



# NEWSLETTER

## LAN HEALTH INITIATIVE

### POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.

Most people who go through traumatic events may have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping, but with time and good self-care, they usually get better. If the symptoms get worse, last for months or even years, and interfere with your day-to-day functioning, you may have PTSD.

Getting effective treatment after PTSD symptoms develop can be critical to reduce symptoms and improve function.

#### Symptoms

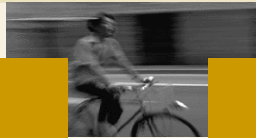
Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms may start within one month of a traumatic event, but sometimes symptoms may not appear until years after the event. These symptoms cause significant problems in social or work situations and in relationships. They can also interfere with your ability to go about your normal daily tasks.

PTSD symptoms are generally grouped into four types: intrusive memories, avoidance, negative changes in thinking and mood, and changes in physical and emotional reactions. Symptoms can vary over time or vary from person to person.

#### Intrusive memories

Symptoms of intrusive memories may include:

- Recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event
- Reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again (flashbacks)
- Upsetting dreams or nightmares about the traumatic event
- Severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that reminds you of the traumatic event



**S Y M P T O M S O F P T S D**

**Avoidance**

Symptoms of avoidance may include:

- Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event
- Avoiding places, activities or people that remind you of the traumatic event

**Negative changes in**

**thinking and mood**

Symptoms of negative changes in thinking and mood may include:

- Negative thoughts about yourself, other people or the world
- Hopelessness about the future
- Memory problems, including not remember-

ing important aspects of the traumatic event

- Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- Feeling detached from family and friends
- Lack of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Difficulty experiencing positive emotions

**PTSD symptoms can vary in intensity over time.**

**S Y M P T O M S O F P T S D**

**Changes in physical and emotional reactions**

Symptoms of changes in physical and emotional reactions (also called arousal symptoms) may include:

- Being easily startled or frightened
- Always being on guard for danger
- Self-destructive behav-

ior, such as drinking too much or driving too fast

- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Irritability, angry outbursts or aggressive behavior

Overwhelming guilt or shame.

For children 6 years old

and younger, signs and symptoms may also include:

- Re-enacting the traumatic event or aspects of the traumatic event through play
- Frightening dreams that may or may not include aspects of the traumatic event

**I N T E N S I T Y O F S Y M P T O M S**

PTSD symptoms can vary in intensity over time. You may have more PTSD symptoms when you're stressed in general, or when you come across reminders of what you went through. For example, you may hear a car backfire and relive combat

experiences. Or you may see a report on the news about a sexual assault and feel overcome by memories of your own assault.

**If you have suicidal thoughts**

If you or someone you know has suicidal

thoughts, get help right away through one or more of these resources:

Reach out to a close friend or loved one.

Make an appointment with your doctor or a mental health professional.

**If you think you may hurt yourself or attempt suicide**

**CONTACT LAN HEALTH INITIATIVE**

## CAUSES OF PTSD

You can develop post-traumatic stress disorder when you go through, see or learn about an event involving actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violation.

Doctors aren't sure why some people get PTSD. As with most mental health problems, PTSD is probably caused by a complex mix of:

Stressful experiences, including the amount and severity of trauma you've gone through in your life

Inherited mental health risks, such as a family history of anxiety and depression

Inherited features of your personality — often called your

temperament

The way your brain regulates the chemicals and hormones your body releases in response to stress



## RISK FACTORS

People of all ages can have post-traumatic stress disorder. However, some factors may make you more likely to develop PTSD after a traumatic event, such as:

Experiencing intense or long-lasting trauma

Having experienced

other trauma earlier in life, such as childhood abuse

Having a job that

increases your risk of being exposed to traumatic events, such as military personnel and first responders

Having other mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression

Having problems with substance misuse, such as excess drinking or drug use

Lacking a good support system of family and friends

## KINDS OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS

The most common events leading to the development of PTSD include:

Combat exposure

Childhood physical abuse

Sexual violence

Physical assault

Being threatened with a weapon

An accident

Many other traumatic events also can lead to PTSD, such as fire, natural disaster, mugging, robbery, plane crash, torture, kidnapping, life-threatening medical di-

agnosis, terrorist attack, and other extreme or life-threatening events.



**L A N H E A L T H  
I N I T I A T I V E**

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**Let's have the conversation!**

LAN HEALTH employs the services of well-trained and experienced professionals, they include psychiatrists, clinical psychologists as well as regular psychologists, project managers, IT specialists amongst others.

Our services at LAN HEALTH include but are not restricted to the following.

- COUNSELLING ON:
  - a. MENTAL HEALTH
  - b. DEPRESSION
  - c. SUICIDE
  - d. PTSD
  - d. DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
  - e. MARRIAGE COUNSELLING. ETC

**P R E V E N T I O N O F P T S D**

After surviving a traumatic event, many people have PTSD-like symptoms at first, such as being unable to stop thinking about what's happened. Fear, anxiety, anger, depression, guilt — all are common reactions to trauma. However, the majority of people exposed to trauma do not develop long-term post-traumatic stress disorder.

Getting timely help and support may prevent normal stress reactions from getting worse and developing into PTSD. This may

mean turning to family and friends who will listen and offer comfort. It may mean seeking out a mental health professional for a brief course of therapy. Some people may also find it helpful to turn to their faith community.

Support from others also may help prevent you from turning to unhealthy coping methods, such as misuse of alcohol or drugs.

**Complications:**

Post-traumatic stress disorder can disrupt your whole

life — your job, your relationships, your health and your enjoyment of everyday activities.

Having PTSD may also increase your risk of other mental health problems, such as:

- Depression and anxiety
- Issues with drugs or alcohol use
- Eating disorders
- Suicidal thoughts and actions