



P.T.S.D.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

June is PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) Awareness Month. With that in mind I'd like to focus on it for this week's goody.

What is PTSD?

- Mayo Clinic defines PTSD as, "Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event."

Kinds of Trauma

- "BIG T" - 'Big T' is the kind of trauma that most of us think of. It is associated with some life-threatening event or situation like wars, natural disasters, physical assault, etc.,
- "small t" - 'Small t' while still quite disruptive to or lives, 'small t' traumatic situations and events are not life-threatening like divorce, abrupt relocation, financial woes, etc

Data

- 1 in 11 individuals will be diagnosed with PTSD in their lifetime.
- In a given year 3.5% of American adults will be affected by PTSD.
- 8% of adolescents, 13-18 years old, will be impacted by PTSD.
- Women are twice as likely to be diagnosed as men are.

Data from American Psychiatric Association



Signs & Symptoms

Intrusive memories

- Recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event
- Reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again (flashbacks)
- Upsetting dreams or nightmares about the traumatic event
- Severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that reminds you of the traumatic event



From Mayo Clinic

Avoidance

- Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event
- Avoiding places, activities or people that remind you of the traumatic event



Negative changes in thinking and mood

- Negative thoughts about yourself, other people or the world
- Hopelessness about the future
- Memory problems, including not remembering important aspects of the traumatic event
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- Feeling detached from family and friends
- Lack of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Difficulty experiencing positive emotions
- Feeling emotionally numb

Changes in physical and emotional reactions

- Being easily startled or frightened
- Always being on guard for danger
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drinking too much or driving too fast
- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Irritability, angry outbursts or aggressive behavior
- Overwhelming guilt or shame



While the data reported above would seem to suggest that PTSD is not that big of an issue, we all know better than that. The truth is, each one of us individually has either experienced PTSD or we know some who have (outside of our clients.) On top of that, the impact that has on an individual's life can be quite devastating. In fact, PTSD and one's inability to cope with and manage it sadly results in many taking their own lives, especially our veterans, In addition, there are many who have experienced either "Big T" or "little t" trauma and are often experiencing PTSD, yet go undiagnosed and without treatment. Thus all the more reason for use to take care of ourselves if we are facing this challenge personally or to be there and support those close to us who are doing so.

Getting Help for Yourself

- As soon as you realize "things aren't right" talk to someone. Reach out to those that are close to you, family, friends.
- Talk to your Medical professional
- Consider seeking talk therapy (WTC has assistance available for this through our EAP (Employee Assistance Program).
- Learn to recognize and acknowledge triggers.
- Learn and practice coping strategies when you encounter triggers or other emotional or behavioral responses to you past trauma.
- Recognize and Acknowledge that you are NOT a victim, but an OVERCOMER!



Help and Support for a Loved One

- Do NOT confront, them but caringly share with them what you are seeing and ask if they are OK.
- Offer to provide any help or support they need, but do NOT push. (Pushing may lead to them shutting you out, or shutting down completely)
- LISTEN - without judgement, acknowledge and validate their feelings.
- Learn to recognize their triggers and offer support in getting through them.
- Help them practice coping strategies when you encounter triggers or other emotional or behavioral responses to you past trauma.
- Remind them that they are NOT a victim, but an OVERCOMER!