



Stress Disorder Post-Traumatic

What is PTSD?

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined as "an *anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing event*". After experiencing a traumatic event, symptoms associated with PTSD may occur; feeling numb or having trouble sleeping – these are described as 'acute stress reactions'.

After witnessing or being involved in a traumatic event, it may take time to get over the event. However, with PTSD, the individual may struggle with this and carry on having dreams, flashbacks or upsetting thoughts about it.

Post-traumatic Stress (PTS) is the first stage of PTSD, and most people recover after the two-week window when PTS occurs. If symptoms persist longer than a month, a diagnosis of PTSD may be given.

Remember PTS is a normal and healthy reaction to trauma.

PTSD is common in individuals who have experienced physical or sexual assault, abuse, car accidents, terrorist attacks or war veterans. You may also be affected by witnessing a traumatic incident such as a serious car accident. This means that it could happen to anyone. Additionally, lower level but persistent stressors can also cause PTSD. These might be things such as family arguments, parental addiction, persistent domestic violence, parental mental health, prolonged bullying etc.

Different types of PTSD:

Mild, moderate or severe PTSD - The impact the symptoms are having on an individual – it's not a description of how frightening or upsetting the experience was

Delayed-onset PTSD – if symptoms emerge more than six months after experiencing trauma.

Complex PTSD – trauma experienced at an early age or lasted for a long time.

Birth trauma – develops after a traumatic experience of childbirth.

Here is a list of some of the symptoms associated with PTSD:

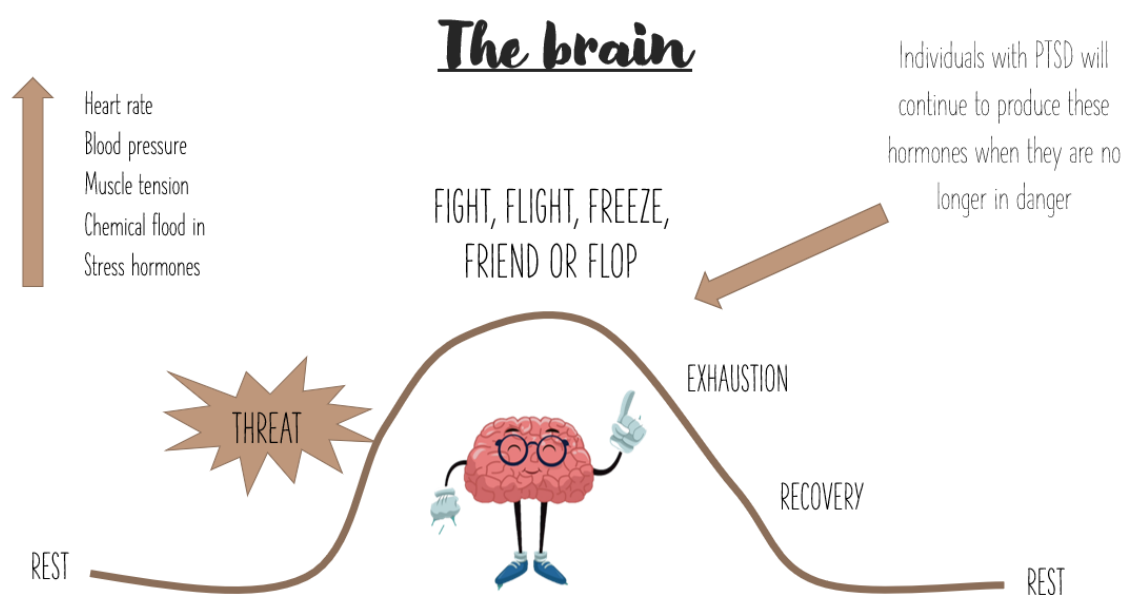
Common Symptoms

| Reliving aspects of what happened: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vivid flashbacks - Intrusive thoughts or images - Nightmares | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical sensations - Intense distress |
|---|--|---|
| Alertness or feeling on the edge: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Panicking - Easily upset or angry - Disturbed or lack of sleep - Irritability or aggressive behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding it hard to concentrate - Extreme alertness 'hypervigilance' - Being jumpy or easily startled |
| Avoiding memory or feeling: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping busy - Unable to remember details of the trauma - Unable to express affection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoiding anything that reminds you of the trauma - Emotionally numb / cut off from your feelings - Using alcohol or drugs to avoid memories |
| Difficult Beliefs or Feelings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can't trust anyone - Nobody understands - Feelings of anger, sadness, guilt or shame | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nowhere is safe - Blaming self for what happened |

Remember the brain:

Studies have shown that someone with PTSD will continue producing these hormones when they're no longer in danger, which is thought to explain some symptoms such as extreme alertness and being easily startled.

It is important to know the risk and protective factors for toxic stress. As with physical and mental health conditions, recognising and addressing toxic stress early can help us to increase protective factors and reduce its effects. (Same with ACEs in childhood)



PTSD has been linked to health-harming behaviours such as drinking, smoking, poor diet, over or under-sleeping, substance abuse and inactivity. However, stress and trauma can impact your brain on its own, but it's made worse when we don't take care of our health. Sleep is needed to help your brain heal; eating unhealthy foods also increases your brain and body's inflammatory response, making it harder for your brain and body to process information to be healthy. Basically, over time these unhealthy habits make everything harder.

SUPPORT:

Be aware that individuals with PTSD may be apprehensive, anxious, or ashamed. This may lead them to avoid treatment, believe that PTSD is untreatable, or have difficulty developing trust. As professionals, an engagement strategy could include following up when people miss appointments and allowing flexibility in service attendance policies

Resilience is key in helping PTSD symptoms to reduce, follow our www.resilienceframework.co.uk to find out more about resilience. Mindfulness-based interventions have also proven to be beneficial alongside, or if first-line interventions are not available, could be things like yoga, Taiichi and meditation. This is because these activities help people manage their thoughts, feelings and mental health.

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation Routine) is the NICE treatment of choice for PTSD.

To access this support, you can use this link to find EMDR therapists:

<https://emdrassociation.org.uk/find-a-therapist/>

YPAS: 0151 707 1025 <https://ypas.org.uk/contact/#get-support>

Talk Liverpool: <https://www.talkliverpool.nhs.uk/>

Visit our website: <https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/websites-apps/> where you will find a range of helpful apps for mental health.

You can find all Liverpool CAMHS providers information via this web link:
<https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/support-category/liverpool-camhs-providers/>