

## PTSD- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, or rape or who have been threatened with death, sexual violence or serious injury.

PTSD has been known by many names in the past, such as “shell shock” during the years of World War I and “combat fatigue” after World War II, but PTSD does not just happen to combat veterans. PTSD can occur in all people, of any ethnicity, nationality or culture and at any age. PTSD affects approximately 3.5 percent of Australian adults every year, and an estimated one in 11 people will be diagnosed with PTSD in their lifetime.

Women are twice as likely as men to have PTSD. People with PTSD have intense, disturbing thoughts and feelings related to their experience that last long after the traumatic event has ended. They may relive the event through flashbacks or nightmares; they may feel sadness, fear or anger; and they may feel detached or estranged from other people.

People with PTSD may avoid situations or people that remind them of the traumatic event, and they may have strong negative reactions to something as ordinary as a loud noise or an accidental touch. A diagnosis of PTSD requires exposure to an upsetting traumatic event. However, the exposure could be indirect rather than firsthand.

For example, PTSD could occur in an individual learning about the violent death of a close family or friend. It can also occur as a result of repeated exposure to horrible details of trauma such as police officers exposed to details of child abuse cases.

### What are the 7 Symptoms of PTSD?

Changes in physical and emotional reactions

1. Being easily startled or frightened.
2. Always being on guard for danger.

3. Self-destructive behaviour, such as drinking too much or driving too fast.
4. Trouble sleeping.
5. Trouble concentrating.
6. Irritability, angry outbursts or aggressive behaviour.
7. Overwhelming guilt or shame.

### **Can emotional abuse cause PTSD?**

Emotional abuse can lead to C-PTSD, a type of PTSD that involves ongoing trauma. CPTSD shows many of the same symptoms as PTSD, although its symptoms and causes can differ. Treatment should be tailored to the situation to address the ongoing trauma the person experienced from emotional abuse.

### **How can we treat PTSD?**

One type of therapy used to treat PTSD at Lifeskills Australia, is The Richards Trauma Process (TRTP). TRTP™ is an elegantly simple, yet comprehensive, step-by-step process which resolves extreme trauma and trauma-related issues – anxiety, depression, fears and phobias. It achieves results quickly, effectively and safely – generally in 3 sessions.

### **For trauma to be resolved:**

1. the person must (somehow) be moved to an empowered position in regard to the trauma
2. the body must (somehow) know that the event / events are over.

TRTP™ initially deals with the underlying, unconscious core beliefs which keep a person stuck in patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour. In dealing with this at the beginning of the process, self-sabotage is avoided during the following therapy.

TRTP™ then takes the emotional charge from the past, moving the client to a place of empowerment in relation to the trauma. Because deep imagination is

used, the therapist can then speak directly to the body and to the unconscious. The client is shifted from fight/flight/freeze and moved to an empowered, self-regulated state. The sympathetic nervous system is calmed. The memory of the trauma is placed firmly in the past.

The client quickly moves from their state of fight/flight/freeze: 'I'm not safe!' to; 'It's over. I'm safe now.' Calm returns, on all levels. Symptoms cease. TRTP™ does not merely address the symptoms of trauma. It deals with the underlying cause of the problem, removing the emotional charge from the past and returning the person to a state of empowerment, returning the sympathetic nervous system to calm.