**POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

Post-traumatic stress disorder, we all have heard of this term, right? As the name suggests, this is a disorder, where an individual suffers from traumatic memories and flashbacks of an event that was highly disturbing to the person. These events are extremely threatening and horrifying to the person and possess the ability to shake him/her from the inside completely. It's usually difficult for the person to function well in his/her day-to-day life. It not only disturbs the professional but personal life of the person as well. Let us delve deeper into understanding what exactly it means, the underlying factors behind it, its types, and how seeking help from a professional contributes to the growth of an individual.

**WHAT IS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER?**

In simple terms, if we try to understand PTSD, it means a kind of disorder where the individual experiences severe trauma related to some event that occurred to him/her. The event could be extremely threatening to the person's existence and could impact his/her emotional, behavioral, and cognitive health. The impact is so strong that it leaves a lasting impact on the person’s mind and heart. PTSD can happen in two ways: either the person experiences the threatening event directly or he witnesses someone experiencing that event. It can also happen if the person is repeatedly exposed to some kind of behavior, like, a child getting to see his father daily coming home drunk or a wife being exposed to domestic violence. If the trauma continues persistently for a longer period, i.e., more than one month, one should seek professional help.

Several events can contribute to the development of PTSD, let us understand how they impact an individual’s life:-

* **Death of a loved one:** If a person experiences the death of a close family member, it's really hard to imagine the kind of pain they must be going through in their mind. Losing a loved one can have an impact on a person’s mind for a very long time and it can have a severe impact on their personal and professional life. And if the person has directly witnessed that death, like road accidents, seeing a person suffering from a long-term illness, etc can even cause nightmares and flashes of those horrible times.
* **Sexual violence:** It is another major event that can impact a person severely. The event itself is so traumatic that it takes people a long time to overcome it. It not only breaks a person emotionally but also impacts their self-esteem, their belief in themselves, and their relationships. The person goes through feelings of hopelessness and helplessness as well.
* **Physical or emotional abuse:** It has been seen that physical and emotional abuse is really common in relationships. We see, that in schools, teachers use sticks to punish students, parents at times use their hands on their children, and children are also abused emotionally by their caregivers and teachers. Children are made feel incapable, and unworthy and this can harm their self-growth severely. Even when they grow into adults, they take this pain with them. In romantic relationships, also, we can see that either of the partners is abused emotionally, they are gaslighted, disrespected, and not cared for, all of this, when happens continuously, can become a serious trauma for people experiencing it.
* **Military Combats:** All of us are well aware of the fact that military jobs are extremely stressful because they work in demanding conditions and its highly unpredictable. Their job is to protect the borders from enemies which requires a lot of mental and physical strength. But, have we ever given a thought to the fact trauma they experience while serving the country? Many officers lose their arms and legs while serving the country, they are tortured to death by enemies if caught, and most importantly, many people die in the process. Going through such turmoil and seeing your colleagues and friends die can have a profound impact on a person’s life.
* **Wars:** These are highly traumatic experiences for people experiencing them. Recently we saw, that Ukraine and Russia went into a deadly war. Could we ever fathom how severely it would have impacted people’s minds? Possibly No! The trauma that people went through is unimaginable, hunger, sexual violence, constant bombing, being stuck in places, being beaten to death, injured, deaths, disability, all of this would have affected people experiencing them and witnessing them equally. In Times like this when uncertainty is at its peak, people are constantly fearful of what will happen next. People who were saved might have developed trauma for life.
* **Severe Accidents:** It has been seen that severe accidents that people go through in their lives, for example, a cylinder bursting in the house, or maybe being part of a road accident can also cause trauma to the person. It has been seen that people even stop walking on the roads alone and use places where they could get exposed to the memories of their related trauma. It also happens at times, that when people go for some adventurous sports and while engaging in them they lose any of their body parts, it also becomes a cause for trauma to the person experiencing it.
* **Natural disasters:** Natural disasters like droughts, floods, and earthquakes, can cause severe destruction to mankind not only in terms of geography but also imprinting lasting impacts on people,’s minds emotionally as well. An example could be the Kedarnath Flood, it was so devastating for individuals, they lost their houses, and their family members, and it was difficult for them to live in the end through those horrible times. When people experience events like this, they constantly, have flashbacks about those little moments when they were struggling for life. It takes a long time to recover from these terrible memories for a long time.
* **Terrorism:** It can also contribute to the development of post-traumatic stress disorder. Many times, we see in the news that a plane has been hijacked, or school students are made hostages, these kinds of events cause severe impacts on the people experiencing it. Can we ever know what a person must be feeling seeing blood around him or people dying in front of him? The answer is no. Only people who go through certain situations can understand the severity of it. In these times when people are struggling for every breath they take, what will be the impact it is causing on their minds? Children might start being fearful even about the thought of going to school. People should fear traveling in the plane again. It affects us so deeply that it becomes impossible to move on from this trauma.
* **Domestic Violence:** This can break the person to an extent where it becomes very difficult to overcome horrible memories associated with it. We have often seen that women are usually subjected to domestic violence, although men can also experience it, but the frequency is less. It has been observed that sufferers develop triggers and whenever they encounter these triggers their trauma returns. For example, triggers related to sight, sound, and appearance, like noise related to breaking of glass, slamming doors, a particular kind of dressing style, etc. It can cause a person to have sleepless nights, feelings of guilt and shame, nightmares, and difficult relationships.
* **Torture:** As mentioned above as well, torture can have lasting impacts on an individual's life. It can not only leave the person with disturbing memories of the past but also interfere with the present of the person’s life. People here experience nightmares and flashbacks that are so real, it disturbs their entire functioning. People not only experience physical problems related to the torture like injury or disability but are also accompanied by sleepless nights and disturbed interpersonal relationships.
* **Chronic Health Conditions:** Diseases and illnesses of the body can develop as a result of PTSD. Similarly, receiving a medical diagnosis of a sickness or illness—such as cancer, autoimmune illnesses, heart problems, or lung conditions—can be upsetting and cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A 2014 study by Donald Emerson revealed that between 12 and 25 percent of patients with a life-threatening diagnosis went on to get post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

