

PTSD 101

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a medically-diagnosed mental health condition that can develop after exposure to one or more traumatic events.

COMMON CAUSES

PTSD can develop after experiencing, witnessing or learning the details of a traumatic event.

Threat of Injury or Death
Serious Accident
Combat

Terrorist Attack
Sexual Assault
Physical Assault

Natural Disaster
Childhood Sexual or
Physical Abuse

A diagnosis of PTSD requires the presence of symptoms from FOUR different categories.



1 INTRUSIONS

Recurring distressing memories, dreams or flashbacks



2 AVOIDANCE

Of people or places that remind them of the trauma



3 PERSISTENT NEGATIVE MOOD OR THOUGHTS

Inability to recall the traumatic event or experience positive emotions; excessive blame, fear, shame, guilt; detachment from others



4 AROUSAL OR REACTIVITY

Irritability, hypervigilance, difficulty concentrating, self-destructive behaviors

SYMPTOM CATEGORIES

BY THE NUMBERS

Between 2000-2014, **149,000** active-duty service members were diagnosed with PTSD in the Military Health System



122,000 of those were diagnosed following a deployment of 30 days or more

† = 5,000 active-duty service members
Source: Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center

TREATMENTS

PTSD is treatable. Effective treatments include:

EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPIES OR COUNSELING

Trauma-focused cognitive therapies that include the following components

Anxiety Management Techniques

Involves learning and practicing techniques including meditation, progressive muscle relaxation or deep breathing exercises which lower anxiety or feelings of stress

Cognitive Restructuring

Involves identifying and changing troublesome thinking patterns and beliefs

Exposure Therapy

Involves thinking about or being in situations which trigger feelings of anxiety

MEDICATION INTERVENTIONS

Antidepressant medications

Strong research supports the use of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors fluoxetine, paroxetine, or sertraline and the serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor venlafaxine as prescribed by your doctor

Alpha-blocker medications

Prazosin is approved for use as an adjunct to antidepressant medications to help reduce or control nightmares