

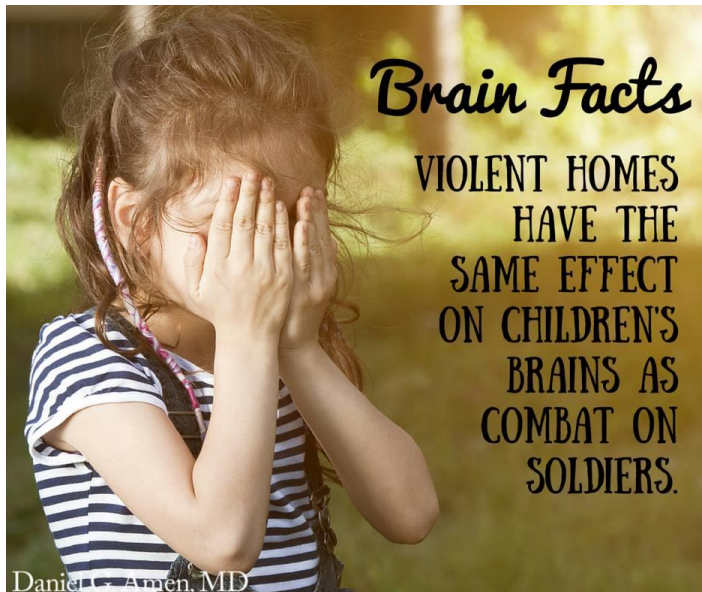
Trauma & Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Trauma (psychological trauma) is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter one's sense of security, making the person feel helpless and vulnerable. Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety, but any situation that leaves one feeling overwhelmed and alone can be traumatic, even if it doesn't involve physical harm. The more frightened and helpless one feels, the more likely the person will be traumatized. An event will most likely lead to emotional or psychological trauma if:

Childhood trauma increases the risk of future trauma.

When childhood trauma is not resolved, the fundamental sense of fear and helplessness carries over into adulthood, setting the stage for further trauma.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. Many people who go through traumatic events have difficulty adjusting and coping for a while, but they don't have PTSD — with time and good self-care, they usually get better. But if the symptoms get worse or last for months or even years and interfere with your functioning, you may have PTSD.



Getting effective treatment after PTSD symptoms develop can be critical to reduce symptoms and improve functioning.

" When someone says "#PTSD" you often think of our nations heroes, but the reality is that PTSD can come in many different shapes and sizes and does not discriminate. This is why it is so important that we don't treat a person based off of symptom clusters, but instead treat the individual as a whole ". **Dr. Daniel Amen**

Symptoms of PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms may start within three months of a traumatic event, but sometimes symptoms may not appear until years after the event. These symptoms cause significant problems in social or work situations and in relationships.

PTSD symptoms are generally grouped into four types: intrusive memories, avoidance, negative changes in thinking and mood, or changes in emotional reactions.

Intrusive memories

Symptoms of intrusive memories may include:

- Recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event
- Reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again (flashbacks)
- Upsetting dreams about the traumatic event
- Severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that reminds you of the event

Avoidance

Symptoms of avoidance may include:

- Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event
- Avoiding places, activities or people that remind you of the traumatic event

Negative changes in thinking and mood

Symptoms of negative changes in thinking and mood may include:

- Negative feelings about yourself or other people
- Inability to experience positive emotions
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Lack of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Hopelessness about the future
- Memory problems, including not remembering important aspects of the traumatic event
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships

Changes in emotional reactions

Symptoms of changes in emotional reactions (also called arousal symptoms) may include:

- Irritability, angry outbursts or aggressive behavior
- Always being on guard for danger
- Overwhelming guilt or shame
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drinking too much or driving too fast
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Being easily startled or frightened

Intensity of symptoms

PTSD symptoms can vary in intensity over time. You may have more PTSD symptoms when you're stressed in general, or when you run into reminders of what you went through. For example, you may hear a car backfire and relive combat experiences. Or you may see a report on the news about a sexual assault and feel overcome by memories of your own assault.

When to see a mental health professional

If you have disturbing thoughts and feelings about a traumatic event for more than a month, if they're severe, or if you feel you're having trouble getting your life back under control, talk to a health care professional. Get treatment as soon as possible to help prevent PTSD symptoms from getting worse.

If you are looking for help that is expert, confidential and tailored to your needs please [contact](#) my office by phone 613-620-3642 or by E-mail: info@chirucounselling.ca