**WHAT HAPPENS IN POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER?**

According to DSM-5, the following symptoms must be met to get a diagnosis of PTSD: -

1. **Intrusion:** It simply means that the person experiences recurring images of the experienced event, he/she can have nightmares, flashbacks, and recurring thoughts about the event. These memories are so real that disturb the life of an individual completely. The person constantly has these thoughts and flashbacks and it becomes impossible for the person to focus on his daily life. He constantly and for a long time has these disturbing thoughts.
2. **Avoidance:** It has been seen that people who have experienced trauma, usually try to avoid those situations which trigger their memories related to the event. For example, a lady who has gone through domestic violence in her home and when she got free from the situation, she would try to avoid going to that house. Or someone who got tortured in school by his teachers and peers would try to avoid going to school. The event disturbs the person to an extent where they can't even face it eye to eye.
3. **Negative Alterations:** Changes in mood and emotions can be seen. For example, negative emotions, shame, guilt, blaming oneself or others for whatever happened, and feelings of detachment are also experienced. It has been seen that in people who experience some kind of traumatic event in their lives, their emotional and cognitive health gets impacted a lot. For example: people have temper outbursts, they become aggressive to their surroundings, and they feel hopeless about the future. Along with this, they can also experience difficulty in sleeping, concentration, etc.
4. **Arousal and Reactivity:** This means that the person is very vigilant concerning his/her surroundings. Is usually irritable and aggressive toward people. The aggression could be seen in verbal as well as non-verbal behavior. The person can also be seen throwing tantrums and can engage in reckless behavior, like not listening to their parents, indulging in self-harm behavior, using substances to cope with their anxiety, etc.

