

Pain Foundations

Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Trauma

Three out of four Canadian adults are exposed to a traumatic event in their lifetime. Trauma is commonly divided into these three types.

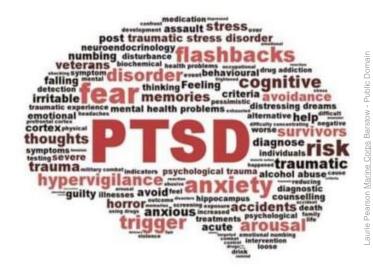
- Acute trauma results from a single distressing event such as an accident, assault, or natural disaster.
- Chronic trauma results from repeated and lengthy exposure to a distressing event, such as such a long-term illness, domestic violence, or war.
- Complex trauma results from multiple distressing events that might or might not be related.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the name for when the ongoing symptoms of trauma continue for more than one month. PTSD can seriously affect your ability to function. About one in ten Canadians will develop post trauma symptoms. Not all people who experience trauma will develop PTSD.

Symptoms of PTSD

PTSD is a real mental health issue. Symptoms include:

- Having nightmares, thoughts, or memories of the event(s) when you do not want to.
- Trying hard not to think of the event.
- Avoiding people, places or situations that remind you of the event.
- Feeling disconnected from people and your surroundings, or feeling numb.
- Feeling on edge and on guard, and startling easily.



Rates of PTSD are higher for people with chronic pain.

Trauma and pain

Studies suggests that people with a history of trauma or PTSD might be more likely to have chronic pain.

Chronic pain changes your brain and nervous system. Often this leads to your pain system becoming oversensitive and overprotective. Trauma and PTSD also keep your nervous system overactive and in the stress state.

There is treatment for trauma and PTSD. If you have trauma or PTSD, treating it might improve your pain experience.

www.fraserhealth.ca

What to do if I think I have PTSD

A good place to start is speaking with your doctor or any health care professional you feel comfortable speaking with. They can provide you with direction on next steps and help you find the support you need.

Your doctor might make a referral for you to go to a psychologist or psychiatrist. If you are not able to get a referral from a doctor, you can do the following:

- Make an appointment with a psychologist or other mental health professional for further assessment.
- Contact your local mental health centre.
 Go to www.fraserhealth.ca and search for "mental health centres".

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Resources

Websites



ACES Too High

Read news reports on research about adverse childhood experiences.

Trauma, PTSD and Chronic Pain - Pain BC

Read an article about trauma, PTSD, and chronic pain.





Wellness Together Canada

Choose from a variety of resources including learning tools, counselling, and a community of support. Resources provided at no cost.

This Way Up

Explore a variety of courses and coping tools, including an 8-lesson course for PTSD based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.





PTSD Association of Canada

Read a variety of resources and personal stories. This website is for those who suffer from or are at risk for PTSD, and those who care for traumatized individuals.

Understanding PTSD - Veterans Canada

Read answers to many common questions about psychotherapy, and learn the role of specific health professionals.



Programs



Surrey Women's Centre

Get a wide range of crisis, court and counselling services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and other forms of family violence. They also run SMART, a 24-hour mobile crisis service.

British Columbia Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Learn about therapeutic services for males who have been sexually abused at some time in their lives.





Moving Forward Family Services

Find free short-term counselling and/or low cost long-term counselling by telephone and online.

Mood Disorders Association of British Columbia

Find a weekly peer support group on PTSD. Free of cost.

