

# Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

## A Guide For Patients/Families



**This brochure provides information about post-traumatic stress disorder, its causes, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options. It is designed to respond to the questions most frequently asked by patients and their families.**



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## **What is Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) ?**

PTSD is the reaction to a major stressful event. The event may be a natural disaster, such as a flood, earthquake etc, or be more personal such as a road traffic accident, fire, murder, rape etc. The reaction may be immediate or delayed, but it lasts a long time and prevents you from getting on with the rest of your life.

## **What Are The Signs And Symptoms Of PTSD?**

The patient's history includes exposure to a traumatic event that threatened life and their response was intense fear, helplessness or horror.

### **Signs and Symptoms Can Be Divided Into Three Categories:**

#### **Hyperarousal:**

- Onset approximately 4 weeks after the event. Duration:two days to four weeks;
- Persistent anxiety;
- Irritability;
- Anger;
- Difficulty in sleeping or/and insomnia;
- Difficulty in concentrating;
- Overreaction to stimuli.

#### **Intrusion:**

- Event is recalled over and over again (awake and asleep).

  
**Avoidance:**

- Avoidance of anything that may remind one of the past events;
- Feeling detached;
- Unable to feel emotions. Numbness;
- Lack of interest;
- Unable to function normally.

**What Is The Treatment?**

There is good success with early and proper treatment.

**Immediate Treatment:****Counselling:**

- To encourage recollection of the stressful experience and to express emotions;
- To work through the event;
- To deal with any guilt feelings;
- Medication to reduce symptoms of anxiety or depression may be necessary.



**Later Treatment:  
Assessment, Counselling And Education Of Patient  
And Family:**

- Reassurance that feelings and behaviour are normal;
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT);
  - Examining thoughts that cause the problem. Teaching relaxation techniques and ways of coping.

**Discharge Instructions:**

- If medications is advised, it is important to keep taking them as prescribed.
- Keep the clinic appointment with the doctor so that your progress can be maintained and monitored.

**For further information, please call:**

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Phone : 4930051, Ext : 1016

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