Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) occurs when someone who has been through a traumatic event experiences intense reactions that linger for months or even years. Situations that could lead to PTSD include:

- Transportation or other accidents
- Natural disasters
- Terrorist incidents
- Military combat
- Violent threats, assault, coercion, or abuse
- Medical or caregiving-related trauma
- Unresolved childhood trauma

A person who develops PTSD after one or more of these events may experience:

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Nightmares
- Intrusive thoughts
- Feelings of disconnection or isolation
- Vivid memories or flashbacks that make the person feel as if they are reliving the event
- Worry, fear, anxiety, or suspicion
- Strong reactions when reminded of the trauma (or sometimes for no obvious reason at all)

A PTSD episode may be triggered by sensory input, such as a loud noise, a location, or being in a similar situation. For instance, a person who has been in a car accident may experience symptoms of PTSD while driving on the freeway. As a consequence, they may choose to only use surface roads, even when doing so is impractical.

Not everyone who experiences a traumatic event will develop PTSD afterward. Risk factors that may make a person more susceptible to the condition include:

- Lack of family or social support resources
- History of childhood trauma or repeated exposure to traumatic circumstances
- A mental health condition or family history of mental health issues
- Difficulties with managing stress, coping with anxiety, or maintaining resilience

If you are experiencing symptoms of PTSD, talk to your doctor or contact LifeMatters. Through LifeMatters, you can also access Togetherall, which provides online support groups for a variety of situations and circumstances.

1-800-367-7474

Assistance with Life, Work, Family, and Wellbeing

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