VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

National Center for PTSD

PTSD AWARENESS MONTH NEWSLETTER BLURB

This draft content features information and resources for people with questions about PTSD, those who think they may have PTSD or have been recently diagnosed, and people who want to help raise PTSD awareness. This information can be shared in newsletters, emails, blog posts—anywhere you share content—throughout the month of June.

PTSD AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that June is posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) awareness month? Throughout June—especially leading up to National PTSD Awareness and Screening Day on June 27th— the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hopes to spread awareness of PTSD and its symptoms, to reduce the stigma around PTSD diagnosis and treatment, and to share help-seeking resources for Veterans and civilians.

WHAT IS PTSD?

When you have PTSD, you may feel discomfort with certain memories or frequently be on alert. PTSD can develop in anyone who has experienced a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, combat, sexual assault, or a serious accident. While most people who live through a traumatic event will experience stress reactions afterward, if that stress or bad feeling doesn't go away or starts interrupting your daily life —you may be dealing with PTSD.

PTSD symptoms fall into four main categories. You can learn more about these symptoms at the National Center for PTSD.

- **Reliving or re-experiencing the event.** You may have nightmares, flashbacks (where you feel like you're reliving the event), or trauma reminders like places, sounds or smells that cause distress.
- **Avoidance.** You may avoid things, places, or people that remind you of the event. This might mean keeping busy to avoid thinking about the trauma or staying away from people because you feel it's just easier to be alone.
- **Negative changes in feelings and beliefs.** You may notice changes in the way you think about yourself and others, you might feel guilt or shame about the traumatic event, or lose interest in things or people you used to enjoy.
- **Hyperarousal or being on guard.** You may feel keyed up, on edge, have a difficult time focusing, or feel as if you are "on alert" for danger more often.

If you think you're experiencing any of these symptoms—don't wait. Talk to a mental health care provider who can help you determine whether your feelings and behaviors may be related to PTSD. Knowing if you have PTSD is the first step to getting effective treatment—and there are treatment options that can help you begin to feel better and take back control of your life, no matter how long you've been living with symptoms of PTSD.

VA's National Center for PTSD offers a variety of resources related to PTSD and PTSD treatment. By visiting their website, you can:

- Get help finding a VA PTSD program or a mental health care provider
- Learn about and compare PTSD treatment options with the PTSD Treatment Decision Aid
- Read Understanding PTSD and PTSD Treatment if you've been diagnosed with PTSD
- Read Understanding PTSD: A Guide for Family and Friends if a loved one has been diagnosed with PTSD
- Download PTSD Coach, a mobile app that can help you learn about your symptoms, develop skills to manage those symptoms, and track your progress over time
- Take a self-screen to find out if your feelings and behaviors may be related to PTSD

No matter what you're experiencing—you are not alone. **PTSD treatment works.**
Be your own advocate and take the first step toward treatment today.

PTSD TREATMENT WORKS.

For more information, visit www.ptsd.va.gov