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Special Interest

Articles

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post published by WebMD

What is PTSD?

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after you have been through a traumatic event. A traumatic event is something horrible and scary that you see or that happens to you. During this type of event, you think that your life or others' lives are in danger. You may feel afraid or feel that you have no control over what is happening. Anyone who has gone through a life-threatening event can develop PTSD. These events can include: combat, military sexual trauma, terrorist attacks, physical violence, sexual violence-such as rape, serious accidents- such as a car wreck, natural disasters-such as a fire, tornado, flood, or earthquake.

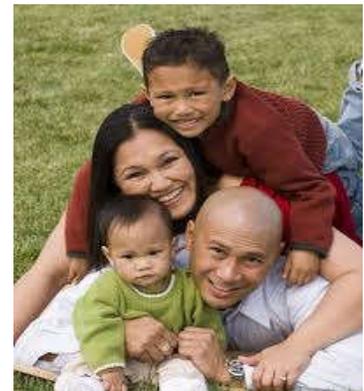
After the event, you may feel scared, confused, and angry. If these feelings don't go away or they get worse, you may have PTSD. These symptoms may disrupt your life, making it hard to continue with your daily activities.

What are the symptoms?

After going through a traumatic event, you may: Feel upset by things that

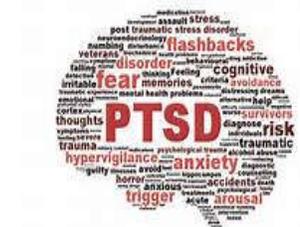
remind you of what happened, have nightmares, vivid memories, or flashbacks of the event. You may feel like it's happening all over again. Avoid places or things that remind you of what happened. You may feel numb or lose interest in things you used to care about. Feel that you are always in danger. Feel anxious, jittery, or irritated. Have trouble sleeping or keeping your mind on one thing.

PTSD symptoms can change your behavior and how you live your life. You may pull away from other people, work all the time, or use drugs or alcohol. You may find it hard to be in relationships, and you may have problems with your spouse and family. You may become depressed. Some people with PTSD also have panic attacks, which are sudden feelings of fear or worry that something bad is about to happen. Children can have PTSD too. They may have the symptoms above and symptoms that depend on how old they are. As children get older their symptoms are more like those of adults.



Treatment-Counseling

There are different types of counseling for PTSD. Several types of therapy have been shown to be effective in treating PTSD. One therapy is: Cognitive therapy, in which you learn to change thoughts about the trauma that are not true or that cause you stress. Finding a therapist you trust is important. A good therapist will listen to your concerns and help you make changes in your life. Your doctor can help you find one or you can call your state Health and Welfare office.



Cited From:
<http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/tc/post-traumatic-stress-disorder--treatment-overview>



Sunpath Outcomes on Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

The Consumer Satisfaction Survey is helping Sunpath to improve services in all areas. This survey is conducted twice a year. Here it is a summary of the outcomes for this period:

Intensive in Home Community	89%
Support Team	84%
Outpatient Therapy	90%
Substance Abuse	85%

Overall 88%

Adolescent Substance Abuse

Being a teenager and raising a teenager are individually, and collectively, enormous challenges. For many teens, illicit substance use and abuse become part of the landscape of their teenage years. Although most adolescents who use drugs do not progress to become drug abusers or drug addicts in adulthood, drug use in adolescence is a very risky proposition. Even small degrees of substance abuse (for example, alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants) can have negative consequences. Typically, school and relationships, notably family relationships, are among the life areas that are most influenced by drug use and abuse.

One of the most telling signs of a teen's increasing involvement with drugs is when drug use becomes part of the teen's daily life. Preoccupation with drugs can crowd out previously important activities, and the manner in which the teen views him or herself may change in unrealistic and inaccurate directions. Friendship groups may change, sometimes dramatically, and relationships with family members can become more distant or conflictual. Further bad

signs include more frequent use or use of greater amounts of a certain drug, or use of more dangerous drugs, such as cocaine, amphetamines, or heroin. Persistent patterns of drug use in adolescence are a sign that problems in that teen's environment exist and need to be addressed immediately.

What causes adolescent substance abuse?

There is no single cause of adolescent drug problems. Drug abuse develops over time; it does not start as full-blown abuse or addiction. There are different pathways or routes to the development of a teen's drug problems. Some of the factors that may place teens at risk for developing drug problems include: insufficient parental supervision and monitoring, poorly defined and poorly communicated rules and expectations against drug use, family conflict, favorable parental attitudes toward adolescent alcohol and drug use, and parental alcoholism or drug use

It is important to also pay attention to individual risk factors. These include: high sensation seeking,

impulsiveness, psychological distress, perceptions of extensive use by peers, perceived low harmfulness to use.

How do you know when to seek help?

