

## HOW TO COPE WITH PTSD

Some of the ways that are often suggested for PTSD patients to cope with this illness include learning more about the disorder as well as talking to family, professionals, and PTSD survivors for support. Joining a support group may be helpful. Other ways to cope:

- Reduce stress by using techniques such as breathing exercises and positive imagery
- Actively participating in treatment as recommended by professionals
- Increase positive lifestyle practices such as exercise, healthy eating, distracting oneself through keeping a healthy work schedule
- Volunteer your time to others
- Minimizing negative lifestyle practices such as substance abuse, social isolation, working to excess, and destructive or suicidal behaviors.

### **PTSD at a Glance:**

- Is an emotional illness that is often terribly frightening, life-threatening, or a highly unsafe experience.
- If left untreated PTSD can have devastating, far-reaching consequences for the patient's medical and emotional functioning and relationships with family, friends, and society.
- Seek professional help if symptoms do not go away or get worse.



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**P - POST  
T - TRAUMATIC  
S - STRESS  
D - DISORDER**



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# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER..... PTSD

## *What is a Traumatic Event?*

When an event, or a series of events, causes a lot of stress, it is called a traumatic event. These events are marked by a sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of serious injury or death. These events affect survivors, rescue workers, and the friends and relatives of victims who have been involved.

## *What are some Common Responses?*

Common responses include feelings of fear, grief, and depression. Physical and behavioral responses include nausea, dizziness, and changes in appetite and sleep pattern as well as withdrawal from daily activities. These responses can last for weeks to months before people start to feel normal again. If the problems become worse or last longer than one month after the event, the person may be suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

*Families of PTSD individuals, as well as the sufferer, may benefit from family counseling, couples' counseling, parenting classes, or individual counseling. Family members may also be able to provide relevant history about their loved one such as emotional behavior, drug abuse, sleeping habits, and socialization issues that people with the illness are unable or unwilling to share.*

## *What is PTSD?*

Post traumatic stress disorder is an intense physical and emotional response to thoughts and reminders of the event that last for many weeks or months after the traumatic event. The symptoms of PTSD fall into three broad types: re-living, avoidance, and increased arousal.

- **Symptoms of re-living** include flashbacks, nightmares, and extreme emotional and physical reactions to reminders of the event. Emotional reactions can include feeling guilty, extreme fear of harm, and numbing of emotions. Physical reactions can include uncontrollable shaking, chills, or heart palpitations, and tension headaches.
- **Symptoms of avoidance** include staying away from activities, places, thoughts, or feelings related to the trauma or feeling detached or estranged from others.
- **Symptoms of increased arousal** include being overly alert or easily startled, difficulty sleeping, irritability or outbursts of anger, and lack of concentration. Other symptoms linked to PTSD include panic attacks, depression, suicidal thought and feelings, drug abuse, feelings of being estranged and isolated, and not being able to complete daily tasks.

  
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## *When Should you Contact your Doctor or Mental Health Professional?*

You may need to consider seeking professional help if your symptoms affect your relationship with your family and friends, or your job. If you suspect that you or someone you know has PTSD, talk with a health care provider or call your local mental health clinic.

## *What Can you do for Yourself?*

There are many things that you can do to cope with traumatic events:

- Understand that your symptoms may be normal, especially right after the trauma.
- Keep to your usual routine.
- Take the time to resolve day-to-day conflicts so they do not add to your stress.
- Do not shy away from situations, people and places that remind you of the trauma.
- Find ways to relax and be kind to yourself.
- Turn to family, friends, and clergy person for support, and talk about your experiences and feelings with them.
- Participate in leisure and recreational activities.
- Recognize that you cannot control everything.
- Recognize the need for trained help, and call a local mental health center.