

What is Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

- PTSD is a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who live through or see traumatic events that occurred **over a month ago**
- Traumatic events can involve serious injury or death or threat thereof
- Examples of traumatic events include:
 - Natural disasters
 - War/ combat
 - A serious accident
 - A terrorist act
 - Threat of death, sexual violence, or serious injury
- **PTSD is common in immigrant and refugee populations**
- People with PTSD can also have anxiety, depression, substance abuse and thoughts of suicide
- Not everyone who experiences or sees a traumatic event will have PTSD
- It can occur at any age

What are symptoms of PTSD?

- Intense, disturbing thoughts and feelings
- Upsetting memories, nightmares or flashbacks
- Feeling “numb”
- Avoiding certain people or places that are a reminder of trauma
- Feelings of worry, sadness, fear, and/or anger

Of note, symptoms can come and go. They can occur when people are under stress or are reminded of trauma.

How can your provider tell if you have PTSD?

- Your provider will evaluate your symptoms by asking questions and doing an exam

How do you manage PTSD?

- PTSD symptoms may go away over time without treatment
- Support from family, friends, community, and religion can improve symptoms

When should you get treatment from your provider?

- If your symptoms cause distress and difficulty in your everyday life

What are some treatment options?

- **Talk Therapy (Psychotherapy):**
 - Cognitive behavior therapies (CBT) can be very effective
 - Talk to your provider about your options and where to find a trained therapist
- **Medications:** You and your provider can decide which medication is best for you. This can depend on your specific symptoms and side effects of the medication
 - It can take a few weeks to feel a change

When should I be concerned and seek care as soon as possible?

- If you start having thoughts and feelings of hurting yourself or others
- If you feel life isn't worth living

Who should I seek care from?

- Call your provider and/or therapist
- Call Washington County Mental Health crisis number (503-291-9111)
- Call Multnomah County Mental Health crisis number (503-988-4888)

What are other resources in the area that help with counseling immigrant and refugee populations?

- Intercultural Psychiatric Program at Oregon Health and Science University
- Lutheran Community Services NW
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Washington County
 - Not specific to immigrants or refugees but a good source



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

General Information and Management



This pamphlet was created by Physician Assistant Students at Pacific University with information from UpToDate 2022, American Psychiatric Association, and Oregon Health Authority.

Photo references:

- PTSD brain: forbes.com
- Coping strategies: verywellmind.com