In this disorder, people experience a range of symptoms which are as follows: -

**A person experiences a range of behavioral symptoms which are as follows:-**

* **Avoiding people, places, activities, conversations, objects, and situations that trigger memories:** It has been seen that a person constantly tries to avoid all the situations, which remind him/her of the traumatic event. The experience was so threatening to their being that they feared experiencing it again.
* **Lack of interest in pleasurable activities:** people who go through these kinds of traumatic events often lose interest in all the activities they used to love, be it traveling, or personal interests, like painting, singing, dancing, etc. because they are not able to derive happiness from any of this anymore.
* **Irritability&Anger:** It has also been seen that people become extremely irritable of their surroundings and of the people who are taking care of them. They get extremely angry if told something to change about their behavior.
* **Self-destructive behavior:** Most people are so disturbed that they engage in self-destructive behavior like drinking, drug abuse, not eating properly, and not taking care of their personal as well as professional lives.
* **Inability to concentrate:** they also have difficulty concentrating on some tasks they are provided with, even if the task is very minor, like cleaning, cooking, or even reading, because their mind is constantly filled with the aspects of the event they went through.
* **Difficulty Sleeping or staying asleep:** PTSD symptoms include both insomnia and nightmares. Nightmares frequently recreate the horrific experience, and bed partners may also be impacted if the nightmares result in shouting and kicking. Resuming sleep can also be a challenge when experiencing nightmares. Having difficulty sleeping or staying asleep is known as insomnia. This sleep deprivation lasts for several months or more and is severe enough to create issues both at home and at work.
* **Startling from little things:** When surprised, people with PTSD frequently respond exaggeratedly, especially if the intrusion—a sound, scent, noise, or sight—reminds them of the original trauma. This may, to put it mildly, cause you to become very tense.
* **Increased vigilance for the environment:** Hypervigilance is an elevated level of awareness combined with actions intended to avert danger. Dilated pupils, fast respiration, and a continual impulse to survey the environment are among the symptoms.

**A person experiences a range of cognitive symptoms which are as follows:-**

* **Recurrent traumatic memories:** Reliving the event in a stressful and intrusive way is one of the core symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. After a stressful occurrence, intrusive recollections are common within the first few weeks. With time, most trauma survivors report fewer and less upsetting intrusions. Significant variables appear to include the memory processes that facilitate the triggering of intrusive memories, how individuals interpret their traumatic experiences, and the cognitive and behavioral responses they have to those experiences.
* **Distressing dreams:** PTSD sufferers frequently have nightmares or anxiety-inducing dreams that either replay the traumatic incident or highlight significant dangers and themes connected to it. Depending on the trauma encountered, these dreams can have different qualities. On the other hand, feelings of insecurity, anxiety, abrupt awakening, and an elevated heart rate are commonly experienced. Although they can happen at any stage of sleep, PTSD dreams typically happen towards the end of the night.PTSD nightmares can have a detrimental impact on a patient's health and functioning, occasionally resulting in suicidal thoughts, insomnia, and malfunction throughout the day.
* **Flashbacks:** A flashback is a vivid experience when you either feel as though you are reliving parts of a tragic event or you are experiencing it all over again. Sometimes, this can be similar to viewing a film of what transpired, however, flashbacks don't always entail seeing visuals or reliving the entire experience. One may encounter any of the following: seeing complete or partially preserved images of the events detecting sounds, tastes, or odours associated with the trauma experiencing pressure or other physical sensations feeling feelings that you had at the time of the trauma.
* **Lack of Memory:** Memory abnormalities, particularly memory loss, are not unusual among PTSD sufferers. Indeed, one of the memory kinds that appears to be most impacted in those who have the illness is working memory, which is the kind of memory that enables us to store and retrieve short-term information.
* **Negative belief patterns about oneself and others:** It’s been seen that in people who go through these experiences, their beliefs about the self and the world get distorted because of the terrible experiences. For example, shaken ideas about oneself and the world like, “I am not worthy”,“ the world is not a nice place to live in” etc. They feel that they are not good enough to do anything now and that they can't achieve anything. They see the world as a frightening place as well.
* **Living in a state of constant horror:** People who go through these kinds of experiences in their lives which disrupt their identity and their belief, often live in a constant sense of fear and horror about what if they experience the event again. What if the perpetrator behind their suffering returns? This constant sense of fear interferes with their daily functioning.
* **Feelings of detachment:** Dissociation, or the loss of connection between one's thoughts, memories, and sense of self, is a common reaction to traumatic events that occurred during or shortly after. it involves feeling a sense of disconnection from the people, places, or things around one.
* **Inability to experience positive emotions:** Decreased positive affect, or the frequency and intensity of positive feelings and affective states including happiness, joy, love, interest, and the desire or ability for interpersonal connection, is one sign of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

**WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER?**

Post-traumatic stress Disorder can be differentiated into the following types: -

1. **ACUTE STRESS DISORDER:** This disorder can develop after a traumatic event and usually lasts between 3 days and 1 month after the event is experienced. For example: a car accident. In general, survivors report rates of ASD ranging from 6% to 33% within a month following a trauma. Rates vary depending on the kind of trauma. For instance, survivors of accidents or natural disasters, like typhoons, have reduced incidence of ASD. The higher end of the spectrum is where survivors of violent crimes, such as robberies, assaults, and mass shootings, show rates. Furthermore, PTSD can still occur in people without ASD in the future. Research suggests that a tiny percentage (4% to 13%) of trauma survivors who do not experience ASD within the first month of the trauma will experience PTSD in the following months or years.
2. **DISSOCIATIVE PTSD:** There are notable dissociative symptoms in certain patients with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is frequently the case with patients who have undergone severe childhood neglect along with other forms of persistent traumatization, such as physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. It has been recently added to DSM 5. This type is marked with dissociative features like depersonalization (seeing oneself outside of the body) and derealization (feelings of unreal surroundings). Individuals who belong to the dissociative subtype frequently have greater rates of suicidality, more trauma exposure, and an earlier history of PTSD.
3. **UNCOMPLICATED PTSD:** This form of PTSD is similar to other forms, except that it isn’t accompanied by other mental health disorders like depression or Dissociative Disorders. Simple PTSD is associated with a single traumatic event rather than a series of traumatic events. It's also among the most often diagnosed forms. It can indicate that people try to stay away from situations and individuals that bring up the trauma, that they experience nightmares, flashbacks, or mood swings, or that they are easily upset. The normal treatment for this kind of PTSD is either counseling, medication, or both. The fact that this mental health disease is less likely to co-occur with other mental health conditions like depression, for example, if it is treated quickly, is its most significant feature.
4. **COMPLEX PTSD:** It is a form of PTSD, where an event occurs multiple times again and again over some time such as childhood trauma or domestic violence. It involves reactions to stress, like
* Fear and anxiety.
* experiencing dreams or flashbacks.
* avoiding locations, circumstances, and other items associated with the painful incident.
* heightened emotional reactions, including hostility or impulsivity.
* persistent problems keeping relationships going.

**Chronic trauma examples include**

* long-term sexual or physical abuse of children.
* prolonged abuse at home.
* being the victim of trafficking in persons or sex.
* Conflict.
* frequent acts of violence in the community.

Although childhood chronic trauma is frequently linked to CPTSD, chronic trauma in adults can also result in the disorder's development.

