

PTSD Support

Support is key to managing post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, a mental health condition that's brought on by traumatic events. Symptoms of PTSD can include anxiety, unpleasant memories, nightmares and sleep problems. Loved ones, healthcare professionals and support groups can help you heal and provide comfort.

"If they have someone that they feel like they can trust and work on some of their skills and maybe serve as a bridge to doing activities by themselves, maybe do it with someone and then eventually be able to do things on their own. That people might be able to do treatment a little bit more smoothly and get a little further."-Dr.

Chad Wetterneck, Clinical Psychologist

Your loved ones can provide support just by being there for you. Dana, a survivor of sexual assault, has a group of friends she depends on.

"They included a million different interactions. And they weren't all big cry on a shoulder, sob. Some of them were, let's go out and have a cup of coffee and giggle and that was just as important."-Dana, Patient

Dana was sexually assaulted in high school. It took years for her to understand and talk about how the incident affected her.

"The reason I didn't talk about this was partially because I felt so much shame around it and around the effect that it had on me and around the effect that I had on the people in my life because of it. Then once I could say that out loud, once I could understand it, I can say anything."-Dana, Patient

Reaching out to others who've experienced a similar trauma can help people who suffer from PTSD.

"People who have been sexually abused, for instance, have incredible shame about what happened. And so, they need spaces to be able to talk about that where they won't be re-victimized."-Carmen Pitre, Victims' Rights Advocate

Veterans Dan Van Buskirk and Jason Lowman both suffer from PTSD. They find support in a music program with other vets. Their passion for playing the guitar helps relieve their anxiety.

"Being together with each other and the brotherhood and sisterhood helps us understand how to heal."-Dan, Patient

Dan is a Marine veteran who served in Vietnam. He witnessed many painful things. Dan's diagnosis came several years after his service. Playing guitar gives him something else to focus on.

"It's an hour of peace and harmony rather than depression and suicidal thoughts and anger."-Dan, Patient

Jason, an Iraq war veteran, got help after he returned home and noticed negative changes in himself. He was

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anxious, aggressive and on high alert. He realized he wasn't alone. Reaching out and finding support, he says, is critical to getting your life back.

"It could be hard but it's something that they can get through. And it's not something they need to do alone. And there's people out there that are willing to help them."- Jason, Patient

Members of your healthcare team can also provide support. Make sure you communicate with them how you're feeling and keep your appointments.

"Missing an appointment can be like taking a step forward and taking at least one step back and not really gaining any ground. So, making sure that you're keeping all of your appointments and rescheduling within a day."- Dr. Chad Wetterneck, Clinical Psychologist

Family members or friends can also be a big support for those struggling with PTSD. Talking about the trauma or how it's impacting your daily life can help you heal.

"A listening ear, someone who believes you, who says it's not your fault that you deserve to heal."- Carmen Pitre, Victims' Rights Advocate

"I can't imagine really feeling like I'm better if I didn't have a group of support. If I didn't have people I could call on."- Dana, Patient

A major part of managing PTSD is identifying people who can offer you comfort, care and support. If you or someone you love has experienced trauma and are struggling, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP to start to regain control of your life.