Coping with PTSD

June is National PTSD Awareness Month. Coping with PTSD is difficult and can leave a person feeling alone, confused, and scared. The more information one knows about the mental health disorder, the better chance they will have of recognizing the signs, seeking help when they need it, and coping in a healthy way.

That is why this National PTSD Awareness Month, our team is here to help you develop a better understanding of what PTSD is, the symptoms of the illness, and healthy ways a person can cope when experiencing it.

# What is PTSD?

Post-traumatic stress disorder, otherwise known as PTSD, is a mental health disorder that stems from experiencing or witnessing a traumatic life event. In the past, PTSD has been known to impact soldiers, but can affect anyone who has experienced trauma. As a matter of fact, the disorder has been found to impact an estimated [3.5% of U.S. adults](https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/ptsd/what-is-ptsd) every year.

The disorder typically causes the individual to experience disturbing, invasive, and extreme thoughts, feelings, and memories related to their trauma. These symptoms tend to have a lasting impact on the person, sticking around long after the traumatic event has passed.

# Symptoms of PTSD

PTSD can look different for many different people. However, there are some signs and symptoms one can look for if they believe they or a loved one are experiencing PTSD, including:

* Intrusive thoughts, feelings, or memories related to the traumatic event
* Experiencing flashbacks of the event
* Enduring nightmares related to the event
* Experiencing extreme emotional distress when reminded of the event
* Avoiding thinking or talking about the event
* Avoiding people, places, or situations that one believes will remind them of the event
* Experiencing guilt, lowered self-worth, or hopelessness
* Experiencing issues with memory and concentration
* Viewing themselves and the world in a negative light
* Social isolation or detachment
* A loss of interest in things that once brought joy
* Low mood, constant negative emotions, or feeling numb
* Becoming easily frightened
* Sleep struggles
* Increased irritability or aggression

# Coping with PTSD

Experiencing PTSD can be awful for everyone. Developing healthy coping mechanisms can help you take care of yourself as you work your way toward healing after trauma.

## Develop Coping Mechanisms for When You Experience Flashbacks

When experiencing flashbacks, having a toolbox of relaxation techniques can be essential to helping you get through them. A few you can try include:

* Breathwork
* Affirmations assuring yourself you are safe
* Journaling
* Comforting yourself (this can include cuddling a pet, watching a comfort film, or listening to music that soothes you)
* Using techniques to bring you to the present, like naming three things you are experiencing with all five of your senses

## Talking to Someone

Having a strong support system is essential for getting through difficult times. However, PTSD can make social isolation tempting. Don’t give in to that temptation. Reach out to loved ones or a support group when you need support. Having someone to confide in will allow you to feel validated, supported, and comforted in difficult times.

## Understand Your Triggers

There will be certain things that trigger your PTSD symptoms. Developing a deeper understanding of these will allow you to prepare and plan for them before you experience them.

## Be Kind to Yourself

Healing is not a linear experience. You will have good days and bad. With time and self-care, you will eventually begin to find healing. Be kind to yourself as you navigate your journey to healing.

## Seek the Help of a Therapist

One of the most important things you can do when experiencing PTSD is to seek the help of a therapist. In therapy, you will be able to learn healthy coping mechanisms and have someone to talk to about the thoughts, feelings, and memories you are struggling to cope with.

If you are ready to begin therapy, our team of professional and compassionate therapists are here for you. [Contact](http://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php) us today.

References:

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/ptsd/what-is-ptsd>

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