



HELPING YOU TREAT TRAUMA

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can occur after someone experiences a distressing/traumatic event that caused extreme fear, helplessness or horror.

POSSIBLE CAUSES of TRAUMA:

PTSD can result from any experienced traumas such as:

- Rape
- Natural Disasters
- Domestic Violence
- Robberies
- Hijackings
- Unemployment
- Death of a Loved One
- Diagnosis of a terminal illness like cancer.

PTSD SYMPTOMS:

People react in different ways to extreme trauma. Many people who experience trauma (an extremely upsetting experience) do not develop PTSD. For those who do have PTSD, it can appear in a few weeks or several years later.

Although symptoms for PTSD can be different for different people a lot, they generally fall into three categories.

1. RE-LIVING THE EVENT:

- through nightmares (bad dreams)
- often suddenly remembering the event out of nowhere
- upsetting and frightening thoughts and memories of the trauma

2. STAYING AWAY FROM THE REMINDERS:

- People with PTSD stay away from people, places and things that remind them of the traumatic event.
- They often do not talk about their pain and suffering - this can lead to loneliness and separation from family and friends.

3. BEING ALERT:

PTSD can cause people to act as if they are always threatened or in danger by the trauma that caused their illness and unable to help themselves.

- People with PTSD are often nervous and jumpy
- People with PTSD often suddenly feel angry and irritated
- People with PTSD have trouble sleeping and paying attention

IF LEFT UNTREATED PTSD CAN:

- lead to other problems such as Depression (feeling down and sad), or feeling anxious or extremely worried and scared. Known as Anxiety or Panic disorder.
- lead to other behavior such as wanting to hurt oneself (commit suicide), wanting to use alcohol and drugs and behaving sexually in a way that may lead them to fall pregnant or become HIV and AIDS positive.
- It can lead to physical problems such as tiredness, stomach pains, diarrhea, eating disorders, breathing problems or asthma, muscle cramps, back aches, sleeping problems and heart problems.
- It can lead to problems at home, at work and with friends.

PTSD PREVENTION and TREATMENT:

- Trauma Counselling is a good way to talk through the experience and work through painful and upsetting feelings.
- Support Groups allow you to share your experience with others who have gone through similar circumstances which can help you bond with others.
- Speaking to family and friends so they can also help you get better by offering their support.
- Call SADAG on 0800 20 50 26
- Make an appointment with a psychologist, social worker or counsellor.
- Get medical help if needed and counseling from your clinic, hospital or church.

HELPLINE NUMBERS:

- SADAG Helpline: **0800 20 50 26** (open from 8am to 8pm from Monday to Sunday).
- Alex Counselling Centre: **011 786 6608** (Trauma Counselling)
- RAU (UJ) Trauma Clinic: **011 559 3106**
- WITS Trauma Clinic: **011 403 5102**
- Trauma Clinic and Centre for the study of violence : **011 403 5102**
- Witwatersrand Mental Health (Trauma debriefing): **011 614 9890**
- **There are Trauma Counselors at certain police stations.**