



Post-traumatic stress disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) sometimes occurs when a traumatic event is experienced. The symptoms include uncontrollable thoughts, extreme anxiety, nightmares and flashbacks. PTSD can sometimes cause short-term memory loss and can have long-term chronic psychological repercussions. The psychological effect of trauma is a shattering of innocence.

It creates a loss of faith that there is any safety, predictability or meaning in the world, or any place that is safe in which to retreat. The road to healing can be difficult, but for someone who suffers from PTSD, having a support structure in place that embodies compassion and patience, makes the road a lot easier to travel. Below is a list of facts to remember when helping a loved one on the road to recovery.

- **Symptoms can appear years after the traumatic event.** Our brains are very unique and we all process information differently. Some people who have been through a traumatic experience may only experience symptoms of PTSD years later. This can result in them thinking something else is wrong.
- **The symptoms can be subtle.** PTSD symptoms can sometimes look like depression, because the symptoms are not always obvious to the person experiencing them or to those around them. This can lead to a misdiagnosis.
- **There are various types of flashbacks.** Each person has their own trigger that can cause a flashback. The type of flashback can also differ from person to person. Some people experience vivid flashback, while others don't experience them at all. There are also those who experience a "middle-ground" flashback, where they don't vividly picture the event, but can suddenly feel overwhelmed or anxious and are unsure why.
- **Medication isn't the only option for recovery.** Although medication can be very helpful, it is important to remember it isn't the only option. Often talking to a professional can be the most effective way to work through the trauma and learn how to manage the symptoms.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is an often stigmatized and misunderstood mental health disorder that affects many people.

It causes a person to have feelings of intense fear and helplessness and people who suffer from PTSD often feel like they've lost all control. But by taking an active role in your loved one's recovery you can help empower them again.

