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Stress

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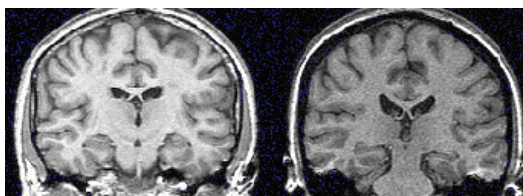
J. Douglas Bremner, M.D.

The Invisible Epidemic: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Memory and the Brain

How Psychological Trauma Affects the Hippocampus and Memory

Childhood abuse and other sources of extreme stress can have lasting effects on the parts of the brain that are involved in memory and emotion. The hippocampus, in particular, seems to be very sensitive to stress.⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾⁽¹⁰⁾⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹²⁾⁽¹³⁾⁽¹⁴⁾⁽¹⁵⁾⁽¹⁶⁾ Damage to the hippocampus from stress can not only cause problems in dealing with memories and other effects of past stressful experiences, it can also impair new learning.⁽¹⁷⁾⁽¹⁸⁾ Exciting recent research has shown that the hippocampus has the capacity to regenerate nerve cells ("neurons") as part of its normal functioning, and that stress impairs that functioning by stopping or slowing down neuron regeneration.⁽¹⁹⁾⁽²⁰⁾

We recently conducted a study to try to see if PTSD symptoms matched up with a measurable loss of neurons in the hippocampus. We first tested Vietnam combat veterans with declaratory memory problems caused by PTSD.⁽²¹⁾ Using brain imaging, these combat veterans were found to have an 8% reduction in right hippocampal volume (i.e., the size of the hippocampus), measured with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), while no differences were found in other areas of the brain (Figure 1).



NORMAL

PTSD

Our study showed that diminished right hippocampal volume in the PTSD patients was associated with short-term memory loss.⁽²²⁾ Similar results were found when we looked at PTSD sufferers who were victims of childhood physical or sexual abuse.⁽²³⁾⁽²⁴⁾

More recent studies have since confirmed hippocampal volume reduction in PTSD⁽²⁵⁾⁽²⁶⁾ These studies also show that hippocampal volume reduction is specific to PTSD and is not associated with disorders such as anxiety or panic disorders.⁽²⁷⁾

Further study on the question of memory and the hippocampus may some day shed light on the controversy surrounding delayed recall, or so-called "recovered memories" of childhood abuse. The hippocampus plays an important role in connecting and organizing different aspects of a memory and is thought to be responsible for locating the memory of an event in its proper time, place and context.

We suspect that damage to the hippocampus following exposure to the stress brought on by childhood abuse leads to distortion and fragmentation of memories. For instance, in the case of the PTSD sufferer who was locked in a closet as a child, she had a memory of the smell of old clothes but other parts of her memory of the experience, such as a visual memory of being in the closet or a memory of the feeling of fear, are difficult to retrieve or completely



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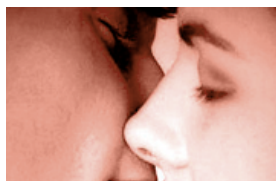
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Closest or a memory of the feeling of fear, are difficult to retrieve or completely lost. In cases like this, psychotherapy or an event that triggers similar emotions may help the patient restore associations and bring all aspects of the memory together.

This new understanding of the way childhood trauma affects memory and the brain has important implications for public health policy. One example would be the case of inner-city children who have witnessed violent crimes in their neighborhoods and families. If this kind of stress can cause damage to brain areas involved in learning and memory, it would put these children at a serious academic disadvantage in ways and for reasons that programs such as Head Start may be unable to address. Studies confirm this: in war-torn Beirut, traumatized adolescents with PTSD, as compared to non-traumatized adolescents who were without PTSD, lagged behind in academic achievement.⁽²⁸⁾

PTSD and Other Brain Areas

Besides the hippocampus, abnormalities of other brain areas, including medial prefrontal cortex, are also associated with PTSD.

The medial prefrontal cortex regulates emotional and fear responses.⁽²⁹⁾ The medial prefrontal cortex is closely linked to the hippocampus. In several studies we have found dysfunction of both the medial prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus at times when patients were suffering from PTSD symptoms.⁽³¹⁾

We believe that dysfunction in these medial prefrontal regions may underlie pathological emotional responses in patients with PTSD.⁽³⁰⁾ For example, we sometimes see a failure of extinction of fear responses — a rape victim who was raped in a dark alley will have fear reactions to dark places for years after the original event, even though there is no threat associated with a particular

dark place. In a study using combat-related slides and sounds to provoke PTSD symptoms, combat veterans with PTSD had decreased blood flow in the area of the medial prefrontal cortex. Significantly, this did not occur in combat veterans without PTSD.³² We saw similar results when we compared women with PTSD and a history of childhood sexual abuse to women with a history of abuse but no PTSD.

The good news is that treatments for PTSD result in an improvement in the brain.⁽³³⁾ Treatment with paroxetine for up to a year in PTSD patients resulted in significant improvements in verbal declarative memory and a 4.6% increase in mean hippocampal volume.⁽³⁴⁾ Studies have also shown an increase in right hippocampal and cerebral cortical brain volume with treatment with phenytoin in PTSD.⁽³⁵⁾ Still other recent studies have also shown changes in the brain with psychotherapy for PTSD.

Conclusion

Traumatic stress, such as that caused by childhood sexual abuse, can have far-reaching effects on the brain and its functions. Recent studies indicate that extreme stress can cause measurable physical changes in the hippocampus and medial prefrontal cortex, two areas of the brain involved in memory and emotional response. These changes can, in turn, lead not only to classic PTSD symptoms, such as loss and distortion of memory of events surrounding the abuse, but also to ongoing problems with learning and remembering new information. These findings may help explain the controversial phenomenon of "recovered" or delayed memories. They also suggest that how we educate, rehabilitate and treat PTSD sufferers may need to be reconsidered.

August 1, 2011

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 Posted Tue, Aug. 27, 2013 at 11:35 am EDT

zwzqynya
 (USA) シャネル
 Posted Tue, Aug. 27, 2013 at 5:32 am EDT

Confused, Concerned and Really Annoyed

My friend claims (she tends to make things up sometimes and I'm not sure if she's lying here) that she was sexually abused during nap time at a day care when she was 7. She has social problems but still thinks that everyone likes her. She is obsessed over one of our middle school teachers and sometimes it's hard to tell whether she's bisexual or not. She talks about marriage and coitus with our female teacher, but says that she's just joking. It's hard to tell whether she still has the same feelings about our teacher because she calls her terrible names and complains about her teaching skills and says some horrible things. But then when we mention her 'mixed feelings' she gets defensive and says that she loves her. She becomes stressed over the littlest things and it affects everyone around her. On several occasions she has mentioned suicide and threatens to hurt herself, but, again, says she was bluffing. She talks about injuring and killing other classmates who also have social problems and who we personally have problems with. She has no manners and describes what she feels inside her mouth while she's eating, picks her teeth and eats it, always says she wants to throw up (even while we're eating), interrupts us while we are talking to others, yells at younger children while she's attempting to run the class for the same female teacher while she is out, doesn't think about anything she says, and is unbelievably rude to anybody she dislikes even the slightest bit. As we just graduated 8th grade into high school and plans on taking up 3 electives instead of 2, so she needs to take

independent P.E. She thinks that marching band will count because she heard that from somebody, and plans on lying to the person in charge, because she is in Pit, which is motionless throughout the whole marching show. I'm not sure whether this is a psychological problem having to do with her unfortunate past, or just something many people experience. She becomes EXTREMELY STRESSED. Help?!

Posted Fri, Aug. 23, 2013 at 3:44 am EDT

Concerned Boyfriend

To Hope2013... Thank you very much for your reply it means so much that you did ! I had not thought of going to see one myself so I can be more of a help to her but that is something I am going to look into, also unfortunately we live in the UK but the idea of group therapy does sound like something she would at least consider. I hope you and your husband have a great and happy life together. You will always be in my prayers thank you again !!

Posted Tue, Aug. 20, 2013 at 2:06 am EDT

Hope2013

To the concern boyfriend... As I survivor of child sexual and physical abuse I can tell you that there is hope... It takes time to recover... With help. Maybe you can contact a therapist (knowledgeable about sexual abuse) and you can go for some visits to help you help your girlfriend and of asked your girlfriend to go see her... Tell your girlfriend that if she does not feel comfortable with this therapist she can stop seeing her and look for one that she "clicks with". I once had to stop seeing a therapist because she made me feel worse :(. Eventually I found one that I liked and been in therapy for some years now. I have come along a long way... And my husband and I are doing much better. I also started attending a support group of survivors of sexual abuse, this was a huge help because I met other people who have been through the same thing. Google the following agency: survivors healing center in Santa Cruz California. They are great and perhaps can send you some information if you do not live close by, if you do maybe your girlfriend can attend some of their groups. I know of people who drove from San Francisco! Finally please just be there for her, she has been through so much pain, betrayal and hurt that she probably feels like she can trust nobody. Prove her wrong that she can trust her, and don't ever ever ever bring up her past as ammunition during arguments or to get back at her... This can further create feelings of betrayal and mistrust. Remember to also take good care of your self, my husband also started to see a therapist because we realized that the trauma was affecting him too. It is road that ultimaly has brought is closer but at times was not easy, just remember that neither she or you are to blame. And if you really love this girl don't let the abuser tear your love apart, with help your love will become stronger. Best of luck..

