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Reactions To Traumatic Events – Part 2

By Dr. Dorree Lynn

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What to expect: Women A woman's work is never done—so goes the saying — and during this time of uncertainty and healing, perhaps this is truer than ever. Women tend to be the ones responsible for keeping the home fires burning, children's schedules organized, and the their own lives in order. Plus, she is often involved with community connections, house of worship attendance, food shopping, and even getting her own nails done—often she wears so many hats, she can loose her own head. I can't recall ever having a working woman in therapy who didn't instinctively have her children's schedules easily retrievable, tucked away in some corner of her brain, whatever else she may have been involved in. Women tend to worry about family tradition, past, present and future in a way that men rarely do. Women are hard wired to nurture their young and to keep the family together.

During this turbulent time, more than ever, women, need the opportunity to talk, to be listened to and to be nurtured. Some women may want more sex, others who were previously interested, shun lovemaking and can't bear to be touched—well maybe held—but nothing more. Men, it helps to remember women that women tend to carry the vulnerability of family ties, hearth and home, children's skinned knees and fearful hearts. Be gentle with your loved one. Do the unexpected. Bring her flowers, make dinner reservations, and take care of her as best you can. She needs your support right now. And if you give it, you may be surprised at all you reap in return.

This is a time for careful thoughtful conversation and random acts of kindness. The need to express love is greater than ever. Gather your woman in your arms and tell her you love her. She needs you now. As you also need her. If she tries to push you away, take a deep breath and don't go. It is only her fear overtaking her neediness. Sidestep her terror, stay steady, and continue to speak wise words of comfort. This is one time being an old fashioned man, may come in handy. Don't toss out what eons of evolution have given you. A strong man who can use logic as well as offer his tender heart can bring you and your loved one closer. Almost any relationship can make it through good and easy times. Real relationships are broken and strengthened when the going gets rough. Whatever you do, this is a time to stay around. Don't get going.

Life is too hard to do alone,

Dr. D.

Dorree Lynn, PH.D.

Dr. Dorree Lynn is co-founder of the Institute for the Advanced Study of Psychotherapy and a practicing clinician in New York and Washington, DC. Dr. Lynn served on the executive board of the American Academy of Psychotherapists and she is on the editorial board of their publication, Voices. She is also a regular columnist for the Washington, DC newspaper, The Georgetown. Dr. Lynn is a noted speaker and well known on the lecture circuit.

Dealing With Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

By Trevor Dumbleton

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For those who experience it, post-traumatic stress disorder can be an incredibly debilitating disease that can prevent you from living a full life. This disorder can bring back moments of severe stress so clearly that it is almost as though you are reliving the moment all over again.

First diagnosed in war veterans, post-traumatic stress disorder was initially named "shell shock" then "battle fatigue". However, by the time of the conflict in Vietnam, it was given the name "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) in order to give a clearer idea of what exactly is at work. As well, it is not only found in war veterans. In fact, it can be seen in people who were abused as children, rape victims, people who have to clean up after disaster, or anyone else who has undergone severe stress at any point in their lives.

Unfortunately, the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder is still in its infancy. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and neurologists are still coming to grips with the disease and its causes and effects, but they are learning new things constantly.

In a strictly biochemical sense, PTSD has its root causes at the moment of stress itself. It seems that at moments of extreme stress, the biochemical system in charge of adjusting to stress is reset, like a computer. It is as though the system is so overloaded that it has to shut itself down and restart. Unfortunately, this also causes the mind to quickly return to that moment when it had to start and stop, which can cause flashbacks to the moments when the shock occurred.

The other results of post-traumatic stress disorder include anger, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, memory problems including amnesia, or any of a host of other mental disorders. Unfortunately, many of these disorders are treated individually without concern for the root cause. This is particularly worrisome because approximately 3.6% of adults between the ages of 18 and 54 are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and the vast majority of them go undiagnosed and untreated. As well, women are twice as likely as men to experience PTSD after a sudden shock.

For those who have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, there are some ways to treat

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it. The most common form of treatment is through psychotherapy. A therapist has several tools at his or her disposal and can work with the sufferer to root out the causes of the disorder and help cure it. As well, a psychiatrist is the best person to talk to in order to actually diagnose PTSD in the first place, helping the sufferer to at least understand what is happening. Knowing what is wrong is the first step to curing it, after all.

Group treatment is also effective, as it allows people to talk about their feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety, or depression with others who feel the same way. This allows people to get comfortable with one another and talk about their feelings openly and honestly. By getting the issues out in the open, it almost spreads it out and allows the trauma to dissipate by opening it up to other people.

However, there are some medications that can be used to help treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

Mostly, these drugs are used to treat some of the symptoms of PTSD, such as depression or anxiety, allowing the sufferer to at least alleviate the condition. Most of these drugs take some time to work before they actually show results so, if you have been put onto medication for PTSD, give it a few weeks before you start expecting relief.

However, studies have shown that the best way to treat post-traumatic stress disorder is to nip it in the bud shortly after the trauma has occurred. The usual method is to sit down with someone who has suffered a trauma about 3–10 days after the trauma occurred. This will allow the feelings to be fresh, while it also helps people relieve the trauma by bringing it out before it hides itself in the mind. There has been some success with this sort of treatment, though it does require the trauma to be recognized early.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a surprisingly common disorder that often goes unnoticed and untreated. However, with improvements in therapy and medication, there is new hope for those who suffer from this debilitating disorder.

Trevor Dumbleton is the owner of <http://www.LowerYourStress.com/> a categorized resource directory for everything to do with stress.



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