

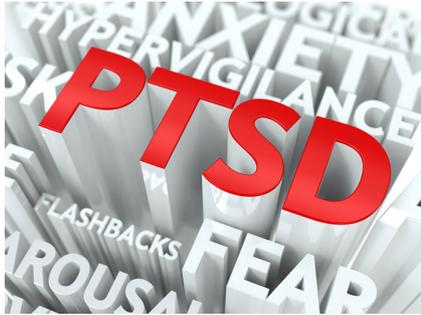


**A W A K E N**  
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## Have I, or Someone I Care About, Got P.T.S.D.? 4 Ways to Know!

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Following on from last week's article about what Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.) is, this week we're discussing the common signs of P.T.S.D. So if you, or someone you know, has been exposed to a traumatic event or events, you, or they, may be experiencing P.T.S.D. Read on to discover more. And next week, stay tuned for what you can do.

**JUST RECAPING FROM LAST WEEK ... What is a traumatic event, and what might you, or your loved one, experience?**

A 'traumatic event' is an incident that most of us would regard as adverse, possibly catastrophic, that causes psychological injury. These events include any threat (actual or perceived) to the life or physical safety of yourself, your loved ones, or those around you. A list of events could include, but is not limited to: sexual assault, physical assault, war, natural disasters, and accidents. Someone can experience a traumatic event either directly (that is, the person actually experienced or witnessed it) or indirectly (learning about the event from someone else).

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Immediately after a traumatic event (during the first month) you may experience acute symptoms, which are normal and help us to process the traumatic event. However, if after a month or so these symptoms are not getting better, and they're impacting negatively upon your life, then you might be experiencing Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.).

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## What Are Some Common Signs of P.T.S.D.?

While everyone will cope with a trauma differently, here are some common signs to look out for, that fall into four categories.

1. intrusive memories
  - experiencing thoughts about the traumatic event that happen often, are unwanted, and are distressing
  - feeling or acting like the event is happening again (even though it's not)
  - having nightmares about the traumatic event
  - getting upset emotionally, or even having a physical reaction, when something reminds you of the trauma
2. avoidance
  - trying to shut out thoughts about the traumatic event
  - avoiding talking about the traumatic event
  - not going to places, not participating in activities, or not seeing people that remind you of the trauma
3. changes in thinking and mood
  - thinking negatively about yourself ("I'm a bad person" "It's my fault")
  - thinking negatively about others ("No-one can be trusted")
  - not being able to experience positive emotions
  - feeling emotionally numb
  - not enjoying previously enjoyable activities
  - feeling hopeless about the future
  - having memory difficulties, such as not remembering important aspects of the trauma
  - having difficulties maintaining close relationships

4. changes in emotional reactions
  - being irritable, having angry outbursts, or being aggressive in behaviour
  - feeling an overwhelming sense of guilt or shame
  - engaging in self-destructive behaviour; such as drinking too much, driving too fast, spending too much money, or engaging in risky sexual behaviour
  - having difficulties concentrating
  - not being able to sleep
  - always being on guard for danger
  - being easily startled or frightened

*Also something further to note : we know that the age you experienced the trauma at, whether you had multiple traumatic experiences, whether you had supports available, whether the perpetrator was a trusted family member or friend, whether you felt heard and validated, whether the event was part of your job, and/or whether you're male or female – all impact upon how you experience the traumatic event(s), and how you cope with the traumatic event(s).*

If you, or a loved one, is experiencing P.T.S.D. and it's affecting your life negatively, seeking professional assistance could be useful. And keep watching your Inbox for next week's article on what to do about P.T.S.D.

If you would like help in managing your thoughts, feelings or behaviours, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, [amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au](mailto:amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au) or [click here](#)

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