Posted Sun, Aug. 18, 2013 at 3:52 pm EDT

Concerned Boyfriend

My Girlfriend has gone through so much and I don't know what to do, Please help me ! So I'll start of by saying if anyone can please give me any kind of advise I would very much appreciate it. As a young child around the age of 5 she was molested by her step father repeatedly, I am unsure for the duration of time but just once is bad enough ! as well as mental abuse and beatings. She has told me about a boyfriend she has had in the past that had beaten her for the best part of the relationship and as well as being very controlling to the things she did. Last but not least the last guy she was with cheated on her. I Think its safe to say that she has had some bad luck in her life !! but the thing is this is the reason I came her in the first place... because she is now having Flashbacks to when she used to get beaten by her ex...but when the Flashbacks are over she curls up into a ball and says she's in great pain in her ribs and back which were from what she's told me her ex's favourite place to hit her ! This has been happening more and more every day. I am in love with this girl like crazy and I am willing to do whatever it takes to help her and see she is happy but I don't know what to do. She refuses to see anyone about it and all I can do is love her and comfort her which unfortunately does not help at all. When we met each other she was a self harmer... she would cut her self open at the top of her legs, she even did it once when on the phone to me, This was a problem at first because I didn't know how to deal with it but thankfully a few hours research and I had a solution to our problem and she has not cut since (that I know of) but with this its not so easy ! I cant just sit her down and talk it out because its involuntary and I cant force her to go see someone about it. I am lost for options and its just messing up my own head trying to think of ways so help her !! so if anyone can give me some guidance on what I can do to help her please do.

Posted Wed, Aug. 7, 2013 at 9:38 pm EDT

patty brey

Thank you for this article. I am printing it and showing it to my housemate to educate him. I have PTSD and I hand out flyers regarding child sexual abuse and this is a seminal topic to me. I hope those below read about the Magic Mushroom cure for PTSD...I am giving that article to my physician...it sounds the MOST promising yet of anything!

Posted Wed, Jul. 31, 2013 at 11:49 am EDT

Z

Im here to get a solution/treatment to the problem. I have been sexually molested 2x, have had a seriously stressful job to the point that I left it and now Im unemployed. What concerns me the most is that my memory is a blank and seems to be deteriorating rapidly. Also, I don't seem to listen/understand instructions clearly. I come to my own conclusions! The article talks of available treatment. QUERY: Which is the best specialist/therapist to see? IS IT A PSYCHIATRIST? Can a NEUROSURSEON assist with the memory?

Posted Wed, Jul. 24, 2013 at 6:02 am EDT

DC Craver

Our childhood was in constant turmoil. Daily beatings, neglect, accusations, assumptions, humiliation, caged in our homes and mother was brutalized on a regular basis. We were the children who lived in a home with a WWII Vet who got "shell shock" or as they now call it PTSD. He received a disability for his issues while we suffered at his hands. Many of the kids are not with us anymore do to the destructive nature of the disease. I have it, my other sister suffers with it and my last brother has it as well. Our flashbacks are just as real as our fathers. Out days are full of paranoia and control issues. We can anger in a moment and assume the worst at any given moment. Our minds run wild with possible scenarios. Where is the help for survivors of a person with PTSD.

Posted Wed, Jul. 24, 2013 at 12:31 am EDT

ce sturdy

Traumatized by constant negative expressions and actions from peers and family members. I am now 56. The ultimate trauma occurred 8 yrs ago when all my sisters and their friends came in and threw out 2/3 of my belongings, placed some in storage where I am ever reminded daily of what happened, constantly reliving it. I could elaborate but too much to say,will try to find ways to cope.

Posted Fri, Apr. 5, 2013 at 1:12 am EDT

Bob Black

Most stressful situations that precipitate PTSD have occurred in adult males who predominated 'fox hole' situations. Very few of them will raise a white flag so they can yell to the enemy, "Wait, wait . . . I haven't had my brain scan yet". So, we really don't know if there is (1)merely a correlation between PTSD and hippocampal volume, or (2) a cause and effect relationship. That females who've been raped and report child sexual abuse show a similar similar posturing of PTSD to hippocampal volume indicates that there might be a cause-effect relationship between PTSD and childhood sexual abuse. But the male PTSD's weren't questioned about this.

Posted Mon, Jan. 28, 2013 at 4:32 am EST

Gary

My doctor has told me for 1.5 years now that I have a fast growing tumor/tumors in my lungs. I have had eight biopsy attempts with five taken with open surgery, with this doctors chosen pro's, but they found nothing but dead tissue. One trip to Oregon Health Science University and one minor surgery told me I had grade 2 follicular lymphoma, which I knew in 2003. I am so frustrated with him. I have had so many test done, needles jammed into me, bone taken, as well as bone marrow. I now have great fear of this doctor and what seems to be needless test and procedures. I over used my anti-anxiety meds, and now my primary care doc has reduced them and cut my pain meds in half, causing even more stress. I now fear seeing him also, that he might take more of my meds away. I am about beyond myself with fear of lung cancer he suggested. He also told me my condition was definately NOT follicular lymphoma. I no longer trust him, but my dov referred me to him, so I guess I need to see him at least once more for bone marrow and bone biopsy. I really do not even want to see him again; I don't think he can be trusted. What's wrong with me?? What do I do? Gary

Posted Sat, Nov. 3, 2012 at 3:52 pm EDT

dlj

I woke up a few days ago in a panic attack which is pretty normal for me to do. This time however I saw (in my mind, it is hard to explain) a little girl scared and making herself as small as possible. I picked her up and held her close to me. Now she is with me all of the time. I have decided to stay far away from my family/abusers and I am thinking that is why she is here. I don't know but I am telling you it is weird.

Posted Sun, Sep. 16, 2012 at 9:22 pm EDT

fineetombvien

(New Zealand) ASFDSGDGADGSDAFHSAD GJTRSDGSADADFHGAD ZVXZSDGSADADSFHGADFS ZVXZADFHGDADFADFHAD YUYASDGASDDSFHGADS YUYSDGSADADSFHGADFS QWERSDGSADSDGASD ERYERZSDGASDSDAFHSAD

Posted Tue, Aug. 28, 2012 at 8:09 am EDT

Anonymous

I am grown but therapists cannot help me. A couple of my kids and my mother beats me to death and my kids have been in numerous hospitals and their fathers have nothing 2 do with them. My mom haS THE MOney and I cant work due 2 their actions....what am I 2 do bcuz their counselors are not fixing anything. I NEED HELP!!!!

Posted Tue, May. 29, 2012 at 12:28 am EDT

justin

i have weird stuff goin on in my head like for example when i do something i do it over and over again and cant get it out of my head and same when i say something i cant get it out of my head what is wrong with me

Posted Tue, Mar. 20, 2012 at 10:19 pm EDT

RRT

Almost 25 years ago I was assaulted by my teacher in front of the classroom. For a long time I didn't want to think about it but over the last few years it's been like a force of power that takes over my real self being. What could be done?

Posted Fri, Mar. 16, 2012 at 5:22 pm EDT

landy

Anyone have a tips on how to control rage? related to I assume PTSD, MDD, and panic attacks with agoraphobia I dont really know. I have to get this rage under control. I am enraged about NOTHING. Mostly in the morning. But it is extreme. I don't even know who I am anymore

Posted Sat, Feb. 25, 2012 at 3:49 pm EST

Diana

Amol, I am not a doctor. I will try and help. I would suggest that something must have happened in your life before your first panic attack that is causing these symptoms. Maybe if you can get to the root of whatever happened, you can find relief in your symptoms. Don't be afraid of the symptoms. When you feel a panic attack coming on, tell yourself it is just your mind's way of protecting you. I hope you can get some help. Talk to someone you trust. All the best to you.

Posted Thu, Feb. 23, 2012 at 1:42 am EST

Amol

i was a free bird before my first panic attack. It found me when i was 19 and took away my life since that day. I was extremely frightened, freaked, my heart bounced every millisecond, i felt like it will burst into pieces and take my life away. This feeling freaked me more and i got an extreme sensations in the center of the brain , i felt i am getting stroke or something else. All this ended after 15 minutes, but leaved a strong imprint on my life. I am facing the worst condition of my life and dying everyday. please let me know if anybody got this strong sensations in the center of the head during the full blown , extreme panic attack. Reply

Posted Wed, Feb. 22, 2012 at 1:59 pm EST

SS

MY HUSBAND IS 100% DISABLED VIET NAM VET WITH PDST HE HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF SEXUAL BATTERY BAND CONFESSED TO IT AFTER BEING TAKEN FROM SUICIDE WATCH. HE DOES NOT REMEMBER ANYTHING BUT FACES A LONG PRISON SENTENCE NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE HAS BEEN FOUND

Posted Mon, Feb. 20, 2012 at 9:42 pm EST

Laurie

It's amazing to me that there are blogs out there that talk about boyfriends, problems with husbands, clothes buying and recipes that haven't had a new comment in two or three years... but this? Not so much. We are amongst the "invisible epidemic". I am part of it. I'm 60. I've been going through this all my life. My childhood. Oye! My childhood. My marriage! Oye! I will get through this. I will love people anyway. I will persevere! Don't give up folks! We are a part of the "16% reported to have been traumatized by age 18". Stand together folks. They have to be told. We ALL know that percent is way higher! Persevere folks! Love will win!

