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**What is PTSD?**

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**Find PTSD treatment**


**Are you in crisis? Call 911**

Call 911 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

**Veteran Help:**

Each VA Medical Center and many VA clinics treat PTSD.

The Sidran Institute

(410) 825-8888

Mental Health Service Locator (SAMHSA)

(800) 662-4357

Veteran Help: Each VA Medical Center and many VA clinics treat PTSD.

(877) 222-8387

or www.va.gov

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**What Is PTSD?**

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**Treatment Can Help**

www.ptsd.va.gov
COMMON SYMPTOMS

✅ Reliving the event
Memories of the trauma can come back at any time and can be triggered by reminders of what happened. You may have bad dreams, or feel like you are going through the trauma again.

✅ Avoiding situations that remind you of the event
You may try to avoid places, people or things that bring back memories of the event.

✅ Negative changes in beliefs and feelings
The way you think about yourself and others changes because of the trauma. You may have trouble experiencing your emotions, think no one can be trusted, or feel guilt or shame.

✅ Feeling keyed up
You may be on the lookout for danger. You might become angry very easily.

Other problems following trauma
If you have PTSD you may also feel guilt, shame, or depression. Problems with coworkers, friends, and loved ones are common. Many people with PTSD abuse alcohol or drugs. Often, PTSD treatment can help these problems, too. The coping skills you learn to deal with PTSD work in other areas of your life.

SCREENING

Only a mental health or medical professional can tell you if you have PTSD. If you went through a trauma and answer “yes” to at least three of the questions below, you should have a PTSD evaluation.

In your life, have you ever had any experience that was so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that, in the past month, you:

- Have had nightmares about the experience or thought about it when you did not want to?
- Tried hard not to think about the experience or avoided situations that reminded you of it?
- Were constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?
- Felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?

TREATMENT

Treatments for PTSD include psychotherapy (counseling) and medication. Sometimes, the two are used together. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is the best treatment for PTSD. There are different types of CBT, including Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure.

Psychotherapy/Counseling

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
CPT teaches you how to identify trauma-related thoughts and change them so they are more accurate and cause less distress.

Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE)
In PE, you talk about your trauma over and over until the memories no longer upset you. You also go to places that are safe, but that you have been staying away from because they are related to the trauma.

Stress Inoculation Training (SIT)
SIT teaches patients a set of skills they can use to manage their anxiety. These skills might include relaxation, thought stopping, and positive self-talk.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
EMDR involves thinking about images and feelings that distress you while doing rapid eye movements.

Medications*

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors raise the level of serotonin in your brain. This can make you feel better. The two SSRIs that are approved by the FDA for PTSD are sertraline (Zoloft™) and paroxetine (Paxil™).

*Some doctors prescribe benzodiazepines (or “benzos”) for people with PTSD. They are often given to people who have anxiety. While they may be of some help at first, these drugs do not treat the core PTSD symptoms. They may lead to addiction and are not recommended for long-term PTSD treatment.