

Does this sound like you?

- You lived through or witnessed a very scary and dangerous event.
- You learned that a traumatic event happened to someone close to you or you were in a situation where you experienced repeated or extreme exposure to details of a traumatic event.
- You feel like the terrible event is happening all over again. The feeling often comes without warning.
- You have nightmares and scary memories of the terrifying event.
- You stay away from places that remind you of the event
- You jump and feel very upset when something happens without warning.
- You have a hard time trusting or feeling close to other people.
- You are irritable or get angry easily.
- You have trouble sleeping, and your muscles are tense.

If you experience some of these concerns, you may have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

PTSD is a real illness. People may get PTSD after living through or witnessing a terrible and scary experience. It can be treated with medication and therapy.

What are some experiences that can lead to PTSD?

- Exposure to combat
- Rape or sexual abuse
- Physical assault
- Violent crime

- Accident
- Tornado, fire, or hurricane
- Event where you thought you might be killed
- Witnessing any of these events
- Learning about trauma to someone close to you
- Exposure to aversive details of a traumatic event

When does PTSD start and how long does it last?

PTSD often starts within about three months of the terrible event. For some people, signs of PTSD don't show up until years later. It can happen to anyone at any age—even children.

Am I the only person with this illness?

No. You are not alone. In any year, at least 5.2 million Americans have PTSD.

Some people get better within six months, while others may have the illness much longer.

What can I do to help myself?

Talk to a counselor or a doctor about the terrible event and your feelings. Tell them if the concerns keep you from doing everyday things and living your life.

What can a doctor or counselor do to help me?

Talking to a counselor helps many people with PTSD. Therapy can help you work through your experience.

A doctor may give you medication to feel less afraid and tense. It may take a few weeks for the medication to work.