Posted Mon, Feb. 13, 2012 at 1:45 pm EST

No name

I was sexually abused as a child. It has made my adult life very difficult. I am at age 43 the most high functioning I have ever been after blood sweat and tears of working through it with counselling, diet, herbs, self help books, bad days and picking myself up again. All this on my own. The cost of sexual abuse has meant I never had children and have never been married. My confidence battered. The relationships I fall into are unhealthy choices. Even though I have progressed in some ways, I struggle to admit that I am afraid of men if anything sexual comes into the equation. it triggers ptsd, and its hard to turn off. this happened to me recently, a married man in an open marriage liked me, and wanted to meet up. i was intrigued and he was so charming but I was quietly revolted by the arrangement anyway but thought I could cope with it, cope with just being a friend, but no the second meet up i was anxious around him and panicky, and keep thinking all he wants is sex from me. i did end it but i spent a whole day and night after with Ptsd. its been three years since i have been with any guy in any way. i would like to believe there is someone out there for me who will understand but its so hard to shake off the fear that men represent. also i think you are all amazing people having survived some harrowing journeys, and if I had a wand I would wish it all away and mine too. but i hold onto hope and wanting better, and wish that for you all too.

Posted Sat, Feb. 11, 2012 at 6:36 am EST

Jennifer Creque

I have gone through sexual abuse by my entire (male) family, from an infant to 16 yrs old. After the age of 12, they went from physical, sexual abuse to looking @ me through holes in the walls & doors. They stole undergarments & made comments. Also as a child I was physically abused with a leather strap, which cut into my skin, leaving bloody gashes from head to toe, front to back. Caused me to miss a lot of school. The sexual abuse happened two to three times a day, 7 days a week. I knew I was going through a lot now, @ 32, but had no idea it was this bad of a condition & diagnosis. OMG!

Posted Fri, Feb. 10, 2012 at 7:59 pm EST

muzammil

sir, i after i read the above report of post-traumatic stress disorder. my brother is a patient of stress he was living in Saudi for a long time. SOME MIND STRESS like he is feeling someone talking to him in his ears, he is not talking to anybody but he is feeling that he is talking to somebody. i am feeling all other works are normal but only that he hears someone is talking to him. what is this problem i want to know more to correct his daily activities. please help me understand his problem and solve the problem as soon as possible.

Posted Thu, Feb. 9, 2012 at 7:37 am EST

TB

I found this site because I asked Google a question. I've read many of the stories on here and almost everyone touches me due to a life experience or a mental symptom or abnormal thought. I was also sexually abused as a young boy and for the last 24 years I've kept it in never talking to someone about it. I've also developed many thoughts and fears that are only found in television. I don't know if I have PDS or another diagnosis I just know on the outside I'm caring, loyal, and a true friend if you need one but on the inside where the real truth is I know it's all a lie. Nobody knows who I really am because I've told so many lies all my life even to my closest family and friends. I once tried to be completely honest with my wife and tell her exactly who I am and now we are divorced, her exact words were "I'm not human enough for her because humans love one another". I would love to get a chance to chat with somebody and maybe connect with someone who understands.

Posted Wed, Feb. 1, 2012 at 11:25 am EST

Roshan

Last several months I keep on doing things repeatedly, like locking my vehicle check at least 3 times, locking door checking 3 times, checking my credit card is there or not frequently. Each time verify things.. what is this problem.. solution for this ?

Posted Wed, Jan. 25, 2012 at 8:09 am EST

Anonymous

It's comforting in a way to read others' experiences with PTSD, and how it all affects us the same way. I'm not able to speak to anyone who understands. I have PTSD due to sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse from a child up until now (in my late 20s). One recent experience triggered me and since then, I have had great difficulty with being able to function in general. I cannot be around any men, period (anymore). I used to be able to tolerate everything, but it's like I've finally become so isolated in my own world because I find a lot of things I just have to avoid at this point, so that I am no longer triggered. I feel that no one understands. When/if I try to explain, it's chalked up to a bad relationship ending, or just some abuse a long time ago that I should have recovered from. Unless someone has been in my shoes, it's (from my experience) impossible for them to ever understand what I'm dealing with. It's isolating. I feel even worse when something so traumatic and gut-wrenching in my life is overlooked and almost trivialized when I do share it. The only other alternative is to keep it inside, since no one understands anyways - which leads to its own array of unhealthy coping mechanisms and behaviors. I guess the only shred of peace I get is when I feel there really are other human beings out there who try to bring awareness to this issue, and other victims are able to share their stories, so that none of us feels alone, misunderstood, overlooked, and not validated. No one deserves to go through this pain, and I think we all deserve to be at peace some day, free from memories and a past that we cannot seem to break away from, no matter how hard we try. Therapy, treatment, and talking about this over and over to different doctors/psychiatrists/therapists is exhausting and taxing emotionally, even spiritually. I wish I could work through my triggers once and for all so I can move on and stop living in fear.

Posted Tue, Jan. 24, 2012 at 12:40 pm EST

Editor

Kelly, comments must be approved first.

Posted Wed, Jan. 4, 2012 at 12:20 pm EST

kelly

why cant you when you say add your comment

Posted Wed, Jan. 4, 2012 at 11:47 am EST

kelly

I was in a relationship for 20 years. My ex who was always in a grumpy mood, would always take his problems out on me and this would start arguments with every little thing i did. Hating all the arguing, always told i was wrong, told not dont argue, not being able to tell him how i felt ect, i started shutting down not fighting back and always walking on egg shells. My new boyfriend is great. He was able to bring me out of my shell because i am very shy person. He wants me to talk openly about my feelings when we argue but i cant, i still shut down my mind going blank not knowing what to say. I was almost raped when i was 5 by my grandmothers boyfriend and my crying brought my mom up but i dont think that bothers me. I hurt my back at work and had surgery and a year later was in a car accident. I do have memory problems and was told it was due to my back pain. IM not sure if i have an dissociation problem? Or a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Posted Wed, Jan. 4, 2012 at 11:45 am EST

anonymousguitarist

@FreeSpirit, I definitely know the feeling. My father stopped when I asked to, claimed to be "Redeemed" and "Pure" and that it would never happen again, and then 2 years later when I turned 16 I get the "just wondering, is the answer still no?" Pedophiles almost never change. I would say never, but I've also never got struck by lightning and hit by an asteroid simultaneously while riding a unicycle. :p Because those have about the same likelihood as a pedo actually developing a conscience. Anyway, I also get the desire to be alone. I just see so much deceit in people, along with other things, that it just sickens me. That's why at work, I volunteered to transfer to the one part of the store where you have almost no human interaction all day. Nobody else there likes it, but I couldn't work anywhere else in the store without getting angry at every customer lol. I don't think about the past much, and when I do I don't feel bothered by it anymore, but I know it affected my psychological well-being, and who knows if I ever will recover. I don't even know if I want to... In that situation I would tell your siblings, when they call you, kindly where he can shove whatever it is he needs. :) But that's just me. :) And I used to feel suicidal too, I know just hearing that "You are an amazing person, it will get better, you have no reason not to be confident" etc only helps on the surface, at least for me that was the case... But I just found something, well.. many things actually, that I could hone, call my own, and be proud of. Music has become my escape. If someone tries to belittle me and make me feel terrible, I can just know in the back of my mind that can't play guitar like me. Can't compose like me. And that's what keeps me goin'. :) Focus on the good, not the bad. Everybody is talented in some way, you just have to find it. And when you do, be proud of it. And that is my monologue #2, I hope it can help in some way. :)

Posted Wed, Dec. 28, 2011 at 2:22 am EST

FreeSpirit

Hi. I am 47. My brother mollested me from when I was 5 (earliest memory) to 21 years of age. I have done a lot of work with this, still have issues, but am managing. When i was 15, my father, a man whi I respected, trusted and looked up to, took me to target practice (I was the only female in my family who was interested in hunting)... Alas, my father turned to me and said: "I'd really like to eat you out"... I was devastated. This still hauntes me today. I want nothing to do with him, and this has affected and is still affecting my life today. What he said to me feels a whole lot worse than what my brother did to me and I don't know why. I feel suicidal, have low self-esteem, no confidence and plainly hate my life. I am seeing a psychotherapist, however have yet to deal with this. It sickens me just to think about it. My father is also a very mean person. He demeaned me in front of relatives, beat me and my worst beating was on my 11th birthday. I despise him tremendously. I want nothing to do with him, yet my siblings always call me when he needs something. WTF? I am a good person, am very generous, have a wonderful 21 year-old, but as of late just want to be left alone... Thank for lsitening B

Posted Mon, Dec. 26, 2011 at 12:42 pm EST

Kim

I dislike crowds, I have mental tam-trumps (tampering but grinding teeth and forces myself to cry but holds it in when someone walks in. I has when people stare at me. I dislike when people tap me. I am easily irritated. I cause distraction to myself at times.. What is wrong with me?? Oh and btw I'm 13... What disorder or anything do I have??

