

## Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

### What is PTSD?

Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events. It is normal to experience upsetting and confusing thoughts after a traumatic event, but most people improve over a few weeks. PTSD is when these thoughts persist.

Some people develop Complex PTSD following repeated traumatic situations, such as persistent neglect, abuse or violence. These symptoms may not develop until years after the event. They are usually more severe if the trauma was experienced in childhood.

### Symptoms

- Flashbacks to the traumatic event
- Nightmares about the traumatic event
- Feeling 'on edge'
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Isolation
- Feelings of irritability and guilt

These symptoms are often severe and have a significant impact on day-to-day life.

### What causes it?

Any situation that someone finds traumatic can cause PTSD, including:

- Childbirth experiences, such as losing a baby or a traumatic birth
- War and conflict
- Domestic violence
- Torture
- Serious road accidents
- Violent personal assaults, such as robbery, mugging or a sexual assault
- Serious health problems

## How can it be treated?

- Antidepressants
- Psychological therapies, such as trauma focussed CBT or eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR)

PTSD can be successfully treated, even when it develops many years after the event.

## How to get help

- Visit your GP if you are still experiencing upsetting thoughts four or more weeks after a traumatic event, who will be able to refer you for psychological therapies and discuss treatment options with you
- Find local services near you for PTSD through the [Hub of Hope](#)

**If you or someone you know is in crisis, it's important to get help fast. If you think that you or someone you know is in danger, call 999.**

Source: NHS