



Department of Minnesota
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Brain Science Chairman, Barbara Hopewell

One of the studies at the Brain Science Center is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Why, because an estimated 12-15% of veterans experience PTSD at some point in their lives.

What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

A disorder in which an individual has experienced, witnessed, or learned about a traumatic event that involved actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence.

The condition may last months or years, with triggers that can bring back

- Intrusive memories of the event (e.g., flashbacks, nightmares)
- Dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks, feeling as if the event is happening again)
- Intense distress or physiological reactions to cues that remind them of the trauma

Individuals may experience avoidance symptoms:

- Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations related to the trauma
- Avoidance of activities, places, or people that remind them of the trauma

They may experience negative alterations in cognition and mood:

- Inability to recall key aspects of the trauma
- Distorted beliefs about oneself, others, or the world (e.g., feeling unsafe, guilty)
- Exaggerated startle response
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Individuals may experience irritability or outbursts of anger, reckless behavior, hypervigilance, and sleep disturbances.

It's important to note that PTSD can vary in severity and presentation. A qualified mental health professional can provide an accurate diagnosis and develop an appropriate treatment plan. Treatment includes different types of trauma-focused psychotherapy as well as medications to manage symptoms.