

"PTSD is a greater cop killer than all the guns ever fired at police officers."

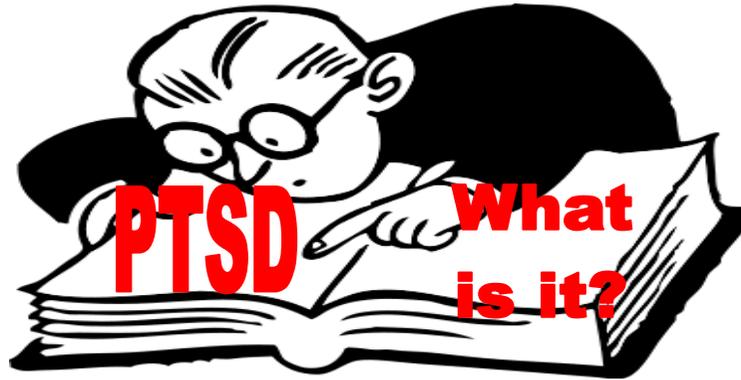
Allen R. Kates is Board Certified in Emergency Crisis Response (BECR) and author of the internationally acclaimed book, CopShock, Surviving Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The A&E Television Network produced a documentary called "Cop Counselors" based on the book.

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All too many police officers are victims of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). (Lt. Lt. James F. Devine, Retired Former Director of N. Y. Police Dept. Counseling Service)

This disorder is a response to traumatic stress. Seeing victims of violence, having to kill some one in the line of duty, being hurt yourself in the line of duty, and seeing the death of a child. There are two main ingredients for PTSD.

First, to become a candidate for PTSD, a person must experience or witness a traumatic event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury.

The second key ingredient is that the person must respond with intense fear, helplessness, or horror. These reactions pave the way for PTSD to be set in motion.

For police officers, these criteria present a dilemma. Cops are trained not to respond with fear, helplessness, or horror. They are taught to control the situation, help people, and move on to the next job. Despite this contradiction, cops do develop PTSD. Sometimes it is later when they are reflecting on critical incidents that they feel fear, horror, and helplessness.

What is PTSD? You could sum up PTSD simply by saying that it consists of three clusters or groupings of symptoms. Those groupings are called reliving, avoidance, and arousal.

The American Psychiatric Association in its publication called The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, also called the DSM-IV.

PTSD Symptoms

Symptoms of PTSD are divided into three (3)

Re-experiencing the trauma In nightmares, Day-time flashbacks, Unwanted memories, thoughts, images or sensations. Cues resembling some aspect of the event can cause intense emotional and physical distress, and the person may feel and act as if the event is recurring.

Intrusion/Reliving/Recurrent

Avoidance/ Emotional Numbing

Avoidance means that the victims avoid anything that reminds them of the trauma. This takes the form of suppressing feelings so well that the traumatized individuals become unable to remember important aspects of the trauma. They may avoid thoughts, conversations, or places where the trauma occurred. They may believe that they no longer have any feelings, that their emotions are dulled or numb to all Emotions.

Arousal/Chronic Physical Signs of Hyperarousal

Being constantly on guard, resulting in insomnia, irritability, outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, or being easily startled. Some people have panic attacks.



HOW TO TELL IF YOU HAVE PTSD.



In order to be officially diagnosed with PTSD, you must meet certain criteria laid out in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association.

- ◆ You experienced or witnessed a traumatic event which involved death or serious injury (or the threat of same), or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others
- ◆ Your response to the event involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children: disorganized or Agitated behavior).
- You persistently re-experience the event in one of the following ways:
 - recurrent distressing thoughts, perceptions, or images of the event
 - recurrent distressing dreams of the event
 - Feeling as if the event were happening again through [hallucinations](#) or dissociate episodes (flashbacks)
 - Intense psychological distress or physical stress reaction upon exposure to things that remind you of the event.
- ◆ You attempt to avoid situations, people, or things that remind you of the traumatic event or feel a sense of emotional numbness
- ◆ You have persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the [trauma](#)), such as feeling “on edge” or hyper-vigilant for signs of danger, which may cause [difficulty sleeping](#), [irritability](#), or problems concentrating.
- ◆ Your symptoms last longer than one month Your symptoms cause significant distress or impairment in social situations, work, or other important areas of functioning.

16 Ways To Help A Friend With Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

How can you deal with this situation? The following steps can serve as helpful tips for dealing with and loving someone with PTSD.

1. **Learn everything you can about PTSD.** By knowing all of this information, you will be better able to handle the situation.
 2. **Exercise together.** Exercising strengthens the overall body and improves health.
 3. **Don't judge them.**
 4. **Be there to listen.** Make your self available to them when they need to talk. Be an active listener by giving input when needed.
 5. **Show respect.** Respect them even though they may be having a difficult time at the moment.
 6. **Look out for them.** Show you care by recognizing when everything doesn't seem to be okay.
 7. **Allow room for mistakes.** Recognize that they will make mistakes, but always be there to forgive them and offer help if needed.
 8. **Talk positively.**
 9. **Give them their space.** Your loved one may not always want your opinion on everything, be willing to step aside every once in a while and give them some space.
 10. **Be active together.** Planning and participating in family activities can be a fun way to interact and show them you don't look down on them.
 11. **Love them.**
 12. **Don't belittle them.** While it is important to not expect too much, not expecting anything at all is unnecessary and can be hurtful.
 13. **Be patient.**
 14. **Avoid harsh remarks.** Stay away from telling your friend or family member to get over their problems, this may only make problems worse.
 15. **Encourage their self-esteem.**
- Take care of yourself.** Remember that you can't take care of someone else if you haven't dealt with yourself first. In many cases seeking out a friend to help you is beneficial.

