

PTSD

Post-Traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, war/combat, rape or an assault. PTSD is one of few disorders that is not inherited, like other mental illnesses, i.e. Bipolar Illness, Borderline Personality Disorder, etc.

Due to our military involvement in the last 25 years, most people in our country are well aware of what it is and its ramifications. PTSD has been known by many names in the past, such as “shell shock” and “combat fatigue“. PTSD can occur in all people of color, ethnicity, nationally, and at any age.

People with PTSD have intense, disturbing thoughts and feelings related to their experience that last long after the traumatic event has ended. They may relive the event through flashbacks or nightmares, they may feel sadness, fear or anger. People with this disorder may avoid situations or people that remind them of a traumatic event, and they may have strong negative reactions to something as ordinary as a loud noise or a touch.

A diagnosis of PTSD requires exposure to an upsetting traumatic event. However, exposure can be direct or indirect. For example, one of my friend’s family members died unexpectedly which causes my friend to believe he or someone he loved would be next to die. It can also occur as a result of repeated exposure to horrible details.

To be specific the symptoms of PTSD are the following;

1. Intrusive thoughts can occur with PTSD. Flashbacks are common as well and can be devastating for mentally ill patients
2. Avoiding reminders of a traumatic event may cause the individual to withdraw and avoid people
3. Negative thoughts and feeling (I am bad, no one can be trusted)
4. Anger, outburst.

For a person to be diagnosed with PTSD, symptoms last more than a month and often persist for months and sometimes for years. It is known that symptoms occur within 3 months of the trauma but symptoms may appear later.

“PTSD“ Ronald G Rossetti, MBA , Article # 21 Volume # 1, Series # 1, International Alliance for Mental Health