



***POST TRAUMATIC, STRESS
INFORMATION BOOKLET
-ROMANIA-***



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Information booklet - Romania

1. What is post traumatic stress disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental health disorder that can occur after a person has experienced or witnessed a traumatic event, such as personal violence, a serious accident, a natural disaster, war or an act of terrorism . This type of experience can cause severe symptoms that interfere with a person's ability to function normally.

It is important to note that although many people experience symptoms of traumatic stress after a serious event, not everyone develops PTSD.

The diagnosis of PTSD is usually made by a mental health professional and is based on the presence of a specific set of symptoms that continue for a period of time after the traumatic event.

Treatment for PTSD may include psychological therapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy or exposure therapy, and/or medication, such as antidepressants.

2. Symptoms of PTSD may include the following:

Intrusive memories: These include flashbacks and nightmares in which the person relives the traumatic event.

Avoidance: People with PTSD may avoid people, places, thoughts, or situations that remind them of the trauma.

Negative changes in thinking and mood: This can include feelings of isolation, difficulty remembering aspects of the trauma, and negative views of the world in general.

Exaggerated physical and emotional reactions: This can include being easily startled, feelings of nervousness, difficulty sleeping and concentrating.

Some examples of situations that can lead to the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):

- Wars and armed conflicts: Soldiers who have participated in armed conflicts can develop PTSD as a result of exposure to violence and death.
- Physical or sexual abuse and violence: People who have been physically or sexually abused, whether the abuse occurred in childhood or adulthood, can develop PTSD.
- Serious accidents: Survivors of a car, plane or other serious accident can develop PTSD.
- Natural disasters: People who have survived natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods or fires can develop PTSD.
- Terrorist acts: People who have been involved in or witnessed acts of terrorism can develop PTSD.
- Serious medical diagnoses: People who have received serious medical diagnoses or who have experienced a serious health event, such as a heart attack, can develop PTSD.
- Sudden loss of a loved one: Although less common, some people may develop PTSD after the sudden loss of a loved one.
- It is important to note that not all people who go through these types of events will develop PTSD. Each person responds to trauma differently, and developing PTSD depends on a variety of factors, including personal mental health history, social support, genetics, and more.

3. Post-traumatic stress in the military environment

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a fairly common mental health problem among military personnel, especially those who have been deployed to conflict zones.

Military personnel may experience a range of traumatic events, including direct combat, witnessing the violence or death of others, or being injured in combat. These experiences can lead to the development of PTSD.

Symptoms of PTSD among military personnel may include flashbacks to traumatic events, avoidance of situations that remind them of the trauma, feelings of isolation, difficulty sleeping, irritability, hypervigilance, and exaggerated startle reactions.

PTSD can have significant effects on a service member's life, affecting their ability to function on duty and in their daily lives. It can also lead to physical health problems and increase the risk of developing other mental health problems such as depression or alcohol or drug addiction.

Treatment for PTSD in the military can include a variety of approaches, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure therapy, cognitive processing therapy, and medication. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a form of counseling that helps people change negative thoughts and behaviors that may be contributing to their symptoms. Exposure therapy involves gradually and controlled exposure to the thoughts, feelings, and situations that trigger PTSD symptoms to reduce the fear response.

It is very important that military personnel experiencing symptoms of PTSD seek help. Many branches of the military have resources available to help personnel deal with mental health issues and recover from PTSD.

The effects of PTSD on military personnel can be particularly harsh due to the specific nature of military service. Soldiers are frequently exposed to high levels of stress and traumatic experiences. Additionally, military culture can sometimes make it difficult to recognize or seek help for mental health issues.

In addition to the standard PTSD symptoms I described earlier, soldiers with PTSD may also experience what is called "survivor guilt," a state of deep sadness and regret caused by surviving an event in which others died. This guilt can add an extra layer of pain and complicate the healing process.

PTSD can also affect a service member's relationships with family and friends. Symptoms can make it difficult to maintain a healthy couple or parent-child relationship, and can lead to social isolation.

Although treatment for PTSD can be very effective, it is important to understand that recovery can take time. A service member with PTSD may need long-term treatment to manage symptoms and learn effective coping strategies.

There are numerous resources for military personnel experiencing PTSD. Many military branches offer counseling and mental health services, as do non-profit organizations and support groups.

PTSD is a common problem found among military personnel as they may be exposed to a number of traumatic experiences. It has been estimated that up to 20% of veterans may develop PTSD after serving in a conflict zone.

Among the military, there are certain circumstances that can complicate the diagnosis and treatment of PTSD:

Stigma: Although significant progress has been made in reducing the stigma of mental health issues in the military, it can still be a problem. Military personnel may be reluctant to seek help for fear of being seen as weak or being discriminated against.

Career Impact: Some military personnel may be concerned that a diagnosis of PTSD could negatively impact their military career.

Availability of Treatment: Although the military provides mental health services, access to these services may be limited under certain circumstances, such as while deployed in a conflict zone.

Comorbidity with other disorders: PTSD is often accompanied by other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and alcohol use disorder. These problems can complicate the diagnosis and treatment of PTSD.

There are, however, numerous resources available to help military and veterans dealing with PTSD. These may include individual and group counseling, stress management programs, medication, exposure therapy, and other forms of treatment. There are also organizations that provide support to veterans and their families, such as veterans' foundations and local support groups.

4. PTSD assessment tools

There are several assessment tools that are used to diagnose post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These include structured and semi-structured clinical interviews as well as self-assessment questionnaires. Here are some of the most used:

- Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5 (SCID-5): This is an interview used to diagnose a variety of mental health disorders, including PTSD. It is conducted by a mental health professional and is based on the diagnostic criteria established in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

- Diagnostic Interview for Stress-Related Disorders (CAPS): This is considered the gold standard for diagnosing PTSD. This interview includes a series of questions that relate to the traumatic events the person experienced and the symptoms of PTSD.

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Self-Rating Scale: This is a self-report checklist that measures PTSD symptoms in the past month. It can be used to track progress during treatment and can be useful in identifying people who may need more in-depth assessment.

- Impact of the Event - Revised (IES-R): This self-report questionnaire measures specific responses to traumatic events, including avoidance, intrusion, and hyperactivation.

- These assessment tools can be extremely useful in the diagnosis of PTSD, but it is important to keep in mind that they should be used as part of a wider clinical assessment, which should also include a discussion detailed about a person's trauma history, current symptoms, general functioning, and other aspects of a person's mental and physical health.

5. Conclusions

PTSD is a serious mental health disorder that can occur after a person has experienced or witnessed a traumatic event. It can affect people from all walks of life, including the military, survivors of abuse, serious accidents or natural disasters.

- Symptoms may vary from person to person, but may include flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance of situations reminiscent of the traumatic event, feelings of irritability and hypervigilance.

- Not everyone who experiences a traumatic event will develop PTSD. Various factors, including social support, individual resilience, personal mental health history, and genetics can influence whether a person develops PTSD after a traumatic event.

- There are effective treatments for PTSD, including psychological therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy and exposure therapy, as well as medications such as antidepressants.

- It is important for those who think they may have PTSD to seek help from a mental health professional. Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent long-term complications associated with PTSD.

- In the military context, PTSD can be a significant problem, as military personnel may be exposed to intense traumatic events. Specific resources and support are available to help these individuals.

- Assessment tools such as the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5, CAPS, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Self-Rating Scale, and Impact of the Event - Revised are essential in the diagnosis of PTSD.

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