Posted Sun, Dec. 25, 2011 at 11:13 pm EST

Josephine McGuinn

No one can help you, you can only help yourself with positive thinking. I was abused by three family members and have PTSD. Life has to go on, do not blame yourself. Council-ling can help, talking to people helps to make you cry and release some of the anger.

Posted Fri, Dec. 16, 2011 at 8:10 pm EST

anonymousguitarist

Part 3 I learned, through all the years of observing, how he manipulated those around him by understanding people's flaws and using them. So I used the skill on myself in order to understand myself. We learn a lot when we focus our attention inward in 3rd person.. Once I did that, I suppressed the low self-esteem, I no longer think any less of homosexuals, and I learned to keep my mind open to opinions of all kinds from all people. Simply put, I adapted and gained a great amount of wisdom from the whole situation. Maybe I should thank him (Kidding, kidding, I'd rather throw him in a volcano. :p) Despite the fact that the major indicators of PTSD are gone, I am wondering if there are some I haven't noticed that are still affecting me. For instance, I have unbelievable difficulty paying attention at times. There are certain patches of many areas of time in my distant AND recent past where I remember very little, just bits and pieces. I feel like remembering things is very difficult for me at times, and just assumed that I was just a forgetful person. It is insightful to read that memory fragmentation could be caused by the PTSD... I also don't fear much of anything; I'll walk in front of a car speeding in a parking lot watching them only with my peripheral vision, thinking "you don't have the balls to hit me" in my head. My one fear is of tight spaces; claustrophobia. And situations that have no easy way out and are, figuratively, "tight" such as marriage, contracts, etc, make me uneasy. These, I can live with though. My lack of genuine emotion tends to ruin most relationships eventually, but that doesn't bother me too much. My memory is very important to me right now as I try and finish college and I'm noticing that I am

forgetting more and more. This article may have pinpointed the cause for me, or maybe not. Either way, I'm tired of being really intelligent, but really forgetful at the same time. I'd love to fix this problem. Thoughts?
 Posted Tue, Dec. 13, 2011 at 11:06 pm EST

anonymousguitarist

Part 2 The first thought that comes to mind is "Oh well thank God he didn't beat you or force you, that would have been so much worse.." Not necessarily. When you are forced, beaten, you have no control. "It wasn't your fault, there was nothing you could have done" is a completely true statement. With me, I just had to say one word, but for so many years did not. = Personality crack number 1, I felt like I had to prove to myself that I wasn't a homosexual, and had homicidal thoughts (just thoughts mind you) whenever a fellow high-schooler would throw the typical insult "dude you're gay" (typically in a combo package with another insult). We found out more and more about him, such as the fact that he never had ANY sexual interest whatsoever in women, my mother just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and he needed a cover. He was able to convince a woman for 30 years that there was love for her when it never existed. He admitted this in a "truth letter" his therapist asked him to write, along with the fact that the only reason he was able to "get it up" was the hope of having a son. = Personality crack number 2, feeling like the only reason I was conceived was to be a living, breathing sex doll for a pedophile. What a noble and awe-inspiring reason to be born. To exist.

Posted Tue, Dec. 13, 2011 at 10:56 pm EST

anonymousguitarist

Part 1 So, I've always considered it a possibility that I have ptsd. However, many of the symptoms aren't present. Some were shortly after, but I managed to "will them away". :p Possibly because of the nature of the abuse: I'm a male who was abused sexually and on a regular basis by my father from when I was younger than 12 until around 16. I'm 20 now. Here's the kicker: during the abuse period, he never "forced" me, or beat me. He started by just "letting" me watch him masturbate when I was younger than 12 and when my mother was gone to work. My mother was a strict Christian, and sheltered me from everything she could, so.. I honestly did not have a clue how wrong it was. Things started to escalate when I turned 12 and hit puberty. He would never force me, merely ask if I "wanted to play". My father. What child wants to disappoint their father, their idol and role model?? So I kept just agreeing to it. It became to where it was at least a weekly occurrence, whenever my mom was at work and he was not. He began to tell me "don't tell your mother, you know how she is. She'll get mad, and we'd probably have to get divorced." Also, he began to do more and more, and ask more and more of me. Not going to go into specifics, but it went pretty much all the way. Finally, as I got a bit older I started to hate it more and more, I knew it was wrong but I waited so long.. I kept figuring he would have enough and stop, but no. Finally, at 16 he asked one saturday morning and I said no. Shortly after, my mother had been noticing some "attitude problems" so she thought a therapist would "straighten me out". (ha.ha.) So that was when it all came out. But anyway, the repercussions: I hated all homosexuals, cut myself (not to "make the pain go away" but honestly because the pain felt.. good.), and other personality problems. These faded, and now I can think of him without getting angry or filled with pain. In my mind he's no more significant than a conniving manipulative stranger.

Posted Tue, Dec. 13, 2011 at 10:53 pm EST

Kristie

I'm a 44 year old woman that was molested by my brother and recently remembered him allowing many of his friends molest me as well. I blocked it out for many years and find bits a pieces coming back to me. I've started EMDR and HIGHLY recommend it to any men or women that are trying to deal with any type of ptsd. It is freeing and allows you to feel all those things we have avoided for so long.

Posted Mon, Dec. 12, 2011 at 2:29 am EST

Moose

Oh, that is OK. You do not have to answer my personal medical questions. There are a whole lot of idiots out there who THINK they know the answers for me. I have been trying to tell them for about a decade now what the problem is.

Posted Sat, Dec. 10, 2011 at 5:22 pm EST

no name

hi, I know im much younger than all of you and probably think i am so young and even innocent enough not to understand how you feel.or what you went through. But really i find it so painful to read the stories and it makes me sick to think of the things that people do.Especially to such innocent beautiful people.Although i have never experienced anything close to what you all have. sure some bulling and emotianil mental and some physical damage from my metally ill brother who is five years older than me much taller and larger than me i find that i am pretty close to normal. i read one book that inspired me so much about how wrong of what people did to you that when i grow up i want to put a stop to things lik brothels and all different ttypes of abuse and i know that one day you will be able to read about in newspaper and on tvs so we can all work together to stop these things togethr (im 12) and i want you to know that i love you and god loves you pls respond to my message...

Posted Fri, Dec. 9, 2011 at 6:46 pm EST

Mary Lynch

Thank you

Posted Sun, Nov. 27, 2011 at 3:18 pm EST

Sonja

I am a 40 yr old woman & was physically, mentally & sexually abused and with everything I've been through I wanna knww how long it is suppose to take to recover? Ive been to counselors, meeting psychiatry group,

etc. I even went thru support. I ran away @ 13 then when I ran away to my dads n he was so far gone on dealing n smokin crack drinkin etc,mom was an alcoholic; stepdad molested me; in every relationship till now I've been metally n emotionly n physically abused also. I have a great man in my life n cause of my past i still lie sometimes, i have drug issues etc the problem is hes over it and i want to knw how long does it take to recover cause my defensiveness comes in to play; old habits arise and it is like I'm back in an abusive relationship, but now I'm the meaner one etc. I need to know will I ever recover? When will I finally feel ok again? Sonja

Posted Sun, Nov. 27, 2011 at 8:58 am EST

maria

Look into: tapping,EMDR,mindfulness raw vegan diet to detoxify body and heal, listen to tones on youtube, meditation, bodywork like thai massage and chi gong, re-birthing breathwork, transpersonal psychology, GOD BLESS!

psychology...COB DEB...

Posted Sun, Nov. 27, 2011 at 8:05 am EST

shelley

I have autism and ptsd. I want to study and write essays to finalise my year at college I only have one left to do, but am physically and mentally exhausted. I am taking anxiety meds and vit b etc but triggers still creep in. I did cbt meditation music but so many childhood issues relating to ptsd is relentless. I am now 50 epilepsy two years ago, polarised all my events in order and clarity the pandoras box was opened and sorted with absolute clarity. I wrote my testimony and gave it to all the family that made me a black sheep and always criticised me. They should be in jail. But too old to sue them. I will never get any resolution except that most people have possibly 4 ptsd episodes in their life, but I have had 11 severe ones. No details but four of them were attempts on my life. I feel in a void today, just want to write my essay, was supposed to be handed in yesterday but I cant. I put together a photoshop montage of about me, plus a brief outline of my life which I shared with students. Now I feel I should have left it alone. It triggered things again. I feel I shared in a sensible and brief testimony the quiet person I am. Why etc, and how my emotions are still raw. But, feel I let the cat out of the bag and now feel they will be gossiping about me behind my back. Will I ever feel at peace even when I have opened up only to feel, perhaps I should have not done this. I needed people to understand why I am so quiet and distant. See my dilemma, it is always a no win situation, I just cant keep my mouth shut, and sharing it scares people off. Didn't think I would type anything much here., Dont see any replies or the point why others have shared there testimony on here, as I don't see anyone coming forward to help any of you or us. Thank you for reading (((hug))) keep well xx

Posted Fri, Nov. 18, 2011 at 1:22 am EST

Kim

I'm 44 years old.I have epilepsy. I was always made fun of, by my own family and kids in school, for my weight from the side affects of the medications, what I looked like. My father would whip us bare skin with a leather belt. I can remember it all the way to when I was 3 years old. Being used to lay your problems on me, blame me, until all I could do is cry. Now when people curse around me, fight, I shake and cry. It reminds me of my father. My sister-in-law held my epilepsy against me. I could not touch my niece or 2 nephews. My 2 uncles used me to get at each other 1 would call me names then I would run to the other crying. It would go on back and forth constantly until I would run to somebody crying. Then later, if not the next day, I would have a seizure or 2. I'm in counseling for 21 years now.

