

FACTS ABOUT

PTSD and Depression

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, is a feeling of anxiousness that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal that involves a grave injury, death, or serious threat to one's safety. Traumatic events that may trigger PTSD include physical or sexual assaults, natural disasters, serious accidents, or military combat. PTSD can occur in children or adults, and is especially prevalent in peace officers and those engaged in military combat.

Symptoms of PTSD include reliving the event or having flashbacks that may be triggered by ordinary occurrences. People with PTSD may avoid places similar to the place where the traumatic event took place. They may avoid watching movies or TV shows that could feature the same kind of occurrence. They may also avoid seeking help so that they can avoid talking about the event.

Someone suffering from PTSD may have trouble expressing their feelings. They may lose interest in activities that they used to enjoy. Sufferers might also avoid relationships and remain guarded or fearful. They may be jittery or exceptionally aware of their surroundings.

PTSD sufferers may also become preoccupied with the traumatic event. They may also become angry, irritable, confused or have difficulty concentrating.

Symptoms usually begin within three months of the event, but occasionally develop years afterward. Symptoms must last more than a month to be considered PTSD. Some people recover within 6 months, while others have symptoms that last much longer. In some cases, the disorder becomes chronic.

Getting Help for PTSD

- See your family physician, who may refer you to a mental health professional. PTSD is treatable.
- Don't isolate yourself. Reach out to family and friends.
- Talk about what happened and talk about your feelings. Consider joining a support group to help work through your feelings.
- Do something nice for yourself. Take positive action in your own life.
- Avoid self-medicating with alcohol or drugs.
- Avoid self-criticism. This is the time to work on healing - not finding blame.
- Eat right and exercise - it energizes your mind and helps with healing.
- Your actions are probably normal and are likely shared by people who have undergone similar events. The concerns you have are part of the healing process and a sign that you care.



WESTERN COLORADO
SUICIDE PREVENTION
FOUNDATION

Sources of Help

Western Colorado Suicide Prevention Foundation

<http://www.suicidepreventionfoundation.org>
(970) 683-6626

National Institute of Mental Health

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org