

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can happen after witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event. It may involve threat of or actual death or serious injury to oneself or someone else (e.g., serious accidents or injuries). It is common to have upsetting memories, feel on edge, and/or have trouble sleeping after a traumatic event. At first, it may be hard to do normal daily activities, such as going to work, school, or spending time with people you care about. Most people start to feel better after a few weeks to a month after the event.

"Getting better" can mean different things for different people. There are many treatment options for PTSD. For some, these treatments can get rid of symptoms. Others find they have fewer or less intense symptoms with treatment. Your symptoms don't have to interfere with your everyday activities, work, and relationships.

Talk to a doctor or mental health care provider (like a psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker) if your symptoms:

- last longer than a month.
- are very upsetting.
- disrupt your daily life.

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States. **Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** if you're:

- thinking about harming yourself, or
- thinking about suicide, or
- would like emotional support.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2021 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8181.

### How to Find a Mental Health Care Provider

1. Call your insurance company. Ask for a list of mental health care providers covered by your insurance. (i.e., in-network providers).
2. Ask your PCP (primary care provider) or a provider you trust to recommend mental health care providers in your community.
3. Look on [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) or [locator.apa.org](https://www.locator.apa.org). You can filter by a number of options such as insurance, provider's gender, what you want to focus on, etc.

### What to Consider When Choosing a Mental Health Care Provider

- **Specialization:** You may want to look for someone who specializes in trauma (PTSD), pain, anxiety/depression, and/or coping with health issues.
- **Distance:** While most providers are only doing teletherapy right now, consider provider location. If you plan to see the provider in person in the future, consider travel distance.
- **Cost:** Find out if the cost is out-of-pocket (i.e. you pay for the whole cost) or if your insurance will cover all or some of the cost. Find out by talking with the provider and by calling your insurance company. Ask if the provider operates on a sliding scale. This means that the cost of the therapy is based on what you can afford.
- **Availability:** Does the provider have appointments available soon? Or, will you have to wait weeks/months to see them?