

Providing the Irish community with information, resources, and opportunities to talk about mental health.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

What is PTSD?

PTSD is a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault - National Center for PTSD

Symptoms

Hyper-vigilance

PTSD sufferers may constantly be on the look out for danger or feel on edge. They can startle easily and have difficulty sleeping or relaxing. Sufferers can be irritable and exhibit angry outbursts.

Reliving the Trauma

Many people with PTSD have flashbacks of the trauma they experienced and feel as though those events are happening again. They can also have nightmares.

Avoidance

People may avoid places or activities that act as reminders of past traumatic events. They may also avoid talking or thinking about these events.

Negative Feelings and Dissociation

PTSD sufferers can experience negative feelings like shame and guilt. They may find it hard to trust others and believe that everything poses a threat. Some can have out-of-body experiences where the world does not feel real.

Diagnosis

Symptoms of PTSD usually begin within three months of the traumatic events but can surface years after the fact.

Symptoms must last for more than a month for a diagnosis of PTSD to be made.

PTSD is often accompanied by anxiety disorders, depression, and substance abuse.

Treatment

Medications

Medications can be helpful in treating the related mental health problems often experienced by those suffering from PTSD. These include anxiety, depression, aggression, and impulsivity.

Psychotherapy - CBT

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) focuses on changing negative patterns of thinking and behavior. The goal of this kind of therapy is to help people to recognize negative thoughts and how they impact on behavior. A therapist works to teach a client how to replace negative thoughts and beliefs with more positive ones.

This fact sheet was produced using material from

NAMI Chicago
<http://namichicago.org/en/fact-sheets/>

National Center for PTSD
<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/ptsd-overview/basics/what-is-ptsd.asp>

3.5%

of the U.S. adult
population is affected
by PTSD

Women

are more likely than
men to develop PTSD

Early 20's

the age at which a
person is most likely to
develop PTSD