoms.

 People with PTSD may get headaches, have stomach problems or feel dizzy.

 They may have chest pain, discomfort in other areas of the body, or immune system problems.

 If you are having any of these symptoms following a traumatic event, ask your health care provider if PTSD could be the reason.

4. PTSD often starts within 3 months of the event.

 But for some people, symptoms do not begin until years later.

5. Previous trauma can increase a person's risk.

 Studies show that people who have been through a traumatic event before, either recently or as a child, are at a higher risk for PTSD.

6. PTSD can be treated.

 Talking with a doctor or counselor who is familiar with PTSD helps many people to recover.

 Medication may ease symptoms like fear, anxiety or depression.

 Joining a support group with others who have PTSD can also help.



7. Recovery takes time.

- With treatment, some people are able to recover within six months. For others it can take longer.
- Treatment helps most people.

8. Positive actions can help the healing process.

- Learn and use relaxation techniques.
- Avoid alcohol and illegal drugs.
- Eat a healthy diet and get plenty of rest and exercise.

Friends and family members can help.

Learn about PTSD.

 Join a support group for friends and family.

 Be patient and supportive.

10. For more information:

- Talk with your health care provider or contact your local mental health services.
- Visit these websites:
 - National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness www.nami.org
 - Mental Health America www.mentalhealthamerica.net
- If you are in crisis or afraid you may hurt yourself, call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).