



# Quit Messing with My Head! Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

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# I am Seriously Injured



<http://ptsdlove.blogspot.com/2011/09/ptsd-monster-that-stole-my-husband.html>

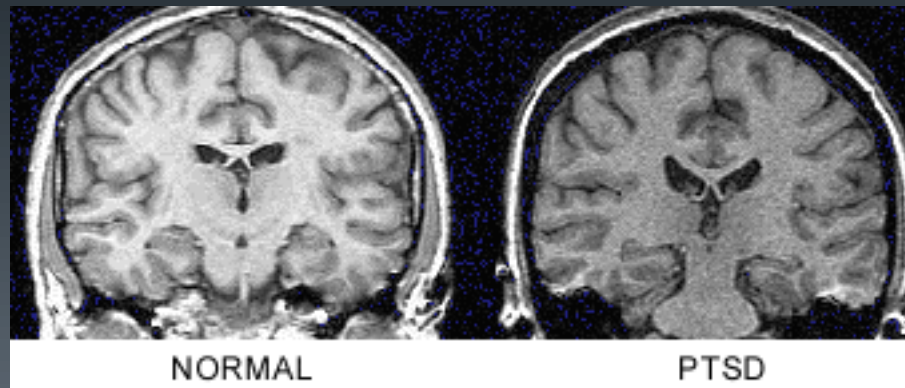


# What is PTSD?

- It is a debilitating mental disorder that follows an exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in the following: directly experiencing, witnessing (in person), or even learning that the traumatic event occurred to a close family member or close friend. It usually involves overwhelmed emotional response including fear, helplessness, or horror.
- PTSD can occur at any age and it may cause serious destruction to the person and family, resulting in depression, substance abuse, homelessness, divorce, suicidal or homicidal ideation.

# What is PTSD Continued

- Although the disease begins after a traumatic event, psychiatrists and researchers are not sure why some individuals appear to be more vulnerable to PTSD.
- Three theories may explain its causes
  - Physiologic changes: the overwhelmed traumatic experience may lead to abnormal processing of the information and feeling of the event in the brain
  - Anatomical: individual with PTSD has low mass volume in certain part of the brain as amygdala (processing fear response) and hippocampus (responsible for formation of memory).
  - Neurochemical: there's evidence that a hormonal system HPA axis is disrupted in these individual.





# Symptoms of PTSD

- Intrusion Symptoms
  - Intrusive Memories
  - Nightmares
  - Flashbacks
- Persistent Avoidance
  - Amnesia
  - Feeling Numb
  - Sense of shortened future
- Marked alterations in arousal
  - Panic Attack
  - Claustrophobia
  - Irritable behavior and angry outbursts
  - Hypervigilance
  - Sleep Disturbance

# Treatment of PTSD



- There are two treatment modalities for PTSD, psychotherapy treatment and medications and Medications are nearly always used in conjunction with psychotherapy for PTSD.
- medications may treat some of the symptoms commonly associated with the disorder, they will not relieve a person of feelings associated with the trauma.
- The most common prescribed class of medications for PTSD and approved by FDA are the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressants. These include drugs such as fluoxetine (Prozac), sertraline (Zoloft), and paroxetine (Paxil). Research shows that this group of medicines tends to decrease anxiety, depression, and panic associated with PTSD in people. There are other medications that might be used as antipsychotic, mood stabilizer and anxiolytic.



# Psychotherapy treatment for PTSD

- Psychotherapy is an effective treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and survivors of trauma. There are a variety of psychotherapies available, such as CBT, one-on-one with a therapist through individual therapy, group therapy, stress reduction program that include meditation, mindfulness, Yoga, Ti Chi, mind-body exercise) but they all share a number of common traits.
  - Therapy begins when person is medically stable.
  - Therapy should individualized to meet specific needs.
  - The goal of trauma exploration is to restore a realistic sense of self-esteem and self-confidence in dealing in memories, reminders and feeling related to the trauma.

# Psychotherapy treatment for PTSD continued

- Group psychotherapy has advantages over individual therapy.
  - Person gets immediate feedback from their peers. It is much easier for survivors to accept confrontation from each other than from a professional therapist who never went through those experiences first-hand.
  - They gain insight into their own condition by listening to each other similar problems.
  - The therapists have better opportunity to evaluate survivors interactions with others.





# Important Facts

- A person with PTSD doesn't mean he/she is a “weak character”.
- Not every individual who experiences a frightening traumatic event develops PTSD.
- Severely traumatized individuals should not be forced to talk about their traumatic event until they are ready to do so.
- People with PTSD can experience remarkable return to normal functioning and way of life.

# Nurses responsibilities in dealing with PTSD patients

- There's no need for inpatient psychiatry treatment unless patient has warning signs and/or poses imminent threat on himself or others.
- Listen thoroughly
- Be supportive
- Read the nonverbal cues and communicate effectively with those who suffer emotional injuries as same as physical injuries.
- Encourage them to seek out professionals who is experienced with this disorder.



# References

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