The earlier one seeks help for their teen's behavioral or drug problems, the better. How is a parent to know if their teen is experimenting with or moving more deeply into the drug culture? Above all, a parent must be a good and careful observer, particularly of the little details that make up a teen's life. Overall signs of dramatic change in appearance, friends, or physical health may be signs of trouble. If a parent believes his or her child may be drinking or using drugs, here are some things to watch for: Physical evidence of drugs and drug paraphernalia, behavior problems and poor grades in school, change in friendships or extreme influence by peers, hostility, lying or increased evasiveness about after school or weekend whereabouts, physical changes such as bloodshot eyes, runny nose, and frequent sore throats.

Cited From:

<http://www.teen-drug-abuse.org/adolescent-substance-abuse.htm>

Depression and Pain

Cited From: http://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/depression_and_pain

Pain, especially chronic pain, is an emotional condition as well as a physical sensation. It is a complex experience that affects thought, mood, and behavior and can lead to isolation, immobility, and drug dependence.

In those ways, it resembles depression, and the relationship is intimate. Pain is depressing, and depression causes and intensifies pain. People with chronic pain have three times the average risk of developing psychiatric symptoms — usually mood or anxiety disorders — and depressed patients have three times the average risk of developing chronic pain.

Depression, disability, and pain

Depression contributes greatly to the disability caused by headaches, backaches, or arthritis. People in pain who are also depressed become extremely heavy consumers of medical services, even if they have no severe underlying illness. But that doesn't mean they receive better treatment; studies show that they actually use fewer mental health services than other patients with mood disorders. According to some estimates, more than 50% of depressed patients who visit general practitioners

complain only of physical symptoms, and in most cases the symptoms include pain. Some studies suggest that if physicians tested all pain patients for depression, they might discover 60% of currently undetected depression.

Pain slows recovery from depression, and depression makes pain more difficult to treat; for example, it may cause patients to drop out of pain rehabilitation programs. Worse, both pain and depression feed on themselves, by changing both brain function and behavior. Depression leads to isolation and isolation leads to further depression; pain causes fear of movement, and immobility creates the conditions for further pain. When depression is treated, pain often fades into the background, and when pain goes away, so does much of the suffering that causes depression.

Treating pain and depression in combination

In pain rehabilitation centers, specialists treat both problems together, often with the same techniques, including progressive muscle relaxation, hypnosis, and meditation. Physicians prescribe standard analgesics — acetaminophen, aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs,

and in severe cases, opiates — along with a variety of psychiatric drugs (see “Medicating pain and depression” box above).

Physical therapists provide exercises not only to break the vicious cycle of pain and immobility but also to help relieve depression. Cognitive and behavioral therapies teach pain patients how to avoid fearful anticipation, banish discouraging thoughts, and adjust everyday routines to ward off physical and emotional suffering. Psychotherapy helps demoralized patients and their families tell their stories and describe the experience of pain in its relation to other problems in their lives.

Pain specialists can improve their practice by learning more about the interactions among psychological, neurological, and hormonal influences that link pain and depression. Why do some people recover from injuries without pain while others develop chronic symptoms, and how is that process related to depression and anxiety? How do psychotherapy and antidepressant drugs affect brain function in depressed people with chronic pain? The goal is not just comfort or the absence of symptoms but restoring the capacity to lead a productive life.



“Hurting bodies and suffering minds often require the same treatment.”

Treatment Team Meeting Outcomes

Every 3 months a Treatment Team Meeting is conducted between the staff, the consumer and the consumer support system to evaluate progress and work with the consumer on their necessities.

The Treatment Team Surveys for this period revealed the following percentages of satisfaction for the first and second quarter of this year:

99% of satisfaction in all services



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Bilingual Services

If you or someone
you know needs
services in Spanish,
please contact our
offices to assist you.



We're on the Web!
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www.sunpathllc.com

Tips for Cold Weather

1. Dress in layers. Layering is great in the winter: Thermal Wear, Coats, Gloves, Hats, & Scarfs.
2. Drink hot fluids: Hot Cider, Coffee, & Hot Tea
3. Reduce the time that you may have to spend outside & be sure to check on the elderly and pets.

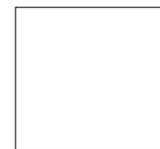


About Sunpath LLC.

Sunpath LLC is a nationally accredited by CARF and CABHA certified behavioral health agency that provides mental health and substance abuse services to individuals and families in Western North Carolina. We provide an efficient and effective array of services that are psycho-educational and supportive in nature. These services are intended to meet the Mental Health, Developmental Disability, and Substance Abuse needs of clients with significant functional deficits or who because of negative environmental, medical or biological factors, are at risk of developing or increasing the magnitude of such functional deficiencies.

Sunpath LLC focused on providing the highest caliber service through professionalism and building a dependable therapeutic rapport with consumer and their families.

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