

Post traumatic stress disorder

Definition (based on ICD-10)

Symptoms occur within 6 months of the traumatic event of exceptional severity. A probable diagnosis can still be made if onset was more than 6 months after the event if other causes have been ruled out.

In addition to evidence of trauma there must be repetitive, intrusive recollection or re-enactment of events in memories, daytime imagery or dreams. Conspicuous emotional detachment, numbing of feelings and avoidance of stimuli that cause recollection of trauma are present but are not essential.

History

1. Enquire about the event, what happened, when and where did it happen, how many people were involved, anyone injured, how did you feel at the time?
2. Do you have any problem remembering the incident?
3. Do you avoid thinking or talking about it?
4. Do you try to stay away from reminders of the event?
5. Do you have repeated disturbing memories, images/flashbacks or thoughts of the events?
6. Do you ever feel that you are reliving the experience?
7. How do you feel then? (autonomic arousal)
8. Do you have trouble falling asleep?
9. Do you ever dream about it?
10. Do you get startled easily?
11. Do you feel that you are always on guard?
12. Are you able to experience feelings as before? (emotional numbing)
13. Have people mentioned that you lose your temper quickly?/Do you feel that you get upset easily?
14. How has it affected your life?
15. Are you able to carry out your normal day-to-day activities?
16. Have you retained interest in your hobbies and interest?
17. Ask about depressive symptoms
18. Suicidal thoughts/self mutilation
19. Substance abuse
20. Past psychiatric history

Acute stress reaction (based on ICD-10)

Transient disorder of significant severity in response to exceptional physical or mental stress. Symptoms appear within minutes of impact of stressful event and disappear within 2-3 days. Partial or complete amnesia for the episode may occur. Symptoms include: daze, disorientation, agitation, over activity, anxiety, poor concentration and dissociative stupor.