

# PTSD

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# PTSD

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# PTSD Causes

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- Examples of events that can trigger post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) include wars, crimes, fires, accidents, death of a loved one, or abuse of some form. Thoughts and memories recur even though the danger has passed.
- It is thought to affect between 7-8% of the population, and women are more likely to be affected than men.
- Instead of feeling better as time goes on, the individual may become more anxious and fearful. PTSD can disrupt a person's life for years, but treatment can help them recover

# PTSD Causes

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**PTSD can develop after a traumatic event.**

**Examples include:**

- **military confrontation**
- **natural disasters**
- **serious accidents**
- **terrorist attacks**
- **loss of a loved one, whether or not this involved violence**

# PTSD Causes cont.

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**PTSD can develop after a traumatic event.**

**Examples include:**

- **rape or other types of abuse**
- **personal assault**
- **being a victim of crime**
- **receiving a life-threatening diagnosis**
- **Any situation that triggers fear, shock, horror, or helplessness can lead to PTSD.**

# PTSD Definition

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- **A mental health condition that develops following a traumatic event characterized by intrusive thoughts about the incident, recurrent distress/anxiety, flashback and avoidance of similar situations.**
- **An anxiety disorder that develops following frightening, stressful, or distressing life events. Characterized by intense fear, helplessness, stress, and avoidance. PTSD affects normal life and functioning of the patient. Treatments include medications and psychotherapy, either alone or in combination.**

# PTSD Symptoms

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- Symptoms usually **START** within 3 months of an event but have also been known to begin later.
- For a person to receive a diagnosis of **PTSD**, they must meet criteria that are set out by the American Psychological Association's (APA) **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Fifth Edition (DSM-5)**
- According to these guidelines, the person **MUST**

# PTSD Symptoms

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- 1. Have been exposed to death or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence whether directly, through witnessing it, by it happening to a loved one, or during professional duties
- 2. Experience the following for more than one month:
  - one or more intrusion symptoms
  - one or more avoidance symptoms
  - two or more symptoms that affect mood and thinking
  - two or more arousal and reactivity symptoms that began after the trauma

# PTSD Intrusion Symptoms

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- **Here are some examples of these four types of symptom:**

## **Intrusion symptoms:**

- nightmares
- flashbacks and a sensation that the event is happening again
- fearful thoughts

# PTSD Avoidance Symptoms

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## **Avoidance symptoms:**

- refusing to discuss the event
- avoiding situations that remind the person of the event

# PTSD Reactivity Symptoms

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## **Arousal and reactivity symptoms:**

- difficulty sleeping
- irritability and angry outbursts
- hypersensitivity to possible dangers
- feeling tense and anxious

# PTSD Mood and thinking Symptoms

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## **Symptoms that affect mood and thinking:**

- inability to remember some aspects of the event
- feelings of guilt and blame
- feeling detached and estranged from others and emotionally and mentally numbed
- having a reduced interest in life
- difficulty concentrating

# PTSD Physical Symptoms

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- There may also be physical symptoms, but these are **NOT** included in the DSM-5 criteria:
- physical effects include sweating, Headaches, shaking, dizziness, stomach problems, aches and pains, and chest pain
- a weakened immune system can lead to more frequent infections
- sleep disturbances can result in Tiredness and other problems
- There may be long-term behavioral changes that contribute to problems and work and a breakdown in relationships. The person may start to consume more alcohol than previously, or to misuse drugs or medications.

# PTSD Treatments

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- Treatment usually involves:
- PSYCHOTHERAPY
- COUNSELING
- MEDICATION
- Combination or any of the above

# PTSD Treatments Psychotherapy

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- Options for psychotherapy will be specially tailored for managing trauma.

They include:

- **Cognitive processing therapy (CPT):** Also known as cognitive restructuring, the individual learns how to think about things in a new way. Mental imagery of the traumatic event may help them work through the trauma, to gain control of the fear and distress.
- **Exposure therapy:** Talking repeatedly about the event or confronting the cause of the fear in a safe and controlled environment may help the person feel they have more control over their thoughts and feelings. The effectiveness of this treatment has been questioned, however, and it must be carried out with care, or there may be a risk of worsening of the symptoms.

# PTSD Treatments Medications

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Some medications can be used to treat the symptoms of PTSD.

- Selective Serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as paroxetine, are commonly used. SSRIs also help treat depression, anxiety and sleep problems, symptoms that are often linked to PTSD. There have been some reports that Antidepressant medications can cause an increased risk of suicide in individuals under the age of 24.
- Sometimes, benzodiazepines may be used to treat irritability, Insomnia, and anxiety. However, the National Center for PTSD **DO NOT RECOMMEND** these, because they do not treat the core symptoms and they can lead to dependency.

(see Veterans)

# PTSD Research

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Research has suggested that the following therapies may help, but further evidence is needed to confirm their safety and effectiveness.

- **Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR):** Recalling the event while making a specific kind of side-to-side eye movement may help lower distress levels for people with PTSD. This allows the individual to have more positive emotions, behaviors, and thoughts.
- **MDMA:** The pharmaceutical version of the recreational drug, ecstasy, may help people learn to deal with their memories more effectively by encouraging a feeling of safety. Scientists are currently researching this option.
- **Cortisone hormone therapy:** One study has suggested that high-dose cortisol-based treatments could help reduce the risk of PTSD, if given soon after a trauma occurs.
- **Computer games:** Playing some computer games has been linked with fewer symptoms in some veterans with PTSD, according to a study published in 2017. However, the researchers do not recommend using computer games instead of regular therapy.

# PTSD- COVID-19

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- Want to help but what if I get it?
- Want to be the best team member but what if I get it?
- Want to **NOT** take it home
- Vaccinee, can it help, hurt, FEAR of the unknown.
- Active coping is a key part of recovery. It enables a person to accept the impact of the event they have experienced and take action to improve their situation.
- The following can help achieve this:
  - learning about PTSD and understanding that an ongoing response is normal, and that recovery takes time
  - accepting that healing does not necessarily mean forgetting, but gradually feeling less bothered by the symptoms and having confidence in the ability to cope with the bad memories

# PTSD- Veterans

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# PTSD Help

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- Here are some numbers that may be useful:
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK
- **National Domestic Violence/Child Abuse/Sexual Abuse:** 1-800-799-SAFE
- **National Youth Crisis Hotline:** 800-442-HOPE

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- Questions
  - Comments