



Symptoms of Trauma/PTSD

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First of all, let me dispel a fairly common myth. Anyone that is exposed to a potentially life threatening event, according to THEIR perception, can develop symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is not restricted to combat veterans. Children and Adults alike can develop PTSD. Sometimes the symptoms show up immediately, and sometimes there is delayed onset. The symptoms are dormant for years until the defense mechanism break down. And, no matter which population we are talking about, civilian or military, it is my opinion that PTSD is highly under reported. There is also a very interesting study titled the [ACE Study](#) that unequivocally proved that there is a direct link between Adverse Childhood Events (trauma) and any type of illness later in life.

The purpose of this article is to define some the symptoms in detail so that the reader may readily identify trauma responses.

Signs/Symptoms of PTSD

Flashbacks:

The person leaves the here and now and re-experiences a past traumatic event as if it were happening right now.

Nightmares:

This is pretty self-explanatory.

1000 yard stare:

When you observe this person, they look like they are not present or staring into space. They can be in this state for hours. They are being totally distracted by attempting to process information at a semi-conscious or unconscious level, attempting to make sense out of it, and being unsuccessful at doing so.

Hypervigilance:

Constantly being on the lookout for the other shoe to drop, or for something bad to happen.

Intrusive Memories:

Memories popping into one's consciousness at inappropriate times causing a disruption in their ability to be present or concentrate.

Sleep Disturbances:

Difficulty falling asleep, or inability to sleep through the night, or the inability to go back to sleep if they wake up.

No Sense of the future:

This is pretty self-explanatory.



Difficulty Concentrating:

This too is self-explanatory and related to the 1000 yard stare.

Exaggerated Startle Response:

Startling easily or being jumpy at the slightest noise or interruption.

Irritability or outbursts of anger:

This is pretty self-explanatory. This also includes the inability to sit still and having to be on the go all the time. The activity level is an attempt to avoid the feelings or memories.

Avoidance of people, places, or events:

This is an attempt to stay safe, and to avoid triggers or reminders of the traumatic.

Loss of interest in significant activities:

This is the depressive component of PTSD.

Feeling detached or estranged from others:

Traumatized people often have difficulty feeling close to or connecting with others. Isolation is another term used in relation to this characteristic.

Physical reactions to reminders of the event(s):

This is a conscious or unconscious reaction of the body in response to the reminder of the event. It is similar to the body's truth response.

Emotional reactions to reminders of the event(s):

Similar to above, except on the emotional level, rather than the physical level.

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