

Mental Health

What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health disorder that is triggered after a person is exposed to a traumatic event including sexual assault, warfare, crimes, natural disasters, death of a loved one, threats on a person's life, or witnessing threats to another person's life. People living with PTSD experience a heightened sense of danger causing them to feel stressed, worried something bad will happen again, feel loss of control over their lives, and may be scared from sounds, smells, or people that remind them of their trauma. This experience can disrupt your whole life including your job or business, your relationships, your health, and your enjoyment of everyday activities. It is something that is happening to you because you endured a traumatic event. There is nothing wrong with you.

Symptoms



Symptoms of PTSD include: (1) avoidance, refusing to discuss the traumatic event; (2) intrusive memories, including nightmares and flashbacks; (3) negative changes in thinking and mood, feelings of guilt, blame, and hopelessness; and (4) changes in physical and emotional reactions, such as sleep disturbances and irritability.

Coping Skills

Coping skills are strategies that help people deal with mental health challenges in order to achieve positive mental health and well-being including:



- (1) Catching negative thoughts and replacing them with positive ones;
- (2) Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries between you and others;
- (3) Destressing and soothing activities like praying, eating healthy foods, sleeping, creating moments of joy in each day, mindfulness meditation, or keeping a gratitude journal;
- (4) Grounding techniques, connecting us to the present and reminding us that we are safe and the trauma is over, such as the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 method: five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste;
- (5) Aromatherapy using essential oils;
- (6) Taking deep breaths and feeling as if you are releasing all of your thoughts and tensions, allowing your mind to clear;
- (7) Physical activity such as walking, yoga, and exercise; and
- (8) Laughing.

Treatment



You may want to consider common mental health treatment options offered by a licensed counselor including but not limited to eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT).

Post-Traumatic Growth



Post-traumatic growth is considered positive psychological changes that develop following the experience of trauma. When we lose things, sometimes it helps us appreciate life around us. We may find afterwards that we feel more closely connected with those who we love and value our time with them more. We may connect to an understanding of a higher power (Allāh, The Exalted) in a more meaningful way after trauma.