

# Post Traumatic Stress Disorder PTSD



## What Is It?

The emotional and psychological turmoil after a traumatic event in someone's life can be equally if not more devastating than any physical violence. This trauma can be from a natural disaster, personal loss, military combat or overwhelming life experience such as abuse or violence. The impact of the trauma may rear its head through feelings or signs such as:

- helplessness,
- anxiety,
- decreased self esteem,
- loss of or interrupted sleep patterns,
- anger feelings or anger outbursts, physical manifestations such as stomach or head-aches,
- change in mood or behavior,
- an overwhelming lack of motivation or numbness.

Although the feelings associated with trauma vary as much as each person is an individual; there is hope in the strategies that can help work through the feelings of pain, grief or fear. No matter how long ago the traumatic event happened, healing is achievable.

## What Treatment Helps?

- Trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy - This therapeutic approach introduces thoughts, feelings, and situations that mirror the trauma. It involves recognition of the thoughts that are irrational or distorted and replaces them with healthy alternatives.
- Family Therapy - Family therapy can help the person with PTSD and family members who are exposed to the symptoms thus, improving communication and overall wellbeing.
- Medication - is sometimes prescribed to relieve depression or anxiety. Note that medication does not treat the causes of PTSD and should be used in conjunction with therapy.
- EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) - incorporates elements of cognitive-behavioral therapy with eye movements or other forms of rhythmic, left-right stimulation, hand taps or sounds. Eye movements and other bilateral forms of stimulation are thought to retrain the brain's information processing system, which is interrupted in times of trauma or extreme stress.

## What Should Happen Next?

Recognize the feelings or signs in yourself or a loved one and take action by talking to family, a trusted behavioral healthcare provider and doctor. Remember, you are not alone!

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*"We have a vision to end child abuse"*

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