

What other problems are common with PTSD?

- Drinking more alcohol or using other drugs more often than before the terrible event
- Having more problems than usual at work
- Having more problems than usual with a partner like frequent fighting, breaking up
- Feeling sick
- Having feelings of hopelessness, shame, or guilt – or, all of these
- Thinking about suicide

IMPORTANT

Tell your therapist if you are having thoughts about suicide

What can I do to help myself?

- Seek treatment from a therapist who has been trained to treat PTSD
- Talk to your therapist about your thoughts & feelings
- Tell your therapist if you are having strong feelings like anger, depression, or suicide or if you can't sleep
- Tell your therapist if you have stopped doing things you used to do, like going to work, being with friends, or doing fun things
- If you have been sick, tell your therapist & go to your doctor to find out why
- Go to all sessions and do all homework assigned by your therapist
- If you feel like you are unable to go to a session or complete your home work, call your therapist and talk about it

References

Healthy Roads Media (2005) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): A real illness. Text adapted from National Institute of Mental health Publication No. 00-0675, www.healthyroadsmedia.org

National Center for PTSD – What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)? A FactSheet, www.ncptsd.va.gov

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder “PTSD”

What is PTSD?

- PTSD is a real condition
- You may get PTSD after being in a terrible (traumatic) event
- PTSD can be treated by a therapist
- With treatment, you can learn to feel better and be more like your old self, before the terrible event happened
- PTSD does not usually get better without treatment

What does it feel like to have PTSD?

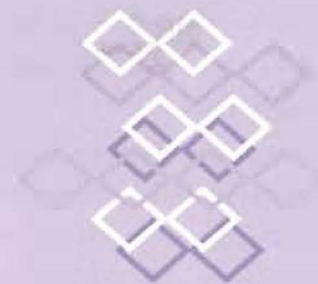
“After I was attacked, I felt afraid, depressed, and angry all the time. I couldn't sleep or eat much. Even when I tried to stop thinking about it, I still had awful memories. I was confused and didn't know where to go for help.

A friend told me to call a doctor. My doctor helped me find a therapist trained to treat PTSD. I had to work hard, but after treatment, I am starting to feel like myself again.”

Case adapted from Healthy Roads Media

Do a lot of people get PTSD?

- You are not alone
- About 5.2 million Americans have PTSD
- Men and women of all ages, children, people of any social class, and members of any ethnic group can get PTSD



What terrible events can lead to PTSD?

- Rape or sexual assault
- Being hit or hurt by someone in your family or by someone else you trust
- Being hit or hurt by someone else
- Any kind of crash or wreck like in a car, plane, or train, or being in some other accident
- A terrible storm or other act of nature like a flood, hurricane, tornado, or earthquake
- Fire
- War

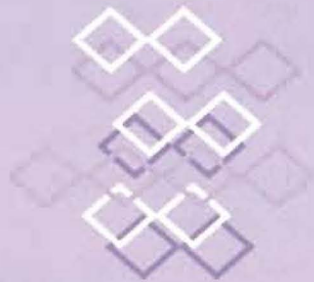
When does someone get PTSD?

- After being in a terrible event that makes you feel like you might get hurt or even die
- Or, after seeing a terrible event happen to someone else, even if you weren't hurt
- Signs of PTSD usually start 1 to 3 months after the terrible event, but some people don't have signs of PTSD until months or years after the event

Why do some people get PTSD and others don't?

Scientists don't know for sure, but it may have something to do with parts of the terrible event:

- How long the terrible event lasted
- If someone close to you was killed or seriously hurt
- How strong your emotions & other reactions were during the terrible event
- How much control you had over what happened
- How close you were to the terrible event
- The help & support you received after the event.



How do I know if I have PTSD?

If you experience a lot of these symptoms, you may have PTSD. Talk to your therapist.

- Feeling like you are reliving the actual terrible event
- Feeling just as upset as you did during the terrible event
- Frequent nightmares
- Memories and thoughts about the terrible event that make you feel very upset or scared
- Being on the look-out for danger more than usual
- Getting mad a lot or losing your temper easily
- Feeling very upset when something startles or surprises you
- Having a hard time thinking or concentrating
- Having a hard time sleeping or being afraid to fall asleep
- Feeling numb like you can't feel anything anymore, even good feelings
- Staying away from people, places, & things that remind you of the terrible event
- Not doing things that you are supposed to because you are too upset or scared, like going to work, school, appointments or taking care of other responsibilities
- Losing interest in being with other people or doing fun things you used to do
- Forgetting parts of the terrible event
- Having trouble talking about the terrible event
- Other daily events that have nothing to do with the terrible event may trigger bad memories and feelings:
 - ◇ A car accident may remind you of your accident
 - ◇ A news report or movie scene about a rape may remind you of your rape
 - ◇ Seeing someone else hurt might remind you of when you were hurt
 - ◇ Hearing a car backfire might remind you of a gun or a bomb that went off during your terrible event