

## Stay on the Frontline of PTSD

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Traditionally, images of war veterans come to mind for most people when they hear the term post-traumatic stress disorder. While war veterans are certainly among those who can live with PTSD, there many other persons who also live with this anxiety disorder. The impact of any shocking, scary, or dangerous event triggers our 'fight or flight' response to protect us from harm. The majority of people will, naturally, experience a range of reactions from trauma and recover from the symptoms on their own. An event may cause PTSD to develop in one person while the same event does not cause PTSD in another person.

A diagnosis of PTSD may be appropriate when the fight or flight response is over-activated leaving the person unable to recover from the reactions to the trauma.<sup>1,2</sup> Below is a brief overview of what someone with PTSD may experience:

- intrusive and/or distressing thoughts (flashbacks, nightmares, reoccurring thoughts about the events)
- emotional numbness
- avoidance of reminders to the trauma
- difficulty sleeping and/or concentrating
- easy arousal or irritation<sup>3</sup>

Responses to a traumatic event(s) can happen immediately or within weeks, months or years later<sup>4</sup>. There is no right or wrong way to respond to an event. In the United States, 7 of 10 adults experience some sort of trauma in their lifetime; about 2 of those 7 persons will develop PTSD from the event(s).

An important note is that not one of us lives in a vacuum. Our health, regardless of mental health diagnosis, may impact relationships, job performance, and quality of life, but it does not need to define our life<sup>4</sup>.

There are many factors that can create barriers to someone receiving care. Regional and cultural factors can influence someone's access to mental health care. While one of the most common barriers is a fear and/or lack of understanding about what types of care are available for PTSD or other mental health needs. Similarly, as one goes to a licensed medical professional to receive care for the body, one seeks out a licensed mental health professional to receive care for the mind.

You and your family members are eligible for MIIA EAP services whether you are a MIIA/BCBS subscriber or not. AllOne Health offers licensed counselors and providers who specialize in PTSD and other mental health needs. There are also educational resources, occupational health support and connections to supportive and likeminded communities. Just as you call the doctor for questions about your body, do not hesitate to call AllOne Health with questions regarding PTSD and/or other mental health needs for yourself or someone that you know at 1-800-451-1834.

Does this article have you thinking more about the health of your mind or of someone you know? For an easy and confidential online mental health screening, including a screen for PTSD, go to our screening for mental health tool: <http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/miiawellness>.

To speak to someone about PTSD and other mental health, substance use, legal, or financial issues, call the MIIA EAP at: AllOne Health at 1-800-451-1834. (Again, all employees and their family members can access AllOne services regardless of whether their employer purchases their health insurance through MIIA or not.)

To learn more about PTSD visit:  
[American Psychiatric Association](#)  
[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)  
[PTSD Alliance](#)  
[Support Groups through Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#)

#### Sources

- 1 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>
- 2 - <https://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/docs/ruralclergytraining/ptsd.pdf>
- 3 - <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/symptoms>
- 4 - <https://www.schriever.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1558093/a-peek-behind-the-curtain-ptsd-barriers-and-stigmas/>