1. **CO-MORBID PTSD:** Individuals with PTSD, not only suffer from the symptoms of PTSD but also with the symptoms of some other mental disorders like, panic attacks, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and substance use disorder. Since they are present in about 78.5% of cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), comorbidities are common and to be expected. Getting a correct diagnosis is crucial because many of the symptoms of PTSD are shared by other mental health conditions.
* **Anxiety and PTSD:** PTSD, which was formerly classified as an anxiety condition, frequently co-occurs with generalized anxiety disorder. It may trigger further conditions including obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, or social anxiety disorder. The experience may also cause a person to acquire phobias and overlapping anxiety symptoms. For instance, individuals can become afraid of driving or accidents if they experience a serious automobile accident. As a result, they might avoid driving or riding in cars.
* **Depression and PTSD:** Up to 48% of people with PTSD go on to have severe depression. Similar to anxiety, depression is a prevalent mental health issue that impacts millions of people. The symptoms of PTSD probably overlap with those of clinical depression. Depression and PTSD are frequently associated, particularly among groups affected by trauma. The issue is that when combined, they worsen impairment, increase anguish, and increase the likelihood of suicide in people.
* **Alcohol Use Disorder and PTSD:** People might turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism if they are having nightmares, flashbacks, or other unfavorable thoughts related to their traumatic experience. Although this may provide some short-term respite, it will worsen pre-existing mental health conditions and lead to more serious problems. Unfortunately, alcohol consumption is widespread among trauma survivors and frequently results in problematic drinking. It can be difficult to treat AUD and PTSD together, and your doctor might suggest that you give up alcohol before starting therapy for PTSD.

**CAUSES OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

As we know it is caused because of the result of some trauma. So, a person has to have experienced a traumatic event or witnessed a traumatic event in their life to develop PTSD. However, if we look from a different viewpoint, there are many army veterans, men, women, children, and old adults, who even after going through a difficult situation not necessarily experience this disorder. Thus, we can conclude that there are also several other factors which play contribute to the development of PTSD. Let us look at those factors below: -

Following are the various causal factors that cause PTSD: -

* A person’s job is very significant. A military official has a comparatively higher chance of experiencing trauma than a music composer
* Family history of a mental disorder like substance abuse, depression, and anxiety-related problems,
* Low level of education,
* Certain personality traits like neuroticism,
* Being a female possesses a higher risk factor for PTSD,
* Having a mental health disorder in childhood like conduct disorder anxiety issues or depression.
* Low levels of social support,
* Pessimistic view of their life,
* Low self-esteem
* Being a member of a minority group,
* Returning to a negative and unsupportive social environment.

**HOW TO DEAL WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

Thinking about what a person might be going through after such horrible experiences, is unimaginable. However, there are ways to deal with this difficult situation like to keep oneself busy and engaged in daily activities. Talking about our experiences and sharing emotions with loved ones can also be good for enhancing mental health and moving forward. Also, it is essential not to let that situation overpower you, there will be times of sadness and guilt, but always remember that if you believe you can achieve it.

Some people overcome this situation with the help of their friends and family. However, there are some people, who fail to do so. What do we don’t then?

The answer is, seeking therapy!

A mental health professional will not only be an empathetic ear to your experience but also will help you develop effective coping strategies for your situation. They will also help you in getting back to your life and help you identify your emotions and strengths which can help you in moving forward.

Mental health professionals use a group of techniques to help their clients, some of which are mentioned below: -

**COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING:** Therapists help clients reduce symptoms and improve their functioning by using a range of treatments. To identify unhelpful patterns (often referred to as "distortions") in thoughts, such as overgeneralizing bad outcomes, negative thinking that diminishes positive thinking, and always expecting catastrophic outcomes, therapists using cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) may encourage patients to reevaluate their thinking patterns and assumptions to replace them with more balanced and effective thinking patterns. These are meant to assist the individual in rethinking how they perceive themselves, their capacity for coping, and their understanding of traumatic events.

It is a technique in which your therapist will help you identify all your negative ways of thinking. it will help you understand all those self-defeating statements that you tell yourself, constructively change them, and give you a new perspective on life.