Posted Wed, Nov. 9, 2011 at 6:06 pm EST

Nidhi

I am 25 years old man. I was having a girl friend past three years. Now it got break up. Many times we did touchings during these period. If she got married with other person means will she get happy life? Or she will remember her past? If she got memory about her past means what will happen?

Posted Tue, Nov. 1, 2011 at 7:59 am EDT

Anonymous

AT the outset, the note regretting for reluctance to answer personal medical questions is very disappointing. Any medical query is primarily a personal issue I guess! If there is any further possibility of discussion, I would like an answer here. I shall get back to it later on. Thanks. Regards, Debraj Deb, Agartala Tripura Northeastern India.

Posted Tue, Nov. 1, 2011 at 6:12 am EDT

gemma

I need help and direction. My youngest won't sleep I am depressed and also suffer from anxiety attacks. My docs don't do much to help. I'm on my own and can only put up with crying for so long before I move her into

my bed. I'm so tired and feel do upset and alone I don't know what to do or how to cope!?! Please!

Posted Tue, Oct. 25, 2011 at 3:46 pm EDT

beth jacobsen

why dont you ask my cousin untill u get your facts right

Posted Mon, Oct. 24, 2011 at 5:47 pm EDT

winnie

this explains a lot. when i was about 7 years old is when i noticed that my father had a strong liking towards rubbing my back and touching my hair. then he would insist on waking me up for school. in the mornings is when most of the molestation took place. i told my mother and she told me to forget about it. so i had to watch myself. i slept less to keep watch on whether he was coming.my grades dropped and my parents would yell at me yet i had told my mother what was bothering me. i became withdrawn from friends, i couldn't talk to anyone. i thought no one would believe me. i am now 20 years old in campus. i have reported my father to a counselor, she believed me. seeing a professional helped. i don't think he should be free. he is a sexual predator and it turns out that my mother could go to jail too. i wouldn't want my kids, if i have any in future, to even visit that house. this article helped explain why my grades have been slipping ever since. i am from Africa. you should spread out your surveys. some young people really need this information

Posted Wed, Oct. 19, 2011 at 3:02 am EDT

Timothy

I am 40 years old, and have been living by avoiding the thing I want most, close relationships. I grew up for several years in an abusive, alcoholic environment. Was even sexually abused once from what I remember. I've always felt deep shame and anxiety, a self conviction of worthlessness. It's time to find a group for support and heal.

Posted Wed, Oct. 12, 2011 at 11:48 am EDT

helloeveryone

i was also afraid to drive and I was 32 when my husband taught me, to this day i have issues but only drive on small roads and i try to stay in familiar places too, which is sad cause i love to travel so that means I am very limited...i also do not speak to my parents and siblings for different reasons, my brother is violent and my sister hates me for speaking up bout things, I never even came out and accused my parents of one thing but I did mention our relatives, who they dont even like anymore but i think its not that, but much more here..anyhow I feel very triggered and now i am dealing with the thought of wanting to punch myself in a certain area, which is odd cause I only had hurt myself with pulling out all my hair all my life, this self harm is new to me, but i am not actually doing it, its just thoughts thats all..i am 46 and am married to a good man and we have a great daughter and i am so thankful for that, i know statiscally i am lucky in that regard, but

the rest of my family really wants nothing to do with us, never wanted to come visit us or be with our and its was always us going to see them, no matter what, i come to see now that this is a blessing in disguise as they say and i am lucky they are like this cause for one i need to protect my child from them, that i know deep down, the thing is that I am being triggered now in life, by what i have no idea but something is affecting me... I always been distrustful, easily angered and I cry and get so upset and cant seem to calm down, take things the wrong way and i have no friends, people just rather not bother with me and i dont blame them really... i am trying so hard to do better...

Posted Tue, Aug. 30, 2011 at 4:29 pm EDT

Helloeveryone..

I had just read some of these stories and i was not able to keep from feeling numb, I in fact feel sick and want to cry, so I had to stop down half way through here. I had expereiced rape as a child from close relatives and people at our church, i believe in groups, my brother verified some things for me, so i know i am not crazy anymore, like i used to think i was. I deal with panic and anxiety alot and now i have weird feelings of death when i try to fall asleep at night, i see faces alot, in the sun images of them as i try to fall asleep and now i find that i am my mind that is that it will fast forward to the pic so fast that i can not make out what the pic is, kind of like falling down but not down but forward, does anyone experience this? I also have strange errie deva feelings of green grass, blue skies and summer days and then it just goes away, also a popping sound in my head...anyone else?

Posted Tue, Aug. 30, 2011 at 3:59 pm EDT

leah I

when i was ayoung girl i was in my mothers car and accidentally put it in reverse. while trying to get out i somehow front flipped and ended up halfway out the door with my shirt stuck on the lock ofthe driver door.when i reached to unhook it i flipped out the door allowing the tire to run over my head.i remember most

of this,i don't however recall my short trip to the hospital . less then 2 days and back home i was . i suffer suicidal migraines. never had a follow up, doctors fail to look at the accident as a cause to this pain. its not discussed much since my mom has permanently rulled that whole day out. she cant come toterms with my unfortunate reality.now im 21 and supposedly my brain is fine. the pressure iget in my head stays in my head since my mom don't takeit serious . no questions ever have gotten answered , i have never discussed any of it with the doctors . almost like it never happend. but doctors fail to find something abnormal in my MRI's. how much weigh can a little girls skull hold?

Posted Sun, Aug. 28, 2011 at 7:51 am EDT

Not important

After doing a little research, doing a neuropsych exam, and talking with a psychiatrist, I'm surprised to learn that my symptoms could actually match those of sexual abuse: memory problems, problems with time, unwilling to go to social gatherings, trouble speaking, nightmares, remembering certain events that everyone else remembers, and the weird one: out of body experiences. When I read the latter, I was shocked. All these years I thought these experiences where I would float up out of my body several feet were evil demons trying to take me away. I fought it at every time very strongly, but it persisted; I couldn't control it. I feel like an idiot now ;(I'm apprehensive about psychotherapy (i don't want to recall "these events" also, i'm 52 years old, I don't have time for this. I have to find a job soon. My disability is not enough to pay my bills every month. But, i tend to get fired often for forgetting things, disorganized, and unable to mee deadlines. I just freeze, and I don't even have to be thinking of the "events" that happened. My mind is blank.

Posted Tue, Jun. 28, 2011 at 12:52 am EDT

Karen

I am finally healing from 34 years of PTSD due to a motorcycle accident at the age of 15. I found a doctor who knew about Frequency Specific Microcurrent. I bought my own portable FSM machine and have been using it daily for 7 months. The very subtle, healing energy (runs on a 9 volt battery) is healing my brain and nervous system. This works! Please find an FSM provider.

Posted Wed, Jun. 1, 2011 at 8:37 pm EDT

MAX

Anyone suffering from PTSD should check out NLP. It can "cure" you in a short time. The techniques can disconnect emotional responses to specific memory/stimuli, which is ofcourse what needs to be changed. Check out "The phobia Cure" procedure and other NLP exercises. Good luck!

Posted Fri, Apr. 8, 2011 at 2:38 am EDT

Yvonne

I lost the ability to read music and play the clarinet among other things when I was traumatized as a child. Will I ever get this back?

Posted Wed, Mar. 30, 2011 at 7:37 pm EDT

AL

Hi all, I'm an air traffic controller with PTSD. Been off work since last October, after witnessing a near fatality at the airport. Two planes came within about 30-feet of each other. I've seen far, far worse actual accidents over my 23-years doing the job, things that never make the nightly news. Anyway, I found this site by just poking around. Anyone know of any good PTSD online groups? AL

Posted Tue, Feb. 8, 2011 at 3:18 pm EST

Anonymous

i stumbled across this site searching for answers on flasbacks of being beaten as a child. I don't remember my birth mother before the age of 7, just my grandmother, then she died and i was left with a woman who was apparently my mother. the flasbacks i get is of wetting the bed i did it everynight up till the age of 12yrs, and everytime i did it i would get beaten, kicked, punched, dragged around by my hair and left outside in my wet pj's for people to see how disgusting i was! She would tell me i needed to see a doctor cause i was mental and only wet the bed to piss her off. The more she beat me the more i did it, going to bed praying at night i wouldn't but waking to a wet bed, i remember being put into hospital for 6wks, she said to find out what was wrong with my head, i never did find out the real reason why! the last really bad memory of it was a everytime i wet the bed she threw the wet stuff away and never replaced it, and i remember sleeping on a rug on the floor with no pj's or blankets and being freezing cold, that breaks my heart to remember that one, i think i was only about 10yrs old. When i stopped she stopped, why i stopped doing it i don't know, but our relationship has never been the same, i have 2 children aged 2 + 1 and i will never let her have them on her own as i don't trust her. 5yrs ago she was diagnosed with bipolar, could that explain it? even though it's no excuse as far as i am concerned. But she said something the other day that made me sick to my stomach,

we were talking about children wetting the bed and she started to explain to me that it's a part of the body with is underdeveloped that causes it and it does catch up eventually.....shame she didn't think about that then!!!!

