

What is PTSD?

Individuals may develop **posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening or emotionally intense event. Any stressful situation, including divorce, combat exposure, or natural disasters, can cause PTSD.

PTSD may be **33%** more likely among veterans who deployed.

Traumatic events may cause **stress-related reactions** in most individuals, and these reactions usually diminish with time. When **they don't subside** or if they get worse, it may mean that PTSD has developed.

Over **13 MILLION** adults in the U.S. have PTSD in a given year.

Symptoms:

Hyperarousal
Constantly feeling that the trauma is going to reoccur
Difficulty sleeping
Inability to concentrate
Avoidance/Numbing
Feeling disconnected from reality
Loss of interest in life
Withdrawing from family and friends

Intrusion
Flashbacks or vivid nightmares of the event
Frequent, disturbing memories of the event
Intense physical reaction to reminders of the event

Risk Factors

People at risk for developing PTSD:

Experienced trauma early in life.
Have been through intense or lengthy trauma.
Lack social support after the trauma.
Have mental health problems or relatives with mental health problems.

Resilience Factors

After the trauma, the risk of developing PTSD is reduced by:

Getting support from mental health professionals, family, or friends.
Developing a coping strategy.
Avoiding drugs and alcohol.
Maintaining an optimistic outlook.
Exercising.

50%
of veterans with
PTSD do not
seek treatment.

Treatment

Early treatment is essential in preventing PTSD from causing other problems. Treatment may include **antidepressant medications and therapy**.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) exposes individuals to situations that **evoke memories** of the trauma and works to **correct irrational cognitive patterns**.

Exposure therapy provides a safe environment where individuals **re-experience** the trauma through **mental imagery, virtual reality, or writing exercises**.

Eye movement and desensitization reprocessing (EMDR) combines **therapy with eye movements** that serve to **reduce the anxiety** that comes with thinking about the trauma.

Family therapy improves **communication and relationship problems** that have arisen since the diagnosis of PTSD.

Recovery from PTSD happens **slowly and gradually** as the memories of the traumatic event fade in intensity.

Overcoming PTSD with therapy takes dedication and persistence, but **it is possible** for those who have suffered to **get back to leading their normal lives**.

GET HELP EARLY TO BE HAPPY AND HEALTHY