

## DO YOU KNOW A VICTIM OR WITNESS OF...



**POST TRAUMA SYNDROME** is a normal, expected response to overwhelming danger or sudden loss of control or security.

Although not every trauma leads to Post Trauma Syndrome, many survivors and witnesses of highly traumatic events find their lives affected even years after the incident has passed. Direct and indirect victims may have memories they can't "just forget," feelings of anger or frustration, and fears of danger and losing control. Some survivors even find their changed feelings, behaviors and life style affecting their family, friends, and others.

### VIOLENCE

- Assault
- Sexual
- Threat

### ACCIDENT

- Crash
- Fall
- Burn

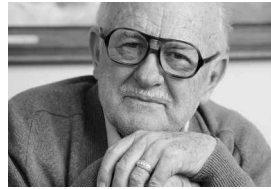
### SUDDEN LOSS

- Security
- Abilities
- Self-Image

### DEATH

- Vulnerable
- Loved ones
- Confronted

## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE TROUBLED BY...



While these feelings and behaviors can come from other sources, people who have experienced or witnessed traumatic events often have many of these reactions. Some victims may not even connect current problems with a trauma that has long passed. In addition, survivors often find that sights, sounds, smells, places, times, feelings, or dreams can trigger:

- intensive, vivid memories
- sudden, strong feelings
- new physical reactions
- fear of trauma repeating

### ANGER

- Guilt
- Arguing
- Distrust
- Impulsive

### ANXIETY

- Startle
- Vigilant
- New Fears
- Nightmares

### DEPRESSION

- Confusion
- Poor Sleep
- Fears/Doubts
- Mind Wanders

### WITHDRAWAL

- Bad Self-Image
- "Numb" Inside
- More Isolated

## LONG TERM EFFECTS

**POST TRAUMA SYNDROME** often affects other parts of a survivor's life. With time, pre-trauma difficulties can worsen and new problems be created.

### RELATIONSHIPS

Anger, withdrawal, poor self-image and new fears can increase the mutual discomfort, isolation, and the chance of separation or divorce.

### EMPLOYMENT

Anger, poor concentration and distrust can hurt performance, teamwork, job satisfaction and overall career progress.

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Some victims use alcohol or drugs to self-medicate problems with sleep, anger, isolation or new fears.

### HEALTH

The chronic stress of Post Trauma Syndrome can aggravate pre-trauma problem areas or create new physical impacts.

### LEGAL

Substance abuse, depression, anger and frustration increase self-destructive or irresponsible behaviors.

## TREATMENT

Not always helped by generic therapies, POST TRAUMA SYNDROME and its effects usually fade under the care of a specialist. Treatment can be brief, depending on the :

- nature of the trauma
- time since the trauma
- victim's prior strength
- support system involvement

### INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

Are for information, goal setting, exploring the trauma, your feelings and teaching new skills.

### FAMILY SESSIONS

Provide information, clarify expectations, improve mutual support and communicate feelings and needs.

### GROUP SESSIONS

Reduce isolation, provide mutual support, validation, valuable feedback and the opportunity to practice new skills.

### REFERRALS

Are available for medication, alcohol/drug abuse programs, career counseling and other needs.

*Adapted from original by  
H. Berman, PhD Psychologist*

## FROM VICTIM TO SURVIVOR

*I have been victimized.  
I was in a fight that was unfair.  
I did not ask for it.  
There is no shame in losing  
such fights,  
only in winning them.  
I have reached the status of survivor  
and need not be a victim.  
I look back with sadness, not hate.  
I look ahead with hope, not despair.  
I may never forget,  
but I need not constantly dwell.  
I was a victim.  
I am survivor!*  
—Adapted from F. Ochberg M.D.

## RESOURCES

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy:

- helps crime victims obtain needed services and resources;
- administers programs for advocacy, treatment and prevention services;
- assists communities in planning and implementing services for crime victims; and
- advises local and state governments of practices, policies and priorities which impact crime victims.

OCVA is administered by the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.



Office of Crime Victims Advocacy

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## POST~TRAUMA SYNDROME



## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