Posted Sun, Feb. 6, 2011 at 7:20 pm EST

snowflake

Hi everyone, I am sorry that all of you have experienced or are experiencing things as the result of abuse. I too have. My therapist claims i have complex ptsd from what I experienced. i just find things are not easy. The talking, talking about the details: the memories, body memories, triggers, dreams. I find 1x per week in therapy is horribly difficult and it feels like i am not important enough, that my pain isn't important enough. I feel punished and abandoned all over again. My therapist is busy...she says she will let me know when i can get in for another session. But is she really???? Does she believe me???? Why aren't I important??? The feeling of being alone is hard and unbearable at times. Is it worth it?

Posted Sat, Jan. 29, 2011 at 7:48 am EST

Patricia

I am 32 yrs old. I knew that my memory problems were from my abuse, but I did not know that forgetting my son's counseling appointments stemmed from more than just memory problems. I do remember going to counseling vaguely when I was a child and they were very uncomfortable since all it was about was my abuse. I learned from this article that I tend to forget my son's appointments are more from me not wanting to remember going to mine, and the feelings I would have after we got finished. Thank you so much for this article it has given me so much more insight.

Posted Wed, Jan. 26, 2011 at 8:58 am EST

Sophia

I'm the founder of the organisation Rape Justice, www.rapejustice.org which aims to educate criminal justice professionals on the aspects of PTSD noted above in your fantastic article and also through the brave reader comments below in order to try and increase convictions of sex offenders. just as one reader notes, there's a complete lack of understanding of the implications of trauma symptoms for the criminal justice system. Survivors are being labelled as making false allegations and even imprisoned when they cannot remember facts clearly or are inconsistent. If PTSD sufferers have been treated badly by the police etc. they must always realise its through police ignorance rather than anything intrinsically wrong with themselves and that hopefully at some point in the near future this sad sorry state of affairs will change.

Posted Wed, Jan. 5, 2011 at 8:09 pm EST

Sarah

I'm a 40 yr old survivor of child sexual abuse by both my mother and father and have also been revictimised in adulthood several times including a gang rape where I was tortured by three men and one woman. I developed chronic PTSD from the gang rape and through trying to survive and manage the flashbacks realised that the pains and symptoms I'd had since childhood and never understood (I always thought I was crazy) were PTSD from the child abuse. I feel I have been brainwashed and conditioned by my parents and have only just started to break away and be able to see the damage they have done. I find it very difficult to trust my own thoughts, feelings and beliefs and constantly have to seek reassurance from others and their opinions rather than my own. I have never managed a normal relationship and am attracted to abusive men and seem to attract sexual sadist - they seem to find me without even looking! I find such abusers trigger very strong reactions in me whereby I fall madly in love with them and fancy them like crazy but at the same time feel the pain of the abuse and mind games they inflict on me. Its not all abusive men that trigger this response only certain types. This is the only time I experience sexual attraction. The rest of the time, Im numb. I feel as though I will never have a normal sexual relationship since I only get turned on or fall in love in highly dangerous situations. I wish someone could help me.

Posted Wed, Jan. 5, 2011 at 7:37 pm EST

Mary Lou

How would I be tested to find out if I might have PTSD ?

Posted Sat, Jan. 1, 2011 at 11:06 pm EST

survivorA

I too am a survivor of childhood/ adolescent abuse and the adult child of an alcoholic. I suffer from PTSD/anxiety as well as depression. The very best advice I can give anyone is read Judith V. Jordan "The Courage to Heal" as well as anything else she has written and look into "Intergated relational cultural therapy"(IRTC) which is a type of therapy developed through The Stone Center at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA. It's a type of therapy designed by women for women. Also the Jean Baker Miller Institute at

Wellesley College as well as the books that have been written by the staff etc. I think their website is wellesley.edu.com? But I know you can google Judith V. Jordan and there will be links..Also on the Wellesley College site are podcasts of seminars...Another person to listen to at that site and who has written a lay persons book is Dr. Amy E. Banks. I enjoyed and have learned a great deal from all that I have listed above. I have not conquered all of my problems related to my PTSD but I have learned how to manage most of it through IRTC therapy, medication and knowledge. I truly cannot urge anyone enough to look into the information above, it has helped me; it has saved me from suicide, self mutilation and everyday life experiences. YOU ARE NOT ALONE! PLEASE at least look up these links or books I yearn to not only to survive but triumph!

Posted Fri, Nov. 26, 2010 at 6:29 pm EST

Sonia

After I was sexually abused by my biological father, I told my mother. She did not know what to do, or felt she did not have the resources to deal with it. This is what I tell myself at least. I still long to go back and have that strong mother who could make things right again. My inner child yearns for things to be made right. For some strong person to stand up and fix it all. This need is part of the reason why I don't move forward in my healing. I still want things to be made right. My only feeling is that my family had been torn apart and noone could put it back together again. All was lost. As a child I wanted to believe that somehow, someday things could magically be made right again. I hurt that the world is not that simple. I feel so alone. I want some outside person to come along and make me safe. Who cares about the feelings of a child who was lost in the dark so long ago? I know that I need to let that child go so that I can heal. Yet in spite of the fact that the abuse is ravaging my current life, I still want to be that child. I guess to move forward would mean to betray the child that was hurt so much. Yet I do my inner child a disservice by allowing her to hang on to lost dreams and hopes. I also want to go back so that I will not have to face all of the other losses that have stemmed from not facing my problems. I have lost so many todays while yearning for the past. It is all gone and I am angry and sad. This is the essence of the rage and selfishness that is labeled as borderline

and I am angry and sad. This is the essence of the rage and bitterness that is labeled as borderline personality. To heal I must be willing to let go of that child and face adult responsibility. The, so called, borderline personality does not want to face responsibility and uses self-absorption of childhood as a way to avoid healing.

Posted Sun, Nov. 7, 2010 at 12:38 pm EST

kc

(continued) I was a cutter and a burner from the age this happened till like mid teens...Then I started getting Tatto all the time..Well now I am 30 years old with a beautiful 16 month old Daughter...Who I call my "ANGEL BABY"..Got off all the drugs after I found out I was pregnant. And still clean now..The thing is I am having a very difficult time mainly at night it's like i never get any rest!..I wake up sitting up sleeping all the time!! It's like my body fights sleep with everything it has..So during the day it's hard for me to stay awake..It is really getting to me. Has anyone else who was abused at night while sleeping have this prob?

Posted Tue, Oct. 26, 2010 at 6:41 am EDT

Anonymous

one last thing. and this must be PTSS. because I am bad.. do not get me wrong. But the reason I am writing this is because of HIM. Yes, him. the boy that likes me and that I like. or at least I think I do. WHY MUST HE TRIGGER THIS STUFF IN ME. HE DID NOT DO ANYTHING. I am to prideful and self centered and to independent and do not know how to balance out my social and academic and work life. I am making myself sick.

Posted Thu, Oct. 21, 2010 at 8:03 pm EDT

Anonymous

And my mother and sister wondered why I had a period growing up. I do not know either. I remember when I got my menses my mother threw pads at me. I know Turner's attributes to anxieties. I know that my doctors told me that I have a type of anxiety that will be without my throughout my life. Generalized Anxiety Disorder. But it may be PTSS. I feel so dirty and ashamed after doing anything sexual with a man.. anything. Last time I did, first thing I did when I got back to my room was take a shower. I FEEL NOTHING, I just lay there like this dead body. even when I give consent. then again I have a problem saying no. once i did give a man head out of pity. he would not stop asking. oh do help. someone respond. I googled childhood sexual abuse and this PTSS website came up, and it described me pretty accurately. things about myself that I would never say out loud.

Posted Thu, Oct. 21, 2010 at 8:00 pm EDT

Anonymous

Help me. I am a 20 year old women from North Jersey. I have Turner's Syndrome, an Uncle who repeatedly touched me from the ages of 7-8 after Church on Sundays.. yes even my vaginal opening area.. a year after my grandfather passed away, another grandfather who had his funeral on 9/11 because he let skin cancer on his ear grow and kill him since he was schizophrenic and did not believe in doctors, a father who thinks he is bipolar, a cousin with downs syndrome, and I was obsessed with this boy growing up for about four years. I was not popular growing up a lot and was harassed in every way possibly, especially sexual harassment from boys. I even remember an incident when my older sister and I almost got kidnapped outside of a computer store. thank goodness my father locked all the doors! I am incredibly screwed up and have been going to counseling since the 9th grade when I got the real learning accommodations that I need, not just special education classes. I have toughed it out though, but now it is getting harder to not have..... male relations. I am so conflicted.

Posted Thu, Oct. 21, 2010 at 7:53 pm EDT

Grizly

I was raped by 4 boys at the age of 5, they left me tied up with the rope down my back and feet pulled up so when I tried to pull my feet I was choked. I passed out and ,I guess one came back and released me ... The Memory was released after I was assaulted by 4 boys at a wedding... I lost my family and have been working on my self for 25 years now ... I'm so happy that I found this.

