



# Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

## What is PTSD?

PTSD is a disorder in which a person who has experienced a traumatic event continues to experience fear and related symptoms even when they are no longer in danger. <sup>1,2</sup>

PTSD is often associated with combat veterans, but can appear in anyone and at any age. Although it is natural to feel stressed and frightened following a traumatic event, people who have PTSD experience these feelings when they are no longer in danger. <sup>3</sup>



## Symptoms

**Symptoms of PTSD may appear days, weeks, months, or years following exposure to traumatic events.**

PTSD is often characterized by 4 symptom clusters. <sup>4</sup>

1. Intense reliving of traumatic event(s)
2. Avoidance of events, locations, or people that are reminders of traumatic event(s)
3. Negative cognitions and mood
4. Hyperarousal

Symptoms include <sup>4-6</sup>

- Intrusive thoughts
- Disruptive memories
- Flashbacks to traumatic event(s)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Distressing dreams
- Avoidance of triggering people, events, objects, and/or locations
- Exaggerated startle response
- Angry outbursts
- Feeling detached from people

## Treatment

There are multiple types and combinations of treatment for PTSD including psychotherapy, medications, and complementary approaches. <sup>1</sup>



**Pharmacological treatments** may include the use of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), antidepressants, antipsychotics, and benzodiazepines. <sup>7</sup>

**Non-pharmacological treatments** include cognitive processing therapy, prolonged exposure, cognitive therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing. <sup>8,9</sup>



**Complementary approaches** include acupuncture, meditation, visualization, hypnotherapy, yoga, and relaxation. <sup>10,11</sup>

## PTSD Statistics

**3.6%** of adults in the United States have PTSD <sup>1</sup>

Lifetime prevalence among adults in the United States is **8%** <sup>8</sup>

Women are **twice** as likely to experience PTSD compared to men <sup>1,12</sup>

**10%** of women develop PTSD, while **4%** of men develop PTSD <sup>13</sup>

**31%** of male veterans and **27%** of female veterans develop PTSD <sup>14</sup>

## Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based approach that recognizes the multifaceted impact of trauma and aims to create environments and services that are welcoming, safe, and engaging for both care recipients and providers. <sup>15</sup>

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues

## Support Resources

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** 1-800-273-8255

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

**PTSD Foundation of America (Combat Trauma Help Line)** 877-717-7873

Find a group here <https://ptsdusa.org/warrior-family-groups>

**National Center for PTSD Crisis Line** 1-800-273-8255

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat>



## Provider Resources

### [National Center for PTSD, Consultation Program](#)

Phone: 866-948-7880 | Email: [PTSDconsult@va.gov](mailto:PTSDconsult@va.gov)

Free lectures: [https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/consult/lecture\\_series.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/consult/lecture_series.asp)

### [Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) Manual & Free Training](#)

Manual:

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/type/psych\\_firstaid\\_manual.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/type/psych_firstaid_manual.asp)

Training: <https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=555>

### [Clinician's Trauma Update Online](#), updates on latest PTSD research

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/publications/ctu\\_online.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/publications/ctu_online.asp)

### [PTSD Toolkit for Nurses](#)

[https://www.nursingworld.org/~48e191/globalassets/foundation/the\\_ptsd\\_toolkit\\_for\\_nurses\\_assessment.99783.pdf](https://www.nursingworld.org/~48e191/globalassets/foundation/the_ptsd_toolkit_for_nurses_assessment.99783.pdf)

### PTSD Screening Instruments:

[Primary Care PTSD Screen for DSM-5](#), 5-item screen for primary care settings

[SPAN Self-Report Screen](#), 4-item self-report screen

[SPRINT Self-Report Screen](#), 8-item self-report measure for core PTSD

symptoms



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