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Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
By
Elizabeth Matthews, LPC

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may occur in individuals who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event where the life or safety of an individual was at risk. Traumatic events include violent assaults, natural disaster, accidents or war.

Individuals with PTSD may discover they feel emotionally numb, have difficulty sleeping, lose interest in activities they use to enjoy, get weepy, startle easily and behave aggressively. These symptoms may occur shortly after the event or remain dormant for years.

Troubling memories or flashbacks may be triggered by sensory memories like sounds, smells, sights, or tastes. PTSD sufferers avoid situations that remind them of the troubling event and may be sensitive to anniversary dates of the trauma. Flashbacks can invade an otherwise pleasant experience or appear in disturbing dreams. The traumatized person may actually re-experience the event during a PTSD flashback.

As a result of untreated trauma the PTSD sufferer may develop a mood or anxiety disorder. They may begin to abuse drugs and/or alcohol to avoid painful feelings. It is important that trauma survivors are allowed to discuss the event with empathic individuals. If they suffer alone they may develop unnecessary guilt feelings or even begin to question their own sanity. Additional trauma can occur when the victim is criticized, blamed or not taken seriously.

Treatment options for PTSD include counseling to learn to deal with the feelings, memories and intrusive memories common to the disorder. If necessary, a qualified doctor should be consulted regarding the appropriateness of medication. If you suffer from unresolved trauma please seek help. The likelihood for a successful recovery is very good.