

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder develops in some people who have experienced a trauma, or a series of traumatic events. In PTSD, the brain may remain in a state of hyperarousal causing a range of negative symptoms. **"Patients need help to change the habitual brain patterns created by trauma and its aftermath"**, Sebern F. Fisher, *Neurofeedback in the Treatment of Developmental Trauma: Calming the Fear-Drive Brain* (New York, Norton, 2014). As a result, the part of the brain that responds to perceived threats becomes stuck in a state of permanent readiness, or *"fight, flight, freeze"* response.

In the past, PTSD diagnosis was typically associated with returning veterans. Today, the diagnosis has expanded to include any significant trauma (physical or emotional) that causes a change in mental or emotional function and stability.

A few examples of individuals who may fall into this category include first responders, accident victims, domestic violence victims, and veterans.

You may have PTSD if you have:

- Experienced a traumatic event, or series of traumatic events
- Feel as if you are reliving the traumatic event(s)
- Experience high anxiety or uncharacteristic anger
- Feel as if you are on-guard all the time
- Have insomnia or poor sleep
- Feel distant or detached from others and your life

Quick Facts

- 9.2% of Canadians will suffer from PTSD in their lifetime
- Not everyone who experiences a traumatic event experiences PTSD
- PTSD symptoms don't always appear immediately after a traumatic event
- PTSD symptoms vary from person to person

Source: Canadian Psychological Association

Symptoms of PTSD

Insomnia

Isolation

Nightmares

Avoidance

Difficulty Concentrating



Flashbacks

Withdrawal

Easily Startled

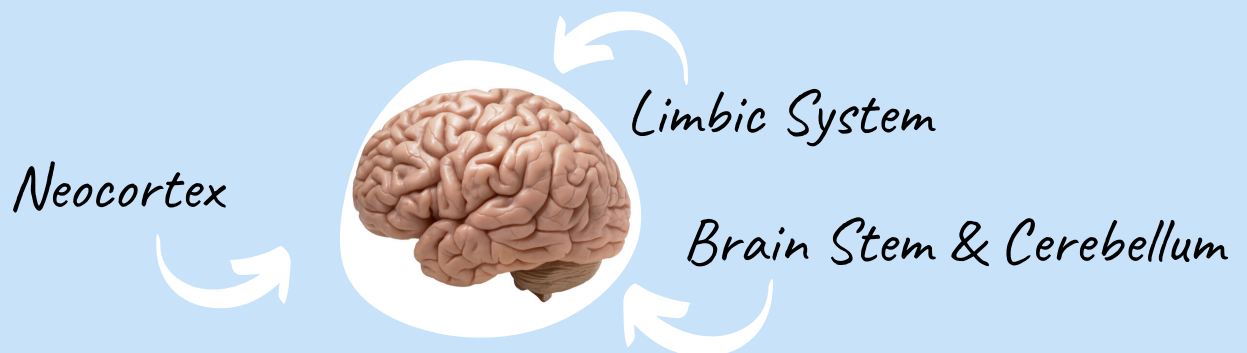
Fear of Dying

Unable to Feel Pleasure

(CAMH, 2019; NIMH, 2019)

How Trauma Can Affect Your Brain

PTSD is your brain's way of trying to regain control after a trauma. When you experience trauma, different areas of your brain are engaged:



The effect can alter your behaviour in specific ways that include:



Enhanced threat perception



Difficulty making decisions



Reasoning becomes harder

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After trauma, the world is experienced with a different nervous system.

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Van Der Kolk, B., *The Body Keeps The Score*, 2014