



## NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY AS A CAREGIVER

Your **loved one** has a diagnosis of **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**.

### *What's next?*

### **Behaviors and Challenges You May Recognize**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is an anxiety disorder which forms as a result of trauma. Research is emerging about another version of PTSD, Complex-PTSD, which forms from environments or multiple events rather than a single event. PTSD is unique among anxiety disorders in that it can lessen or disappear over time in stable environments. Still, your loved one is likely going through a lot.

They may be experiencing:

- Stress dreams and night terrors causing poor sleep or no sleep
- Disassociating: checking out of their environment involuntarily
- Feeling the urge to avoid people or places that remind them of their past
- Challenges forming bonds and trusting others
- Difficulty enjoying movies, TV and other media for fear of triggers
- Regressive thoughts, struggling to separate past from present
- Bodily effects such as ulcers, bodily pain, headaches, high blood pressure
- Anxiety attacks and panic attacks
- Triggered by loud noises, physical contact, or new relationships

This journey of navigating your loved one's PTSD diagnosis may look daunting at first. Yet, it can help to shift that compass and look at this journey as an opportunity for GROWTH. On this journey, you can NURTURE your relationship with your loved one AND yourself.

### **Supporting Your Loved One**

You and your loved one are embarking on a growth journey and will navigate their diagnosis TOGETHER. Be PATIENT with your loved one AND yourself as you learn which coping strategies are most helpful.

The greatest gift we can give our loved ones is ACCEPTANCE of what they are going through in the moment. To help them you can also practice boundary-setting, utilize outside help, and take care of YOU! It will empower you BOTH on this journey for you to give yourself love and rest. YOU will be more able to give the care they need and THEY will witness your self-care example.

You can also provide your loved with resources. *See the next page for ways to help manage PTSD.*

**If you are currently experiencing a crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741-741.**

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## Resources for You and Your Loved One

- **The National Institute of Mental Health** on PTSD <https://bit.ly/3hqhDXv>
- PTSD info from the **National Alliance on Mental Health** <https://bit.ly/3AlhNYH>
- **Mental Health America** on PTSD <https://bit.ly/3hbIHea>
- **The Center for Disease Control and Prevention** on PTSD in children <https://bit.ly/2UZE5zh>
- Panic self-help by **MoodJuice** <https://bit.ly/2Tip4YV>
- PTSD Coach app from **Veterans Affairs** <https://bit.ly/3xcoDuO>
- **SAM App** for anxiety self-management <https://bit.ly/3dyrauD>
- Free, comprehensive meditation app called **Insight Timer** -<http://bit.ly/calminsight>
- Distraction tools for intrusive trauma symptoms by **Beauty After Bruises**  
<http://bit.ly/distractiontools>
- Online discussion board support for PTSD by **Support Groups** <https://bit.ly/3dxtMbs>
- **Veterans Affairs Mental Health** on military sexual trauma <https://bit.ly/3jyrAos>
- Info on car crashes and PTSD from **the American Family Physician (AFP) journal**  
<https://bit.ly/3haBlaJ>
- Info on witnessing violence and PTSD in children, also from **the AFP journal** <https://bit.ly/3AjQhuY>
- “What is Complex PTSD (CPTSD)?” from the **CPTSD Foundation** <https://bit.ly/3dBow7b>
- **Medical News Today** on supporting a partner with PTSD <https://bit.ly/3dzG5EL>
- Info on PTSD and abusive relationships from **Caring Communities** <https://bit.ly/364jSuk>
- An overview of EMDR (one type of PTSD treatment) from the **American Psychiatric Association**  
<https://bit.ly/3xc4XKy>

## Preventing Caregiver Burnout

We give our BEST care when we are also taking care of ourselves! Make time to recharge, even with a short moment that's just for YOU. Connecting with other caregivers is another powerful form of self-care. Learn more about our One-to-One Caregiver Peer Support program on [our website](#).

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