



Mental Disorders

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder is a mental disorder that happens after a shocking, dangerous scary event that is life-altering. People who live with PTSD have witnessed violent death or natural disasters first-hand, or been violently assaulted. Black people, especially those that live in communities or households with high and constant violence are vulnerable to having symptoms of PTSD. Sometimes Black people who exhibit symptoms of PTSD never leave the environment of where the trauma occurred; which makes it challenging to fully heal from PTSD.

Symptoms & Warning Signs

Re-experiencing the Event: Reliving the event through memories, dreams, and flashbacks.

Avoidance: Avoiding thoughts, people, and places that are reminders of the traumatic event.

Negative changes in mood, thoughts, and isolation: Exaggerated negative beliefs, expectations, and thoughts about the traumatic event. Having feelings of guilt, shame, fear, and anger. Isolating oneself from activities and others.

Irritable and Reckless Behavior: Angry outbursts, self-destructive behavior, problems concentrating, being overly watchful and attentive to others and environment (hypervigilance)

Warning Signs

- Trouble concentrating and sleeping due to thoughts about the traumatic event.
- Change in reaction to everyday tasks (driving, walking, working)
- Irritability and Anger
- Engaging in risk-taking behavior like using drugs, doing life-threatening activities.
- Avoiding people, places, and things that remind you of the traumatic event.
- Stressed relationships with family and friends.

Sources: DSM-V, National Center for PTSD

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Treatment

- Removal from Environment of Traumatic Event
- Psychotherapy: Cognitive Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Mindfulness Practices: Breathing Meditations, Pain-Relief Meditations, Yoga, Relaxation Techniques
- Acupuncture
- Medication