Posted Wed, Oct. 20, 2010 at 4:12 pm EDT

Rebecca Sherlock

I am a 68 year old woman and was diagnosed with PTSD several years ago. We live in a small Oregon coastal community and I would like to find a support group that I can become part of. Do you know of any or how can I go about finding one? I see a therapist several times a month, but he doesn't know of any helpful groups. I am having more and more struggles with my problems and have no one to just talk to. I'm married, but very lonely. My family can't understand whats' wrong with me and they think I'm justnot trying hard enough to get over 'it' I have been a successful and active woman, retired from teaching, but I can't seem to relate to anyone, even my family. Any ideas? Thank you.

Posted Wed, Oct. 20, 2010 at 3:04 pm EDT

jane doe

Hi I'm a 29 year old. Ever since I can remember I've been abused physically by my father uncle and cousins. I can't remember when I started my shamefully bad habit -- I suck and chew clothing. It's clean of course, but I'm a adult now. It relaxes me. I love coming home curling up in bed and sucking it until I doze off I get really embarrassed if any one finds out. I was nearly raped in my teens but maybe I was molested or raped and can't remember? I began I as a child how can I stop? Its hard to just stop. I crave it like I would crave food. I've only stopped when I was realy sick with a cold or flu. Sometimes when I can't taste it or smell it I don't bother.

Posted Tue, Oct. 12, 2010 at 12:09 am EDT

Stevie

I am utterly alone sometimes. I never suffered much physical abuse but did suffer an abundance of emotional abuse and still do from both parents to this day. I've had blackouts. I have days where I cannot concentrate on anything at all, I cannot move, or do anything. I can't even pick myself up to go to the bathroom sometimes. I do... eventually. But still. I'm very socially avoidant, and have problems walking in crowded places. I don't talk to my mother for long expanses and it's fine with her. She never admits to anything she has said or done. My father does on rare occasion, but most times acts just like her. It's like I can identify when they are being absurd and out of control, but it still hurts. When I was age 8 and on, I used to lay in bed all day, all the time, day dreaming. I did this until I was 17 and had to move out.

Posted Mon, Oct. 11, 2010 at 1:58 am EDT

Kerrv

I am a 40 year old adult survivor of childhood abuse by my parents, and struggle with PTSD. As a result, I have fragmented memories of my childhood, mostly negative. I have high's and lows. I have not spoken to my parents in three months because being around them too long is overwhelming. They do not recognize or take responsibility for the abuse. I suffer internally from anxiety, feelings of emptiness, and fear. I am very paranoid and do not respond well to authority. These things eat me up inside, while externally I am a good mother, loving wife, and professional.

Posted Sun, Sep. 5, 2010 at 8:14 pm EDT

Geawiel

I found this looking for something to show my doctor. I suffered from physical, emotional and sexual abuse as a child. Now I suffer from short and mid-term memory loss (I usually forget about 80% of what happened greater than 48hrs old), concentration problems, multi task problems (I have trouble sometimes pouring

water and watching tv, I'll spill the water b/c I forget I'm pouring it); and I've had numerous blackouts where I function for a period of time but have no memory of the events. I'd love to see more information about this put out there.

Posted Fri, Jul. 9, 2010 at 8:29 pm EDT

Marguerite Ogilvie

I am glad someone is recognizing the affects of post traumatic stress and that there are many people suffering from it. Perhaps medical associations need to educate doctors, so they can more easily read these symptoms and treat, guide, or refer their patients to someone who can help them I have suffered from PTSD for years, as a result of spousal abuse. At times I cannot cope with it. Doctors tend to treat this as depression and prescribe antidepressants which I find only increase the problem, to the point of being suicidal. I have not been able to get any help regarding this, and chose to deal with it on my own, through research and understanding and work to help myself. I would like to help others who cannot help themselves, and therefore I am writing a book to explain what it is like living with this, what I believe caused this, and how I am dealing with it. Thanks for this info, please publicize this, as the heading is correct: this is an epidemic and often invisible, because people do not understand it, or recognize it. It took me year to recognize it in myself, and now that I do, I can deal with it, on a daily basis.

Posted Thu, Jul. 8, 2010 at 2:36 pm EDT

Another victim of childhood sexual abuse

Another thank you; I have dark holes in my life life where I do not recall years, it is very frustrating and some people do not believe me. This article helps me realize that 'm not crazy and there is a reason for my lapse in memory.

Posted Mon, Jun. 21, 2010 at 9:31 am EDT

Gloria

I came to this website because I have had two horrible nightmares in the last week relating back to childhood sex abuse by my biological father. In addition, I was at the age of 19 when I was date raped by a guy I was dating. My mother couldn't defend herself against my father so she looked the other way about what he was doing to me. Be aware this all took place in the 50s where what went on in a man's house stayed in the house --- men had all the power. I eventually entered into a loveless marriage with the boyfriend who raped me --- back in the 50s we believed no decent man would want you if you had sex with someone else --- so I married the perpetrator. In the following years women gained power, and I was vindicated from the dominant abusive male era. I was diagnosed with PTSD in my 40s. It was an easy diagnosis for the doc. After all these years I never know when something will trigger a flashback or a nightmare and sometimes year go by without any nightmares or flashbacks. Now, in 2 wks. time there have been 2 nightmares. The first involved me as an adult in the same room with my father - I can't remember the dream in total, but it was consumed with rag - I was like a crazed animal lunging at him and screaming you do not have the power to hurt me anymore. I woke up and found I was safe in my bed. The second dream was much worse ---- he was in bed with me, I could feel his body up against me. I was trying to scream for help and believe I finally got out the word "mommy" before i woke with my heart pounding. So girls, the effects of that kind of childhood trauma will reach way into old age. I have never had a successful relationship with a man, but I did very well in a professional world dominated by men.

Posted Sat, Jun. 19, 2010 at 11:33 am EDT

bjoyous

Thank you for making me, thus others, feel less "crazy". I've thought I had PTSD licked via yoga and other means, but it comes back, especially when my Mom sends me crazy, "Christian", "Tea Party" stuff,.... Same Mom whose whole family is "very Christian", yet very perversely/inappropriately sexual, very misogynist, very supportive of the males. Earliest memories of "sex" are of cousins arriving from a home in Alaska. My sister and I were assigned to share beds with our "new" cousins. My sister and I met in the hallway, afraid to go back to our beds, and afraid to wake our parents. Later, We were babysat by the mother of these Cousins, who loved our baby brother, showed us how she could make his penis stick out when she sucked on it, ... and we were constantly harassed by these cousins to engage in sex play. Other cousins did the same, yet our parents made us feel bad for "causing problems". Then, after all this crap from cousins, Mom threatened me with a test for virginity, when I didn't even know what that was! I obviously was, no thanks to her protection. In fact, a step-daughter of her precious brother was impregnated by one of the cousins we had to fight off. I didn't even know about this child until our children were adults! I finally got to talk to my cousin. Now I'm the parent, and my baby brother is sick like the rest of her family. He exposed my daughters to porn, then posted such on our Mother's computer when he became angry with my eldest daughter. I want to break the cycle.

Posted Mon, Jun. 14, 2010 at 3:22 am EDT

Deborah

I hate ptsd because of what it does to me and to others around me. Around 9-9:30pm - 1:30am I become irritable, angry and unable to cope with anything. Of course my teens are at the ages where they want something all the time (money, food clothes, gas etc). My daughter had miscarriage etc. and it's just enough with my husband out of town to start me on a rampage screaming for everyone to leave me alone and that I hate being a mother and I feel like everyone is invading my privacy and almost raping me. I know it's an over-reaction but any noise or hearing their voices asking questions makes me even more angry as I just want to assimilate a 4 hour class I just arrived home from. What happens each night are the feelings (residual) of memories from long ago as a child, and I wish there was some kind of medication that would just block wherever it comes from in my brain so I'd have peace. sometimes i bang my head or hold it trying to find pressure points to relax and calm down. I can't imagine what people think of me at church in their chapel. I am better with quiet solitude after 10pm and gentle music, and next to nothing when it comes to any other type of contact which makes it hard on marriage. (Life is a mystery and this is almost comical).

Posted Thu, Jun. 10, 2010 at 11:37 pm EDT

Deborah

My mom used to tell me I was behind emotionally and then say disparagingly "with intelligence comes snobbery". A college professor once told me I was "a snob". Well, to be a snob or think that you're better than someone else I would think you'd have to know that first or believe something like that. I found grades I never knew I accomplished in school and then some documents for joining "sigma theta tau". I remember getting that package but I had "to survive" and work to help my family and try to "take care of" so I boxed/shelved those documents. Now how smart was that? I've had people tell me "you need more confidence" oh "you're a woman you need self-esteem" or oh, "you need humility and someone actually handed me something to read on that." lol I'm just me and trying to live and stay alive one more day. I can mess up meds terribly and if add alcohol that isn't smart. I love simple things in life. I helped a friend's daughter finish up high-school so she could start off again in college. It wasn't exactly an honest way to help someone get out of high-school but they were desperate and I helped. In one month we finished up a xxxload of papers. Then my friend told me that she was offered scholarships. lol the kid knows she has to start from the beginning at community college and as for me going back to college? Broken back, high blood pressure, anxiety and exhaustion. It's not possible anymore. Maybe it's not good to remember but once memory returns there isn't a xxxxx of alot you can do about it and have to live with it. I'm not complaining or wanting pity. I'm plain exhausted. I've had a "good enough" life for what I've lived but have grief for what I didn't know because ultimately I am happiest when helping someone else succeed and achieve. My friend has cancer and I'm not sure I can support her over the coming months/years? I don't trust myself or my memory anymore. Can I remember and function?

