

## **Teens and PTSD**

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**What is PTSD?** PTSD stands for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is a severe anxiety condition that occurs after people have gone through or seen something terrifying or overwhelming, like a car accident, a suicide of a friend or family member, a rape or severe abuse. Did you know that even hearing about a horrifying event that happened to a friend or loved one can cause you to have PTSD?

**What are the symptoms of PTSD?** Most commonly symptoms include nightmares of the event, flashback of the event or severe avoidance of anything having to do with the event. People with PTSD are often very shaky and easily startled and do not sleep well. Consequently they don't get the benefits of Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep that can help the mind process traumatic events. People with PTSD often are also depressed and isolated. Unfortunately many war veterans with PTSD die by suicide, as their symptoms are so overwhelming to them and they become hopeless.

### **Facts about PTSD:**

- Women are twice as likely to develop PTSD and it is being seen in increasing numbers in children and teens.
- The more traumatic experiences you have had in your life the more chances that you could develop PTSD.
- 7.7 million Americans age 18 and older have PTSD.
- Many people with PTSD use alcohol or drugs to self medicate intrusive memories and to force themselves to sleep.

**What should I do if I think I have PTSD or a friend has it?** People with PTSD often require intensive counseling and sometimes, even medication. Make sure you shop for the right therapist for you. Not just someone with expertise, but also someone you click with.

**New treatments:** EMDR or Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing is a new and highly effective treatment for PTSD that quickly reduces anxiety and other symptoms. You will never forget the event, but you will think and feel about it in a different way. (For more information go to [www.emdr.com](http://www.emdr.com) or [www.emdria.org](http://www.emdria.org).)