



## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

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Post-traumatic stress disorder affects about 8 million people each year.(1) The anxiety disorder is often triggered by a traumatic event (rape, war, natural disaster, violent act, tragic accident).

Most people experience some amount of anxiety and grief after traumatic events, but those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder experience prolonged and severe cases of anxiety.

The illness presents itself in three major ways: re-experience, avoidance and increased arousal. With re-experience, clients may hallucinate, have vivid nightmares and flashbacks, and be triggered by occurrences that remind the subject of the event. Others may detach from emotions, forget details surrounding the trauma and avoid any situation or person that reminds them of the trauma. Another symptom is increased arousal which may appear as emotional outbursts, trouble sleeping, jumpiness and difficulty concentrating.

The most common and effective way to treat post-traumatic stress disorder is through counseling. In addition, medications for anxiety help clients sleep better and manage some of the symptoms.

1. Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. Archives of General Psychiatry, 2005 June.