



POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

After a traumatic event like: combat exposure, sexual or physical assault, terrorist attack, serious accident or natural disasters, it is normal to have stress reactions such as upsetting memories of the event, increased jumpiness, or trouble sleeping. If these reactions do not go away or if they disrupt your daily life, you may have Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Symptoms.

Symptoms of PTSD usually start soon after the event but may not appear for months or years later.

Symptoms include:

- Re-experiencing the event in nightmares or flashbacks.
- Avoiding situations that remind you of an event, avoiding situations or people that trigger memories.
- Negative changes in beliefs and feelings, the way you feel about yourself or others may change. You may feel guilt or shame. You may not be interested in activities that you used to enjoy (this is another way to avoid memories).
- Hyperarousal, always alert, jumpy, may have trouble concentrating or sleeping.
- Co-occurring problems may include: depression, anxiety, substance abuse (self-medicating), employment and relationship problems.

Causes.

PTSD can occur after a traumatic event. How PTSD develops depends on many things: the intensity of the trauma, how long it lasted, if injured or lost someone, how close you were to the event and how much you felt in control of the event.

Diagnosis.

For a diagnosis, visit a mental health professional.

Treatment.

There are two main types of treatment, psychotherapy and medication.

1. Psychotherapy (or counseling) includes Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Some of the types of CBT are:
 - a. Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) where you learn skills to understand how the trauma changed your thoughts and thinking, then change the negative thought patterns.
 - b. Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) which is the repeated imaginal and real-world exposure to the trauma until it is no longer upsetting.
2. Medications, Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor (SSRI) is showing to be effective for PTSD. Some people seek treatments that do not involve medications because of the side effects.

For your convenience in finding behavioral health resources, The Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) has compiled this list. These links will take you out of the DMH website. DMH does not endorse or take responsibility for the content of other organizations' websites.

Resources

The Missouri Department of Mental Health's Division of Behavioral Health has contracted mental health professionals across the state. To find a mental health professional call (800) 575-7480 or visit the [DMH website](#)

The [National Center for PTSD](#)-Veterans Affairs offers additional information on PTSD, treatment options and self-help for coping with PTSD.

[Make the Connection](#) is the Department of Veteran Affairs' public awareness campaign that provides testimonials on the signs, treatment and steps to take if you have PTSD.

Are you a combat Veteran looking for confidential counseling services? *Vet Centers* provide bereavement, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, screening and referral for medical issues including TBI, depression, etc. For more information or to find the nearest Vet Center visit their [website](#)

The [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) has several facilities across the state. They offer a wide array of services to eligible veterans.