

PTSD Basics

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PTSD Is:

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder can affect anyone, and it results from exposure to an experience that is horrific or life threatening. The whole person gets locked into emergency mode (fight or flight or freeze survival!) and will always be permanently programmed in that emergency mode at some level for the rest of their lives. 24/7 they live as if the original trauma or an impending crisis could occur at any moment. It totally overwhelms their ability to cope so when something triggers them back into survival mode, they have no reserve with which to handle it.

PTSD affects millions just in the U.S. alone, along with all those who love them and care about them.

Because the trauma can impact them on every level (physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually), the manifestations are quite extensive. Some typical symptoms may include flashbacks, intrusive thoughts of the trauma, avoidance, numbing, putting up walls, withdrawing, hypervigilance, irritability, easily startled, memory blocks, sudden bursts of anger or other emotions, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, fear, depression, anxiety, substance abuse and other addictive behaviors, difficulty holding a job, relationship problems, and unfortunately sometimes even suicide. (See www.LoveOurVets.org for more information.) They are people who are reacting normally to an abnormal experience.

PTSD is NOT:

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is not a chosen situation or a temporary condition, nor is it 100% curable. People who struggle with it are not crazy, weak, failures, bad people, nor are they without help and hope. They can learn to thrive again!

PLEASE DON'T:

Don't pity them.

Don't fear or avoid them.

Don't try to "fix" them.

Don't judge.

Don't assume you know what they are going through.

Do NOT say:

Aren't you over it yet?

You are crazy.

Just get over it.

It's all in your head.

Just be stronger.

I have a total cure for you.

At least you weren't wounded.

I had that but I got over it.

What you really need to do is ____.

You're on your own now.

Pull yourself together.

It's all in the past.

Suck it up.

Move on.

PLEASE DO:

Treat them with kindness and respect.

Acknowledge the depth and reality of their struggle.

Encourage and support them.

Try to imagine a day and night in their shoes.

Accept that you will never fully understand.

Invite them to explore resources together if they want.

Respect their need for space.

Offer to go with them to a local Vet Center, VA, doctor, or counselor.

Be supportive of the loved ones.

Pray for them.

Listen to them.

Love them.

Realize that with PTSD every day is a victory.

This information is intended to provide a brief summary. Do not use it to diagnose or treat any condition. Please consult a qualified health or mental health care provider.

www.LoveOurVets.org



www.PTSDProjects.com

