

Virtual Reality Exposure Program for Combat-Related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



What is PTSD?

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can occur after witnessing a traumatic life-threatening event. During this type of event you may have thought that your life or other's lives were in danger. You may have felt that you had no control over what happened. Trauma events can include:

- ♦ Combat or military exposure
- ♦ Terrorist attacks
- ♦ Physical or sexual abuse or assault
- ♦ Serious motor vehicle accident
- ♦ Natural disasters

PTSD symptoms may begin soon after the trauma but may not appear until weeks or months later. If symptoms last longer than 4 weeks, cause you great distress or interfere with your work or home life you are probably struggling with PTSD.

Symptoms of PTSD:

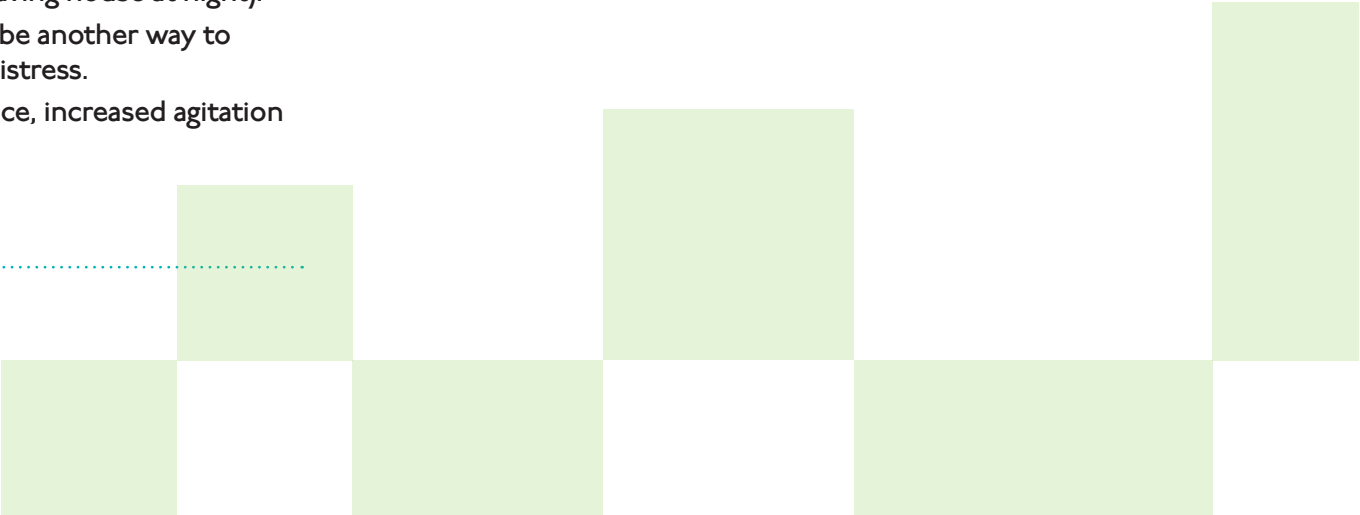
Reliving the event in the form of intrusive flashback memories, thoughts, worries or recurrent nightmares. There may be environmental triggers that bring back memories or elicit anxiety (e.g., hearing a car backfire may bring back memories of gunfire).

Avoiding situations, people, and other triggers associated with trauma event (e.g., if trauma occurred at night may avoid leaving house at night).

Feeling numb. Keeping distant and withdrawn may be another way to avoid fearful memories and associated emotional distress.

Feeling keyed up, jittery, hyperarousal, hypervigilance, increased agitation can lead to difficulty sleeping and concentrating.

Other common PTSD symptoms:

- ♦ Drinking, drug problems
 - ♦ Depression
 - ♦ Relationship problems
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Virtual Reality Exposure Treatment (VRET)

VRET allows individuals with combat-related PTSD to effectively learn to cope with their intrusive distressing memories and associated anxiety reactions. Following an initial diagnostic evaluation, to ensure that this treatment is appropriate and then to develop an individualized treatment plan, individuals are placed in a three-dimensional computer simulated environment which approximates the original trauma memory. With the therapist's guidance through every stage of the treatment, patients learn to gradually tolerate and cope with anxious thoughts and physical reactions as they are repeatedly exposed to feared situations. The goal is for patients to recall their trauma memories without feeling overwhelmed by anxiety symptoms and function adaptively in their every day lives.

For additional information please contact:

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