Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) affects over 14 million American adults (4.4% of the adult population) in any given year.

If you have gone through a traumatic experience, it is normal to feel lots of emotions. You may start to feel better after days or weeks, but sometimes, these feelings don’t go away.

You may be suffering from PTSD.
PTSD is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event.

It is natural to feel afraid during and after a traumatic situation. This fear triggers many split-second changes in the body to respond to danger and help a person avoid danger in the future.

Nearly everyone will experience a range of reactions after trauma, yet most people will recover from those symptoms naturally.

Those who continue to experience problems may be diagnosed with PTSD.

People who have PTSD may feel stressed or frightened even when they are no longer in danger.

According to the National Center for PTSD, about seven or eight of every 100 people will experience PTSD at some point in their lives.

Who can develop PTSD?

Anyone can develop PTSD at any age.

This includes war veterans as well as survivors of physical and sexual assault, abuse, car accidents, disasters, terror attacks, or other serious events.

Not everyone with PTSD has been through a dangerous event.

Some experiences, like the sudden or unexpected death of a loved one, can also cause PTSD.
What are the signs & symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

**Young and Older Adults**
For many, symptoms may begin almost right away after the trauma happens. For others they could appear weeks or years later

- Repeatedly thinking about the trauma.
- Being constantly alert or on guard.
- Avoiding reminders of the trauma.
- Physical symptoms such as chronic pain, headaches, or diarrhea
- Substance abuse
- Feelings of mistrust
- Panic attacks
- Relationship problems
- Depression and/or Suicidal Thoughts

**Children (Under 6 years – Teens)**
Children and teens can have extreme reactions to trauma, but their symptoms may not be the same as adults.

- Forgetting how to or being unable to talk
- Acting out the scary event during playtime
- Being unusually clingy with a parent or other adult
- Wetting the bed after having learned to use the toilet

**Looking Beyond Treatment**

**How To Support Yourself in Trauma Recovery**

1. **Connect with Friends and Family.** Meaningful social connections can have a positive impact on healing.
2. **Relax and Get Enough Rest.** Lower your stress with healthy relaxation techniques and sleep regularly.
3. **Develop an Active Daily Routine.** Exercise and a Healthy Lifestyle will boost energy and improve mood.
4. **Refrain from Self-Medicating.** Avoid drugs/alcohol, it can delay recovery or lead to abuse and addiction.
5. **Limit Caffeine.** Caffeine can trigger anxiety and may disturb your sleeping patterns.
6. **Limit TV Watching.** Watching the news or shows could trigger symptoms, avoid disturbing news before sleep.

**Medications**
Selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors or SSRIs, is used to treat the symptoms of PTSD. It lowers anxiety and depression and helps with other symptoms.

**Psychotherapy**
Although it may seem painful to face the trauma you went through, doing so with the help of a mental health professional can help you get better. There are many different types of therapy.

**Support Groups**
This form of therapy, led by a mental health professional, involves groups of four to 12 people with similar issues to talk about. Talking to other survivors can be a helpful step in your recovery. Share your thoughts to help resolve your feelings, and cope with your memories/symptoms and find comfort in knowing you’re not alone.
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Georgia Crisis & Access Line
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This information was provided by the National Institute of Mental Health. For additional information, please visit www.nimh.gov