As a self-management technique for handling unpleasant emotions, cognitive restructuring involves identifying the precise thoughts causing the distress and evaluating information objectively to support those beliefs. Patients are taught how to change false beliefs that are not supported by the evidence (like "I am responsible for my sexual abuse") and how to create action plans to deal with circumstances where it is decided that troubling beliefs are true (like "My new boyfriend is becoming abusive and I am at risk of getting hurt"). After learning cognitive restructuring as a coping mechanism for any unpleasant emotion, people move on to treating trauma-related ideas and preconceptions that are the root cause of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

**EXPOSURE TREATMENT:** For PTSD, exposure therapy is regarded as a behavioral treatment. This is so because exposure treatment focuses on acquired behaviors—most commonly avoidance—that people exhibit in reaction to events, ideas, or memories that they perceive as frightful or anxiety-inducing. For instance, a victim of rape can start to shy away from dating or relationships out of concern that she might be victimized once more.

It is critical to understand that there is a purpose for this taught avoidance. In an attempt to keep the traumatic experience from happening again, a person who has experienced a traumatic incident may start acting in ways that involve avoiding dangerous circumstances.

Avoidance is a defensive or safety-seeking reaction. However, a person's quality of life may decline as this avoidance behavior intensifies.

He/she can become estranged from his family, struggle in his career, or have relationship problems.

Furthermore, avoidance can extend or even worsen the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. This is because when someone avoids particular thoughts, feelings, or events, he misses out on the chance to discover that these circumstances might not be as dangerous as they first appear to be. Additionally, a person prevents himself from properly processing those experiences by denying thoughts, memories, and feelings.

Thus, the ultimate purpose of exposure therapy is to help the patient feel less afraid and anxious, to end avoidance behavior, and to improve quality of life. This is accomplished by actively facing one's concerns. Anxiety and terror can be taught to go away on their own by facing one's fears and negative thoughts and feelings.

**METHODS OF EXPOSURE THERAPY**

* **IN VIVO EXPOSURE:** The term "in vivo exposure" describes a person confronting fearful items, actions, or circumstances directly while being guided by a therapist. For example, if a woman with PTSD is afraid of the place where she was abused, her therapist could help her go there and face her anxieties head-on (as long as it's safe to do so).
* **IMAGINAL EXPOSURE:** A client is instructed to visualize frightening scenarios or visuals during imaginal exposure. An individual can confront fearful memories and thoughts head-on with the aid of imaginary exposure. It wouldn't be safe, for instance, to put a combat veteran suffering from PTSD in confrontation with a combat scenario once more. As a result, he might be asked to recall a terrifying battle scenario from his past.

In this therapy, your therapist will help you face all those disturbing memories in a safe space so that you can build resilience and develop coping mechanisms. It can be really helpful for nightmares and flashbacks as well.

**GROUP THERAPY:** The goal of this type of therapy is to encourage people who have similar experiences to share their stories and their experiences with other people. So, it can motivate and help other people who have experienced similar situations.

Survivors of trauma are frequently offered trauma group therapy, which is seen as an effective type of psychotherapy. A new study from 2017 indicates that group therapy may be superior to individual therapy in some ways, as it helps participants receive social support and "normalize" the symptoms of trauma.

People who have encountered a variety of circumstances have benefited from group therapy. The following stressors are successfully treated by groups, according to some empirical evidence:

* Sexual assault of children
* Conflict and warfare
* being forcibly removed from one's residence
* Sexual assault

The following stress-induced symptoms have also been linked to group therapies:

* hyperarousal,
* re-experiencing,
* avoidance/numbing,
* depression,
* self-esteem,
* anger,
* anxiety,
* guilt,
* lack of assertiveness,
* deficiencies in social functioning,
* substance use, and
* grief

To restore a sense of deeply understood empathy, strengthen feelings of alienation and isolation, and foster a safe and protective "healing space" it is crucial to connect with others who have experienced trauma. This is something that is emphasized by all group approaches. There are several advantages to group therapy for mental health, including:

* enhancing a circle of support and encouragement
* lessening isolation and improving social and emotional ties
* Developing coping mechanisms
* a secure environment for emotional expression
* Increasing consciousness of oneself
* Enhanced mental adaptability
* exposure to a variety of viewpoints
* Gaining understanding and empathy
* Possibility of improving communication abilities

Apart from therapy, a person can also try to do things on a personal level, which can help him/her to overcome their trauma:-

**Challenging your sense of helplessness**

Resolving your sense of powerlessness is essential to getting over PTSD. It's critical to remind yourself that you have coping mechanisms and strengths that can help you get through difficult situations, as trauma can leave you feeling vulnerable and helpless. assisting others is one of the finest ways to regain your sense of power. You can do this by giving blood, volunteering your time, assisting a friend in need, or making a donation to your preferred charity. Taking proactive measures immediately combats the feeling of powerlessness which is a prevalent PTSD symptom.

**Exercising**

Exercises with a rhythm that uses both your arms and legs, like dancing, swimming, walking, or running, can be beneficial. But pay attention to how your body feels, not what's going through your head. Take note of your breathing patterns, the sensation of the wind on your skin, or the sound of your feet striking the ground.

**Spending time in nature**

Engaging in outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, rock climbing, mountain biking, whitewater rafting, and skiing can assist veterans in managing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and readjusting to civilian life. But spending time outside has advantages that extend beyond veterans. The calm, solitude, and relaxation that come with spending time in nature are beneficial for anyone suffering from PTSD.

**Reaching out to others**

You may feel socially isolated if you have PTSD. You could feel inclined to distance yourself from your loved ones and social interactions. However, it's critical to maintain ties to your loved ones and life. The best method to relax your nervous system is to engage in social engagement with someone you can trust, so make sure that person is someone you feel comfortable being around. Although it's not required of you to discuss the trauma, having the company and supportive care of others is essential to your healing. Make an effort to connect with someone you can spend quality time with without interruption; someone who will listen to you when you need to vent without passing judgment or becoming sidetracked.

**Adopting a healthy lifestyle**

Because the physical effects of PTSD symptoms can be severe, it's critical to look after your health and adopt a healthy lifestyle.

* **Give yourself some time to unwind.** Deep breathing, yoga, massage, and meditation are examples of relaxation treatments that help trigger the body's relaxation response and lessen PTSD symptoms.
* **Steer clear of drugs and alcohol.** One may find it tempting to use drugs or alcohol as a form of self-medication when they are dealing with challenging emotions and painful memories. However, several PTSD symptoms, such as emotional numbness, social isolation, hostility, and depression, are made worse by substance abuse. It may also worsen relationship issues and cause interference with treatment.
* **Consume a balanced diet.** Breakfast is the best way to start the day, and you should eat balanced, nutrient-dense meals throughout the day to maintain your energy and mental clarity. Consume foods high in omega-3s, such as walnuts, flaxseed, and fatty fish, as they are essential for mental well-being. Reducing your intake of processed foods, fried foods, refined carbs, and sugars might make mood swings and energy swings worse.
* **Make time to sleep.** Anger, irritation, and moodiness can be brought on by sleep deprivation. Try to get between seven and nine hours of sleep every night. Create a calming nighttime routine by reading a light book, listening to music that promotes relaxation, or making your bedroom as quiet, dark, and peaceful as you can.

In conclusion, there is nothing that can compare to the trauma a person faces in their lifetime. It can impact us in ways that cannot be comprehended easily. If given, a choice all of us would want to go back in time and change it but that is out of our hands. We can sit with our emotions, understand them, learn from them, and move forward. Life never stops for anyone and therefore, we, as individuals should also try moving forward and living it to the best of our abilities. The focus should always be to be kind to yourself during difficult times and have faith and positivity.