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Coping with PTSD in Family Members



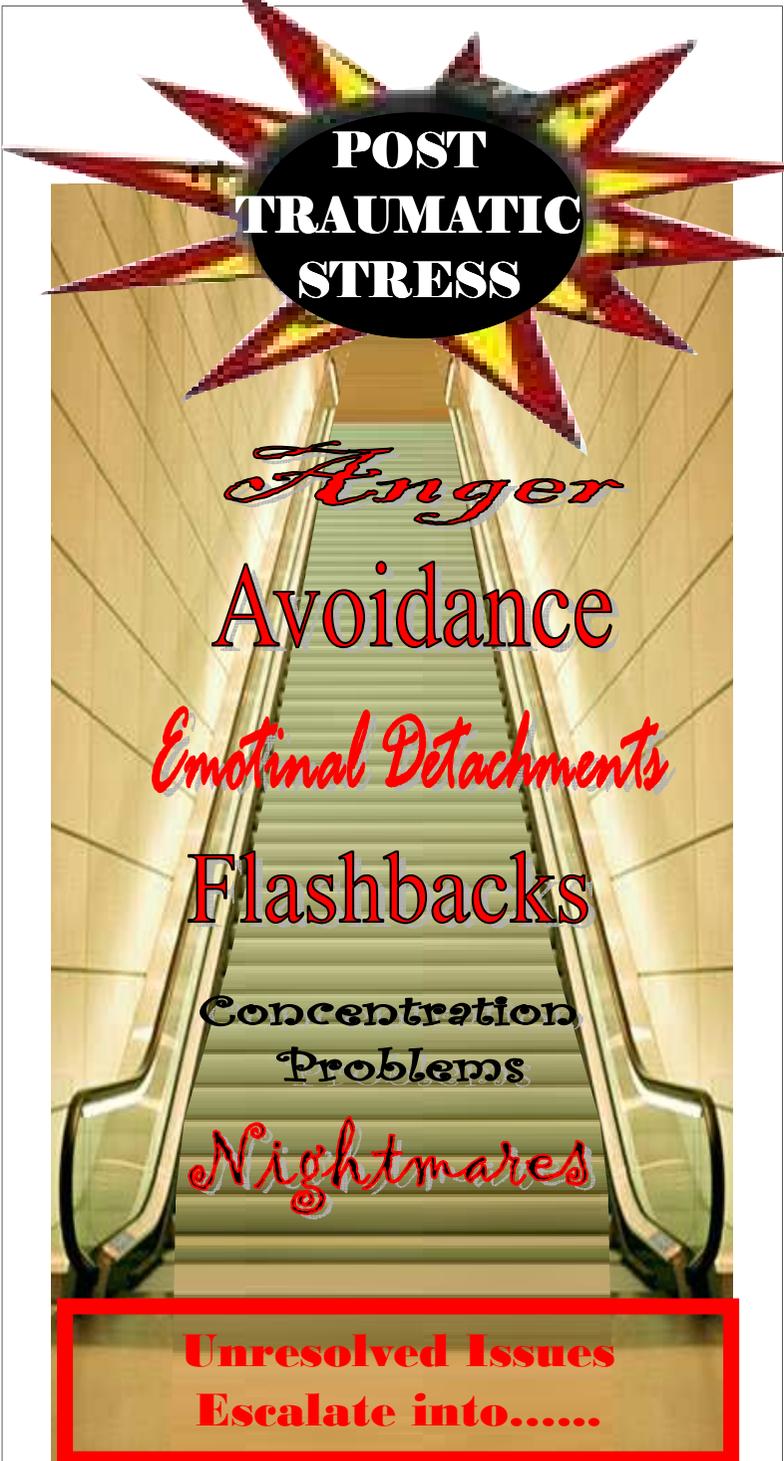
Understanding a Loved One's PTSD
Matthew Tull, Ph.D., About.com Guide, Updated July 23, 2009

What Can a Family Do?

- *First, it is important to understand that the loved one's behavior does not necessarily indicate his true feelings. That is, he may want to go out with friends and family but he is too afraid of bringing up upsetting thoughts and memories.*
- *Next, it is important for family members to understand their loved ones symptoms and the impact of those symptoms on behavior.*
- *A family also needs to know what leads to those symptoms. That is, family members need to know their loved one's triggers. For example, if you know that the nightly news on the TV always triggers your loved one's PTSD symptoms, you may want to schedule other activities during that time so there is no way that your loved one will contact those triggers.*
- *Family members may also need to change their routines based on a loved one's symptoms. For example, if your loved one tends to have nightmares, try to figure out a way to wake him up without touching him. Some people with PTSD may respond as though they are being attacked.*
- *Finally, support groups and/or couples counseling may be a good way to learn how to communicate with your loved one, as well as cope with his PTSD symptoms. They may also help you find the best way to encourage your loved one to get help if he hasn't already.*

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The symptoms of PTSD are [the body's attempt to cope with extreme stress](#). Recovery from PTSD can be a long and difficult road. A family's support and understanding can be invaluable on your loved one's journey to recovery.



**POST
TRAUMATIC
STRESS**

Anger

Avoidance

Emotional Detachments

Flashbacks

Concentration
Problems

Nightmares

**Unresolved Issues
Escalate into.....**