



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This information sheet looks at Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), some of the signs and things to consider if you believe that you are affected by this and ways of getting help.

What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder' (PTSD) is a set of reactions that can develop after someone has been through a traumatic event. Such events could be:

- Military combat or war
- Serious accidents (traffic, workplace or others)
- Terrorist attacks
- Natural disasters
- Assault.

What are the signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

Signs of PTSD include strong feelings of fear, sadness, guilt, anger or grief which don't go away with time.

Examples of these feeling can include:

- Re-living the traumatic event (for example, unwanted memories, vivid nightmares, flashbacks, or intense reactions such as heart palpitations or panic attacks when reminded of the event)
- Feeling wound up, having trouble sleeping or concentrating, feeling angry or irritable, taking risks, becoming easily startled, or constantly being on the look-out for danger.
- Avoiding reminders of the event (e.g. activities, places, people, thoughts or feelings that bring back memories of the trauma).
- Negative thoughts and feelings such as; feeling afraid, angry, guilty, flat, or numb a lot of the time, losing interest in day-to-day activities, or feeling cut off from friends and family.

What common issues are associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

If you think you may be experiencing PTSD, speak to your Doctor or another healthcare professional. Be honest with your Doctor and share your concerns, they will not judge you and are there to help.

Research shows that PTSD is commonly associated with the following issues and conditions:

- Major depression and substance (drug and alcohol) abuse.
- Increased risk of panic disorders.
- Increased risk of developing medical conditions such as hypertension and asthma.
- Significant interpersonal difficulties (for example, being unable to relate to or communicate with friends, family or colleagues).

How is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder treated?

PTSD can be effectively treated with counselling, medication and/or a combination of the two. Treatment will depend on individual circumstances and be led by healthcare professionals who are skilled at treating PTSD, such as Doctors, Psychologists and Counsellors.

Where to find help for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

If you think you may have PTSD speak to your Doctor or another health professional, as soon as you possibly can. These professionals care about you, will not judge you, and are there to help you.

Public support:

- Immediate assistance can be provided by calling **'Lifeline'** on **13 11 14** at any time or visit their website www.lifeline.org.au

Veteran's support:

- Veterans and their family members can call the **'Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service'** on **1800 011 046** or visit their website www.vvcs.gov.au
- Veterans and families can contact the Australian Defence Force Mental Health Strategy **'All Hours Support Line'** on **1800 628 036**.

'Phoenix Australia' is the national Centre for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and has valuable resources, tips and advice visit: www.phoenixaustralia.org

References:

1 = Phoenix Australia - Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health. About posttraumatic stress disorder. Retrieved on October 21, 2015 from <http://phoenixaustralia.org/recovery/fact-sheets-and-booklets/>

2 = Cohen, H. (2013). Associated Conditions of PTSD. Psych Central. Retrieved on October 21, 2015, from <http://psychcentral.com/lib/associated-conditions-of-ptsd/>

3 = Phoenix Australia - Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health. Treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder. Retrieved on October 21, 2015 from <http://phoenixaustralia.org/recovery/fact-sheets-and-booklets/>