

WHAT IS PTSD?

You can't patch a wounded soul with a Band-Aid. ..Michael Connelly

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD occurs after a terrifying situation in which a person is harmed, threatened, or a witness to a harmful event
- ❖ PTSD affects about 7½ million Americans with women more likely to feel its effects
- ❖ PTSD can occur at any age and anyone can get it not just veterans but also survivors of assault, accidents, abuse, disasters, and other serious incidents
- ❖ PTSD symptoms are grouped into 3 categories:
 - ❖ **Re-experiencing** which includes flashbacks, bad dreams, and scary thoughts
 - ❖ **Avoidance** including emotional numbness, loss of interest in activities, staying away from reminders of the event, and feelings of guilt, shame, or worry
 - ❖ **Hyperarousal** such as being on edge, difficulty sleeping, having angry outbursts, and being easily startled
- ❖ The re-experiencing of an event, or flashback, can start from memories or exposure to situations, objects, or words that are reminders of the event
- ❖ Reminders of the event can also cause people to avoid places, people, or things
- ❖ Hyperarousal is usually constant in PTSD; it can cause people to be excessively vigilant and prepared for fight-or-flight to a perceived or misperceived threatening situation
- ❖ Not everyone who experiences a dangerous event develops PTSD
- ❖ Risk factors for developing PTSD include: actually getting hurt, having a previous trauma, having little social support, continuing to deal with the consequences after a traumatic event, and feeling horror and helplessness
- ❖ Resilience factors that inhibit PTSD include: support from friends and family, having a coping strategy during the event, taking some action, and not feeling helpless
- ❖ People with PTSD:
 - ❖ avoid anything related to the trauma including talking about it
 - ❖ avoid behaviors, places, or people that might remind them of the trauma
 - ❖ may be unable to recall major parts of the trauma
 - ❖ have decreased involvement in general life activities
 - ❖ may be numb to their emotions
 - ❖ may be pessimistic about their future
 - ❖ may have irritability or angry outbursts
 - ❖ may feel guilt and self-blame
 - ❖ may have suicidal thoughts
- ❖ People with PTSD can have secondary problems including shame, depression, alcohol or drug problems, chronic pain, employment difficulties, and relationship problems

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Recognize that PTSD is not a weakness but a normal reaction to an abnormal event
- ❖ Getting treatment and getting it early will improve family and work life
- ❖ Therapy will help explore thoughts and feelings about the trauma, resolve feelings of guilt and blame, teach coping strategies, and help solve work and relationship problems
- ❖ Join a support group and do not abuse drugs or alcohol
- ❖ Seek professional help if you have disturbing thoughts and feelings about a traumatic event or if you have trouble managing your life

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [**DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com**](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

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