

DSM-IV & DSM-IV-TR:

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

When an individual who has been exposed to a traumatic event develops [anxiety](#) symptoms, reexperiencing of the event, and avoidance of stimuli related to the event lasting more than four weeks, they may be suffering from this [Anxiety Disorder](#).

Diagnostic criteria for 309.81 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

(cautionary statement)

A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:

- (1) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involve threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others
- (2) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror. **Note:** In children, this expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior

B. The traumatic event is persistently reexperienced in one (or more) of the following ways:

- (1) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. **Note:** In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of trauma are expressed.
- (2) recurrent distressing dreams of the event. **Note:** In children, there may be frightening dreams with recognizable content.
- (3) acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, [illusions](#), [hallucinations](#), and dissociative [flashback](#) episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when [intoxicated](#)). **Note:** In young children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur.
- (4) intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
- (5) physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and [numbing](#) of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

- (1) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma
- (2) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma
- (3) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
- (4) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
- (5) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
- (6) restricted range of [affect](#) (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)
- (7) sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span)

D. Persistent [symptoms](#) of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the following:

- (1) difficulty falling or staying asleep
- (2) [irritability](#) or outbursts of anger
- (3) difficulty concentrating
- (4) [hypervigilance](#)
- (5) exaggerated [startle response](#)

E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than 1 month.

F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning.

Specify if:

Acute: if duration of symptoms is less than 3 months

Chronic: if duration of symptoms is 3 months or more

Specify if:

With Delayed Onset: if onset of symptoms is at least 6 months after the stressor

Also: [Acute Stress Disorder](#), battle fatigue

- [National Center for PTSD](#)

Practice Guidelines

- [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#) (children and adolescents)
- Allen, Jon G. [Coping With Trauma: A Guide to Self-Understanding](#) (Paperback - June 1999)
- Bremner, J. Douglas (Editor) [Trauma, Memory, and Dissociation \(Progress in Psychiatry, No 54\)](#) (Hardcover - February 1998)
- [Desert Bloom](#) *John Voight plays an alcoholic veteran and father figure apparently suffering from combat trauma as well in the coming of age film about a teenage girl growing up in Nevada within sight of an early nuclear test.*
- **Fearless** [VHS](#) | [DVD](#) Jeff Bridges, Isabella Rossellini (1993)
- Fullerton, Carol S. (Editor), Ursano, Robert J. (Editor) [Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Acute and Long-Term Responses to Trauma and Disaster](#) (Hardcover)
- Horowitz, Mardi Jon [Stress Response Syndromes: PTSD, Grief, and Adjustment Disorders](#) (Hardcover - August 1997)
- **House of Cards** (1993) [VHS](#) | [DVD](#) Kathleen Turner | Tommy Lee Jones
- **K-PAX** (2001) Kevin Spacey, Jeff Bridges [DVD](#) | [VHS](#)
- [Nuts](#) (1987) VHS Barbra Streisand
- [The Prince of Tides](#) VHS Nick Nolte, Barbra Streisand 1991
- Saigh, Philip A. (Editor), et al [Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Comprehensive Text](#) Hardcover
- Simon (Editor), Robert I. [Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Litigation : Guidelines for Forensic Assessment](#) (Hardcover - February 1995)
- (Contributor), et al [Traumatic Stress - The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society](#) Hardcover 1996
- **Up in Smoke** [DVD widescreen](#) | [VHS](#) Cheech Marin, Tommy Chong 1978

- Van Der Kolk, Bessel A. [Psychological Trauma \(8233\)](#) (Hardcover - December 1987)
- Wambaugh, Joseph **The Onion Field** [Paperback](#) 1974 | [VHS 1979](#) *A criminal accused of murdering a police officer ties up the criminal justice system for years while the police officer who survives the murder of his partner appears to suffer from PTSD.*
- Yehuda, Rachel; McFarlane, Alexander **Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder** [Paperback](#) 2000 | [Hardcover](#) 1997
- Yehuda, Rachel (Editor) [Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](#) (Hardcover)
- Yehuda, Rachel (Editor) [Treating Trauma Survivors With PTSD](#) (Paperback - May 2002)