

PROVIDING HOPE: UNDERSTANDING PTSD

When many people hear Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), they often think of military veterans. While PTSD can certainly affect veterans, it can happen to anyone who has experienced or witnessed a traumatic event.

Trauma can take many forms, including serious accidents, abuse, violence, natural disasters, medical emergencies, childhood adversity, the sudden loss of a loved one, or other deeply distressing experiences. PTSD isn't a sign of weakness—it's the brain and body's response to overwhelming events.

What Does PTSD Feel Like?

PTSD looks different for everyone, but common symptoms may include:

- Intrusive memories, flashbacks, or nightmares
- Feeling constantly on edge or easily startled
- Avoiding people, places, or situations that remind you of the trauma
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, or emotional numbness
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed

These symptoms can come and go, change over time, and sometimes appear months—or even years—after a traumatic event.

If Someone You Know Has PTSD

One of the most helpful things you can do is simply be patient.

You may not always understand why someone reacts the way they do, but remember that trauma changes how the brain responds to stress. Loud noises, crowded places, certain

smells, dates, or seemingly ordinary situations may trigger intense emotions or anxiety.

Instead of saying:

"Just move on."

"That happened a long time ago."

"Everything's fine now."

Try saying:

"I'm here for you."

"How can I support you?"

"Thank you for trusting me with your story."

Feeling believed, heard, and supported can make an enormous difference.

If You're Living with PTSD

Healing doesn't mean forgetting what happened. It means learning how to move forward without your trauma controlling your life.

While everyone's journey is different, these strategies can help:

- Create predictable routines. Daily structure can help your brain and body feel safer.
- Practice grounding techniques
- Focus on your breathing or notice five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell, and one you can taste when anxiety rises.

- Stay connected. Isolation often makes symptoms worse. Reach out to trusted friends, family members, or a support group.
- Take care of your body. Sleep, movement, balanced meals, and limiting alcohol or substances all support recovery.



- Give yourself grace. Healing isn't linear.
- Difficult days don't erase the progress you've already made. There Is Hope

PTSD is highly treatable. Many people experience significant improvement through therapy and other evidence-based treatments that help the brain process traumatic experiences in healthier ways.

At The Center for Counseling and Consultation, we understand that every person's story is different. Whether you've been struggling for years or recently experienced a traumatic event, you don't have to face it alone. Healing is possible, and reaching out for help is one of the strongest steps you can take.

Because every story deserves support—and every person deserves hope.



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