

PTSD Treatment

If you are diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD, while it cannot be cured, it can be managed. You do that by creating a treatment plan with your healthcare team. That might include therapy, medication or both.

"I was seeing a therapist once a week."-Jason, Patient

Jason Lowman is an Army veteran living with PTSD. He was injured during a training exercise before heading to Iraq. The injury got worse overseas and he was brought home.

"I learned that the best treatment for me was to stay busy and doing something constructive."-Jason, Patient

For Jason, that meant taking his love of the guitar and joining a music program with other vets.

"Playing the guitar and making something sound good and sound cool is kind of like a relief for me. And it just makes me feel good about myself."-Jason, Patient

Dana is also living with PTSD. She was sexually assaulted in high school. Back then, she didn't realize how the attack had affected her.

"So much of what stopped me from getting help was shame."-Dana, Patient

She started therapy a few years ago and those negative thoughts and feelings came out.

"As I look back now I can see that the outcome of that was that I really stopped trusting myself. I stopped trusting my own instincts about people. I stopped allowing myself to be really angry."-Dana, Patient

There are many different types of psychotherapy that can be used to help people with PTSD. One type is called cognitive processing therapy. It targets the negative thoughts you're having as a result of your trauma, by getting you to talk about it.

"It's really important to try to identify what are some of those dysfunctional beliefs that they have that are associated with the changes of behavior, of avoidance and not participating in emotional experiences."-Dr. Chad Wetterneck, PhD, Clinical Psychologist

Another therapy used to treat PTSD is prolonged exposure. This helps you face and reduce your fears by exposing you to the trauma you experienced but in a safe way.

"We're going to teach them that they can choose to be in that situation and then get them to see that

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their anxiety is present but that they are not in danger and they don't need to, they don't need to fight anyone. They don't need to flee the situation."- Dr. Chad Wetterneck, PhD, Clinical Psychologist

Through therapy, Dana realized she had to change how she dealt with her PTSD and the trauma of sexual assault.

"A lot of people deal with it by responding as though they're in a violent situation and they have to win. And I responded for a long time, when I felt I was in a violent situation, I had to stop it. And that probably was less about winning and more about shutting down."-Dana, Patient

Medications can also be used as part of your treatment plan. The medicines target symptoms that often go along with PTSD, such as anxiety, depression or sleep problems.

"And what those do is help the brain to remain calmer, not to let your thoughts spin out of control. It helps you to be able to focus."-Dr. Martha Carlson, Clinical Psychologist

Your mental health professional will help you decide what your treatment plan should include.

"Some people are more prone to want medication. Some people would like to try psychotherapy and some want a combination of both. There are some people with PTSD, their symptoms are so high, it's very difficult for them to engage in psychotherapy. So, you might start them out on medication in order to give them some support."- Dr. Martha Carlson, Clinical Psychologist

Once you find the right treatment plan, you can manage your symptoms and live a healthy life.

"It's hugely important that people keep doing what it is that they do to make them feel better and help them cope."-Jason, Patient

"Now that I have a better idea what's going on with me, and that I've had therapy, and I have had treatment and I have this awareness...it's like the sun shines more."-Dana, Patient