

# Employee Assistance Program

## Signs, Symptoms, and Treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

**Every year millions of Americans are affected by unexpected tragedies and natural disasters.**

PTSD can occur after people experience or witness a life-threatening event including combat, natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, serious auto accidents, assault, sexual abuse, or the sudden death of a loved one.

There are four types of PTSD symptoms:

- **Reliving the event.** This may take the form of nightmares or flashbacks, when people feel the same fear and distress as when the event took place.
- **Avoiding activities, people, or places that are reminders of the event.** People may find it too difficult to think or talk about the event and instead keep their feelings bottled up.
- **Negative changes in beliefs and feelings.** Sometimes these changes make it difficult for people to trust others or have close relationships and they may be easily irritated and angry.
- **Feeling jumpy or keyed up.** This may result in problems concentrating, sleeping, and being easily startled.

While it is normal to have stress reactions after a traumatic event, most people recover from their experiences. However, if symptoms go on for weeks and interfere with daily life, people may need professional help to find relief. Symptoms to watch for include:

- **Feelings or emotions that last longer than four weeks**
- **Ongoing feelings of distress**
- **Disruptions to work or home life**



### Treatment for PTSD

It is important for anyone experiencing PTSD to be treated by a doctor or mental health professional who is experienced and trained in PTSD. The main treatments for PTSD include psychotherapy, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT); medications; or both. Some people will need to try different treatments to find what works best for them.



Employee Assistance Program  
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