

Treatment

Treatment for PTSD usually begins with a detailed evaluation, and a treatment plan is then tailored to your individual needs. It is never too late to ask for help PTSD is still treatable years after the traumatic event.

At K&R Counselling you will be seen by professionals who will always treat you with sensitivity and understanding, and will explain your treatment plan to you clearly. For treatment to be effective, it is important that you and your family understand that PTSD is a medically recognised anxiety disorder that happens to some people after an extremely traumatic experience.

- Problems with concentration,
- Problems with sleeping,
- Irritability or outbursts of anger,
- Hyper-vigilance and alertness to possible danger,
- Increased startle reaction re-experiencing the traumatic event,
- Feelings of guilt,
- Long term behavioural effects,
- Alcohol abuse,
- Drug dependency,
- Failed relationships/divorce,
- Severe depression, anxiety disorders or phobias,
- Chronic illness headaches, stomach upsets, dizziness, chest pain and general aches and pains, together with a weakened immune system, and
- Employment problems.

PTSD often involves periods of symptom remission followed by an increase of symptoms.

However some people will experience severe and unremitting symptoms.

K&R Counselling



***‘Professional service,
Personal care’***

***Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
(PTSD)***

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K&R Counselling
FREE Consultation

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Introduction

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychological and physical condition that can be caused by extremely frightening or distressing events.

PTSD can occur after experiencing or witnessing traumatic events such as military combat, natural disasters, serious accidents, terrorist attacks, violent deaths, personal assaults including rape, and other situations in which the person felt extreme fear, horror or helplessness.

Many people develop PTSD because someone close to them died suddenly. Around 30% of people exposed to such a stressful event will develop PTSD.

PTSD can affect anyone. It is common, and affects around 5% of men and 10% of women some time in their life. It can happen at any age, including in childhood. An individual with PTSD often relives the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, has problems with concentrating and sleeping, with feelings of isolation and detachment from life. These symptoms can be lasting and severe enough to significantly impair the person's daily life.

Symptoms usually develop immediately or within three months of a traumatic event, although occasionally they do not begin until years later.

PTSD has been called shell shock or battle fatigue syndrome, because it first came to prominence in the First World War with soldiers memories of the trenches. It has only recently been recognised that

traumatic events outside the war situation can have similar effects.

The term post-traumatic stress disorder was first used after the Vietnam War and formalised in 1980 with its inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders developed by the American Psychiatric Association.

Causes

It is not yet completely understood why certain people develop PTSD after a traumatic experience, and others do not. However, there are some risk factors which seem to make PTSD more likely to happen to some people. For example, if you have already had depression or anxiety, or you have not had a lot of support from family or friends, you are more susceptible to the condition.

There may also be a genetic factor involved, so some people will be more likely to develop PTSD. The hippocampus (part of the brain that is important to memory and emotions) appears different in MRI scans in those with PTSD. Researchers believe that changes to the hippocampus are related to memory problems and flashbacks.

Studies have also shown that in people with PTSD, there are abnormal levels of hormones involved in their response to stress. People in danger normally produce natural opiates. These chemicals trigger a reaction in the body when put under extreme stress or into a fight or flight situation. They deaden the senses and dull the pain. It has been found that people with PTSD continue to produce high levels when there is no danger. This may cause them to have feelings of detachment and blunted emotions.

Symptoms

Most people who are exposed to a traumatic event, experience some of the symptoms of PTSD. However in most cases the symptoms disappear in the days and the weeks following exposure.

Symptoms of PTSD can include:

- Flashbacks, nightmares, or frightening thoughts, especially when exposed to anything reminiscent of the traumatic event,
- Sweating and shaking,
- Avoidance of reminders of the event and a refusal to discuss the experience,
- Numbness and feelings of estrangement or detachment from others,
- Inability to remember aspects of the traumatic event,
- decreased interest in life,
- Increased consciousness of ones own mortality,
- Flight/fight syndrome,