



10

SIGNS THAT YOU COULD HAVE PTSD

So what kinds of trauma exposure can lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)? It could involve directly experiencing a traumatic event or witnessing it happening to others. You may have learned of a traumatic event happening to a close friend or family member, or be repeatedly exposed to aversive details of traumatic events. There is something about the exposure that stays with you, affecting your ability to be with others, do school, your job, or feel comfortable within yourself.

For example, perhaps you're a police officer investigating child pornography. Maybe you are a military member who was involved in search and rescues. You could also be a nurse who worked in the trauma room of an ER. If you have experienced the type of trauma we describe above, and you're experiencing some of the signs we outline below, you may be experiencing post-traumatic stress.

1

I have disturbing and unwanted thoughts of the upsetting event that come back in a manner that I can't seem to control.

2

I find myself avoiding events or people that are connected to the upsetting incident.

3

Things in my environment trigger memories or sensations associated with the upsetting event. Sometimes I may even feel as though it is happening again.

4

I find myself drinking, eating, gambling, taking drugs in a non-prescription manner, and/or spending more money as a way of managing my feelings.

5

I am having difficulties concentrating, sleeping, or focussing on anything for extended periods of time. My memory is not what it used to be.

6

I am growing increasingly uncomfortable going into crowds, and find myself constantly scanning my surroundings for the quickest exit strategy. I may prefer to sit with my back to the wall when in public places.

7

I find it increasingly difficult to trust others, and have a growing sense of isolation or alienation from those around me.

8

I am having increasing difficulties experiencing positive emotions and no longer seem interested in some of my former hobbies or interests.

9

I am having increased difficulty with intimate relationships, and am hesitant to let people know what's really going on inside.

10

I see the world differently than I used to. I no longer give people the benefit of the doubt, don't necessarily believe in the goodness of others, and tend to see the world as an unsafe place.

If you replied **yes** to a number of these symptoms, you may benefit from talking to a mental health professional. Remember, the earlier you address these warning signs, the faster the recovery.

