

Employee Assistance Program *Tip Sheet*

PTSD Symptoms & Support



Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that can develop after experiencing, witnessing, or being repeatedly exposed to traumatic events. It's normal to have stress reactions (like feeling on edge or having trouble sleeping) right after a traumatic event. Most people start to feel better within a few weeks. PTSD may be present if symptoms last longer than a month and begin to interfere with daily life, work, or relationships. It can affect anyone, at any age, but treatment to help you recover is available.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

PTSD **symptoms** may begin soon after trauma or appear later, and they can come and go over time. There are four main categories of symptoms which vary from person to person:

- 1. Reliving the event.** Someone may experience intrusive memories or distressing thoughts, nightmares, and flashbacks (feeling like the event is happening again).
- 2. Avoiding things that remind you of the event.** Involves staying away from reminders of the event and keeping distracted to avoid thinking about the event.
- 3. Changes in mood and thinking.** Includes having more negative thoughts than before the event, feeling numb, loss of interest in things you used to enjoy, feeling like the world is danger and people can't be trusted, feeling guilt or shame about the event.
- 4. Feeling "on edge".** Also referred to as hyperarousal, this includes being easily startled or constantly alert, having difficulty sleeping or concentrating, or feeling irritable or angry.

WHEN TO SEEK SUPPORT

Early support can make recovery easier. Consider reaching out for support if:

- Symptoms last more than one month.
- Symptoms cause distress or disrupt work, relationships, or daily functioning.
- You feel "stuck," unsafe, or unable to cope. Call **988** for immediate assistance at any time.

WHERE TO GET SUPPORT

- Start with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at the number below which offers confidential no-cost short-term therapy and referrals to longer-term or more specialized care.
- Another resource is your primary care provider or a licensed therapist experienced in trauma-focused therapy.

PTSD is a treatable condition that can affect anyone after trauma. You are not alone—help is available.

Reference: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. National Center for PTSD. <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/index.asp>

Call 24/7: 1.833.539.7285

Website: SOWI.MyLifeExpert.com

Code: SOWI

