

Acu News

"All things are difficult before they are easy."- Chinese Proverb

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Ways to Combat PTSD Naturally

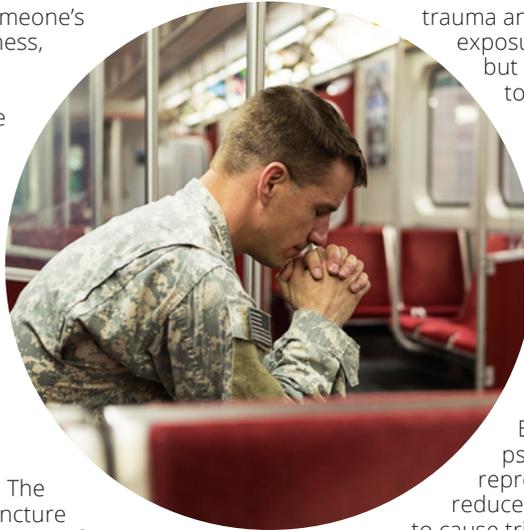
PTSD is a physiological disorder that can result from being exposed to a traumatic event. The disorder results in several different symptoms including anxiety, irritability, insomnia and flashbacks. The effects of post-traumatic stress disorder in someone's life can be far reaching. Feelings of hopelessness, shame and despair, problems at work or with relationships, serious health problems, depression, anxiety and drug or alcohol abuse are not uncommon. Getting help can be hard at first, but can have a great impact for helping PTSD.

Acupuncture, MSRP & NADA

The Military Stress Recovery Project (MSRP) is a unique program that provides free community acupuncture to veterans and active duty soldiers with PTSD and their family members.

Treatment in a MSRP clinic is unique for several reasons. Patients are treated in a group setting, sitting in comfortable chairs. There is an environment of calm and support. The patients are treated using the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) protocol, a series of 5 needles placed in one ear. The program is designed to address all the needs of people with PTSD.

The MSRP clinics have been very successful. Patients report stress reduction, improved mental clarity, improved energy, enhanced performance, better sleep, fewer bad dreams and headaches, less anxiety and depression, reduced anger and pain, improved general health and better relationships.



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive therapy involves talk sessions between a therapist and their client. The therapist will help the patient work through their trauma and memory and can include techniques such as exposure therapy. This type of therapy is not for everyone but has been proven effective in beginning the steps toward recovery from a traumatic experience.

Relaxation methods

A lot of the times, anxiety and high blood pressure come with PTSD. Practicing daily relaxation methods can help lower stress and anxiety due to PTSD. Meditation, yoga and breathing exercises can all help lower heart rate and calm the mind. Spending time in a quiet place in nature can also have calming effects. Taking the time out each day to practice mindfulness can be very beneficial in lowering PTSD symptoms.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing

EMDR therapy is practiced with a trained EMDR psychotherapist and involves allowing the brain to reprocess traumatic memories. It has been shown to reduce recovery time for PTSD patients and is less likely to cause triggers from the trauma than talk therapy. The American Psychiatric Association and Department of Defense/Veteran's Administration recognize it as an effective treatment.

Guided imagery

Guided imagery is a meditation therapy that can be used at home and involves listening to dialogues to help reduce anxiety, depression and other symptoms of PTSD. The recorded dialogues are listened to a few times a week and involve imagining oneself in nature and a calm environment.

How to Help Someone with PTSD

Watching someone you love and care about suffer from PTSD can be hard. You may feel like you don't know how to act around them or want to help but don't know how. Below are ways to support those with PTSD.

Educate yourself

The first step you can take in helping those you care about is learning more about PTSD and what it means to suffer from it. Take the time to understand the causes, symptoms and effects to better understand what your loved one is going through. When things get tough, it is easy to get frustrated with someone who is dealing with this disorder. Remember that they are going through something out of their control and your support is important.

Listen, be patient

Sometimes it can take a person dealing with PTSD a while before they seek treatment. While it is important to encourage treatment, they also need to come to this decision on their own. Being supportive and a good listener in the meantime can be very helpful for their ultimate choice to seek treatment. Don't push

them to talk, but let them know you are there to listen. If they do want to talk, try to listen without judgement so that they feel comfortable to keep coming to you.

Make sure to take care of yourself

Being around someone who is struggling with PTSD is not only hard for them, but can take a toll on you mentally as well. Make sure you are taking care of your physical and mental health as well. If you feel overwhelmed or stressed, don't forget to take time for yourself to destress and relax.

Understanding triggers and symptoms

If you are living with someone with PTSD it is important to recognize their triggers. Triggers can be anything, sometimes an object, person or place that reminds them of their traumatic experience. Ask your loved one to explain what triggers them so that you can best help them avoid those triggers. Make a plan for when triggers or a flare up of symptoms do happen and ask them what you can do to help when this happens.

There are many resources out there to help those with PTSD as well as their families and loved ones. For family and friends of veterans, visit www.ptsd.va.gov for more information and help.



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