



## Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

### What is a “Traumatic Event”?

Traumatic events are stressful events where there is a threat of serious injury or death and a person’s response involves fear, helplessness, or horror. Individuals affected can include friends and relatives of victims and survivors, rescue and response workers and those who witnessed the events through television and newspapers.

### How people respond to exposure to traumatic events?

- Most people exposed to a traumatic event can show signs of stress in the immediate and short-term aftermath of the event. These reactions are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.
- Response to trauma may vary from person to person, but they usually disappear in a few weeks.
- Some people, however, continue to experience stress for an extended period of time, or their symptoms worsen. These people may suffer from PTSD and they should consider seeking professional help to support their coping and recovery.
- People suffering from PTSD are often unaware of their need for assistance and may not seek help.

### What is PTSD?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an intense physical and emotional response to the thoughts and reminders of the event lasting for weeks or months after an exposure to the event. There are three main types of responses commonly experienced by those suffering from PTSD:

- **Re-living:** Such as flashbacks and nightmares. Emotional reactions may include, feelings of guilt, extreme fear of harm and numbing of emotions. Physical reaction may include shaking, chills, headaches and palpitation.
- **Avoiding:** Keeping away from places and activities related to the trauma or feeling detached from others.
- **Increased arousal:** Signs may include being overtly alert or easily startled, sleeping difficulties, irritability and angry outbursts.

Other symptoms may include, panic attacks, depression, drug and alcohol use, feeling isolated and thoughts of suicide.

### Finding help

Should you or your loved one need help to cope with a stressful event or should the symptoms of stress after an exposure to a traumatic event worsen or persist for longer than a month, you should consider seeking professional help. To find help contact LifeNet a 24 hour, 7-days-a-week crisis hotline. LifeNet staff are mental health professionals who speak a variety of languages: English 1-800-LifeNet 1-800-543-3638; Spanish 1-877-AYUDESE (1-877-298-3373); Asian 1-877-990-8585, Deaf/Hearing Impaired (TTY): 1-212-982-5284. You can also visit their Website at [www.mhaofnyc.org](http://www.mhaofnyc.org)