



# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

## *Sutton*

### **What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?**

Anyone who experiences a traumatic and distressing event is likely to experience physical and emotional reactions, for example nightmares, irritability, sadness or anxiety (see Symptom box).

For most people these symptoms gradually reduce over a month as the person comes to terms with the traumatic event. However, for approximately one in three people these symptoms keep on going without improvement and may develop into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Some people may feel numb or removed from themselves (depersonalised) after experiencing a traumatic event and it may be months before PTSD symptoms develop, although usually the symptoms develop within six months of experiencing the traumatic event.

PTSD increases the risk of depression and other anxiety-related disorders such as phobias and generalised anxiety disorder. Symptoms may affect a person's ability to work and their relationships with others.

### **What are the treatments for PTSD?**

Treatment for PTSD can involve a variety of different approaches, including psychological therapy and medication. People often find a combination works best

Your GP may refer you to the Psychological Therapies in Primary Care service (PTiPC). This service provides the recommended psychological therapy for PTSD: trauma focussed Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). You can find out more information about psychological therapies in the websites and books listed overleaf.

If the PTSD persists or if the PTSD is very severe, you may be referred to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). The CMHT provides a specialist mental health services and will provide a care package which may include medication management, psychological therapy and social support. You may be offered CBT within the CMHT or the CMHT may refer you to specialist services such as the Traumatic Stress Service, which specialises in treating severe PTSD.

### **Symptoms of PTSD**

People with PTSD may experience different symptoms. Here is a list of some of the symptoms you may experience.

#### **Intrusion**

This means the event is constantly revisited in your mind, including:

- Having sudden, unwanted and vivid memories (flashbacks).
- Feeling like you are re-experiencing the event all over again. This can feel very real and be very frightening.

#### **Avoidance**

This means that you may unconsciously avoid thinking about the traumatic event so that you do not experience the stress and pain of the memories. This may include symptoms like:

- Feeling numb and unable to feel strong emotions
- Feeling depressed, guilty and anxious
- Avoiding activities that may trigger memories of the event
- Using alcohol or drugs to manage or avoid the painful emotions.

#### **Increased arousal**

This means that you are on constant alert. As a result, you may experience some of these symptoms:

- Jumping or being startled by sudden noises
- Feeling irritable
- Feeling angry
- Getting angry about small things "snapping"
- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Difficulty sleeping
- Poor mental and work performance
- Feeling tense, including experiencing headaches, shaking and sweating and digestion difficulties.

*A diagnosis should only be made by a mental health specialist.*



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### Useful sources of information and support

There is a lot of information about mental health available on the Internet and in books. Occasionally these are not from reliable sources and may provide mis-information. While service users and mental health professionals have recommended these websites, books and services, we cannot guarantee their quality nor can we take responsibility for the impact that the resources and services will have on you. The websites and books listed here are not an exhaustive list.

#### Websites

- [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/mentalhealthproblems/posttraumaticstressdisorder.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/mentalhealthproblems/posttraumaticstressdisorder.aspx)
- [www.mind.org.uk/Information/Booklets/Understanding/Understanding+post-traumatic+stress+disorder.htm](http://www.mind.org.uk/Information/Booklets/Understanding/Understanding+post-traumatic+stress+disorder.htm)
- [www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23069095/](http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23069095/) (A self-help guide)
- [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/articles/article.aspx?articleId=293](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/articles/article.aspx?articleId=293)
- [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/therapies/cognitivebehaviouraltherapy.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/therapies/cognitivebehaviouraltherapy.aspx)

#### Books

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Invisible Injury by David Kinchin ISBN-10: 0952912147
- The PTSD Workbook by Mary-Beth Williams, Soili Poijula ISBN-10: 1572242825
- Understanding Your Reactions to Trauma: A Guide for Survivors of Trauma and Their Families by Claudia Herbert ISBN-10: 1904127029
- Overcoming Traumatic Stress by Claudia Herbert and Ann Wetmore ISBN-10: 1841190160

**Local non-NHS services** Your GP will also be able to advise you of local services and how to contact them.

<p><b>Refugee Network</b> The Sutton Refugee Network provides a support group and a range of other activities (e.g. English classes, advocacy and advice) for refugees in Sutton. Call for more information</p> <p><b>Telephone</b> 020 8770 6983 <b>Address</b> Sutton Refugee Network, Trinity Church, Sutton <b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:srefugeen@yahoo.co.uk">srefugeen@yahoo.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASAC)</b> RASAC provides a confidential help line and counselling service to rape victims and survivors of sexual abuse. Call for more information</p> <p><b>HelpLine</b> 08451 221 3311 <b>Counselling information</b> 020 8683 3311 <b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:info@rasasc.org.uk">info@rasasc.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Breaking Free</b> Breaking Free provides support service for women who have survived childhood sexual abuse by providing a safe, confidential and non-judgemental environment. Call for more information.</p> <p><b>HelpLine</b> 0845 108 0055 Monday to Thursday 10 am to 1 pm <b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:support@breakingfreecharity.org.uk">support@breakingfreecharity.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Private Therapy</b> If you are interested in seeking private therapy it is recommend that you find a therapist through one of these professional bodies:</p> <p><b>British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies</b> <a href="http://www.babcp.com">www.babcp.com</a></p> <p><b>British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy</b> <a href="http://www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/index.html">www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/index.html</a></p> <p><b>British Psychological Society</b> <a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/psychoindex.cfm">www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/psychoindex.cfm</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other Useful Numbers</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SaneLine:</b> 0845 767 8000 (Monday- Sunday 1-11pm) <b>Samaritans:</b> 08457 90 90 90 (everyday, 24 hours) <b>Mental Health Helpline:</b> 0500 639 000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">There are other voluntary services in Sutton that may be useful but not directly linked to depression, please ask your GP for more information.</p>	