Posted Thu, Jun. 10, 2010 at 3:10 pm EDT

Deborah

Sometimes I am so embarrassed when I'm socially reacting to something, and I know it's an over-reaction; but at least I can recognize that more and more. I'm going to try and find a counselor (again). I've been cleaning out boxes (with my daughter) and grieving alot for what has been lost. I have pictures of great friends, unopened Christmas cards from a time long ago, and don't have any explanation for these friends. In order to live I shelved parts of my life and moved on to survive. I have pictures with co-workers I loved and then just relocated and never said good-bye.....My best friend from high-school gave me a college graduation party (I found the flyer) but I don't remember the party. another friend tells me about that event. I'm afraid to form any new friendships or go on now that I've woke up. what if I forget again? I guess that's my biggest question and fear. what if everything I've remembered and re-remembered and what I know now I forget again? I wonder if this is part of ptsd or just that I'm truly crazy or a mental deficit. At least I've known and loved with great friends although I question how good a friend I've been. I've lost my mother, grandmother and father-in-law before waking up to the reality of my life 4 yrs ago. I'm reading letters I've never read before.....my mom used to say, "better later than not at all" or something like that.

Posted Thu, Jun. 10, 2010 at 2:45 pm EDT

Anonymous

I feel so alone, I have no friends, I have a marriage that I just can't break away from....but i do have hope, one day I will get everything together and move on and have friends and a job and a place that feels safe. I tried, I tried so hard to make things good, i went to University, but it was all so stressful, I got a degree, but still didn't find a job. We have moved so many times, my husband wouldn't pay for child care, so I never got a job worth much. I had nothing to offer to get a job that would pay enough to cover my looking after my three children, no help from anyone, nothing worked out. Anyway I got my degree, I worked so hard... i wanted to do more, but it all went wrong, I never fitted in at the University, so much stress at home from my husband, he hated it that I might be able to escape from him, he wanted me just where he had got me, at home washing and cleaning. Anyway it all went wrong, I was picked on by two staff at the University, they are in a relationship, I offended the girlfriend and he jumped in and put in a complaint of Serious Misconduct against me...it has since been dismissed as a malicious complaint, but i had to go through months of awful meetings, everything so personal, making me out to be a really bad person, I'm not, but I felt so bad. i was suicidal, i had tried so hard to make things work for myself and I was dragged down by these people. I was diagnosed as having PTSD, this on top of everything else in my life was too much. Having the diagnosis has helped, given me hope that I can get over this, one day I will, its getting better now, been 9 months now, i still think about what was said about me too much, it was truly devastating to be lied about by people you looked up too, they have been sacked by the University, doesn't make me feel much better though. Still a long way to go, too much to deal with. This incident took way all my hope for the future, it made me feel vulnerable and afraid.

Posted Wed, Jun. 9, 2010 at 12:36 am EDT

BravoBilly

I am a Veteran. I am also a Survivor of other things which I prefer not to share on a public. When I began my recovery from alcoholism, all of the memories from the past came blasting in. I had to deal with them. I did it by finding counseling, 12 step groups, ACOA groups, AA, Church, and now I attend AA on a regular basis with a sponsor. It has been a long process; but, well worth it as I no longer suffer from depression and anger. When I start questioning whether anything happened to me was real or not, I stumble upon a site like this. Thanks. I was looking up increased memory disorder...LOL Hang in there guys and gals its well worth it on the other end. Just don't try to do it alone.

Posted Tue, Jun. 8, 2010 at 6:11 pm EDT

Laura

Hi, I am PTSD survivor. My story is different from most of the posters here. What happened to me was I was driving home from a job interview one day and a boy ran right out in front of my car from a heavily wooded yard. The boy died. I was not speeding or found at fault thank God. But of course that doesn't take away the fact that a young boy died. I thought I was going to be ok but the parents sued me and it made me face the accident all over again. I had coped was by tucking it away and not dealing with it. After 2 years of insurance and legal stuff, it finally ended in a civil trial in which I was exonerated. Another Thank God. Anyway my PTSD kicked in when I had to go back to the accident site, one year later with the lawyers and actually drive that route all over again. The next day, I started to experience heart palpitations. I thought I was having a heart attack. I had to stop at the side of the highway driving home and have my husband pick me up. I went to the emergency room, but of course they couldn't find anything wrong. That is because I was having panic attacks. The next day I could not drive at all. I was spaced out and couldn't function at all. Luckily, I found a great doctor who really listened with compassion. I got on medication, and I went to a therapist for 4 months. I got better. The only problem is now, 4 years later, I got very stressed out at my job and began getting panic attacks again and unfortunately back on Paxil. I don't think my brain/nervous system will ever be the same unfortunately. It's like my system is always going to be hypersensitive. I will never be the same. It stinks but I will get through it. Just wanted to share my story. You guys are not alone but we can all get through it.

Posted Fri, May. 21, 2010 at 9:45 pm EDT

Suzanne

I have not only found myself a good counselor, I have found a great group that addresses all these issues - ACA - Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families.

Posted Sun, May. 9, 2010 at 11:58 pm EDT

Lindsey

Elli, I remember you.

Posted Sun, May. 9, 2010 at 1:03 am EDT

Sherry

Shannon, I am also an adult child of alcoholics and that's where so much of our trauma stems from. I found reading books like the Janet Woititz books called "Adult Children of Alcoholics" and "Struggle for Intimacy" gave me great comfort. That there were whole books that expressed exactly how I felt was an epiphany for me. I am not the only one and I am not crazy; there is hope for me. I struggle each day, but the more knowledge and support I have the better the chance of a happy life. So please keep writing people; this a great forum to share healthy tools with each other.

Posted Fri, May. 7, 2010 at 7:26 pm EDT

DEBORAH

My sister remembers things I don't. She remembered that my dad nearly ran our car off the road with us in it because he exploded. We were screaming and on the side of a steep mountain, on some kind of dirt road. We never knew when or where the next explosion would happen or how it would happen or what to expect.

Turn right/turn left go straight/backwards and nothing was safe or right. I never sleep in pajamas-don't own them. Take baths all day to relax, have a broken back etc. And live with physical, mental, and emotional pain but I can't complain because others have so much more that I to deal with so I'm sorry for complaining. I'm remembering and didn't forget...

Posted Mon, May. 3, 2010 at 12:58 pm EDT

DEBORAH

I hope my experiences don't offend anyone. I need to tell. I've never told anyone or even known how to put into words such things. I miss my mother and remember her crying and tear-stained face as she swept up glass in the kitchen after my earth-dad exploded and food went all over the walls and her cleaning up and then her shame. It wasn't right. She helped and gave to everyone she met maybe to compensate for the shame and for not knowing how to make her children's lives better or fix such abuse and violence. It's made me a better person in that I watch and see people differently. I freak out when others judge or act self-righteous or don't respect differences. I've been judged and accepted in a parish of 10,000. You meet all kinds of people. I go ballistic when I sense judgment upon others or someone that is closed minded to others. Maybe those people should have to serve in the military and learn that life isn't one way and you can't control others or situations. You can't judge others either or condemn anyone because people are many parts/dimensions. The sum of the parts is greater than the whole and I thank god for that. Sadness, hate, anger, fear were the first feelings I could identify after many months of counseling. Happy is a hard one or having a sense of enjoyment has never existed in my life. I've been surviving it seems since I was born. I remember climbing into a refrigerator outdoors; playing around and the door closed. I screamed. It finally was opened by my earth-dad and he basically laughed at me. I comfort my kids when they are scared or hurt. I protect them. I protect them even when I don't have to or didn't need to. They knew I overreacted but that I was in their corner. My son said, "Mom it happened just like it was supposed to" but my daughter is angry that I wasn't all there as she grew up. It makes me sad.

Posted Mon, May. 3, 2010 at 12:54 pm EDT

Deborah

Triggers seem to run rampant for me these days as the memories come in like wave after waves crashing upon me over and over again. I wonder if I'm going to live through this but reading your posts gives me hope. I think; well if the vets can do this then I can too. I joined a church after my mother died. Guess which faith? Catholic. Never considered what the pastors/reverends were called. Took awhile before I caught on. I'm slow these days and wonder if I'll ever be able to help others or be a normal wife, mother, grandmother, neighbor, friend, etc. Again. All my hats are off and the show has stopped. I can't pretend anymore. I learned about the show from 12 step programs. Fortunately, I have priests who are allowing me to e-mail them as the memories flood in. (They're good ones and not abusers.) It's a parish that includes all-"all are welcome". The pastor has been criticized heavily for not excluding different people of sexual orientation and allowing all. Well, he's helped me the most and is real about life and being a human being. He's not abusive and is a decent man/priest/father but I cringe at that word father and can't seem to get around it even when I know the man behind the title isn't abusive and his main theme is dignity, and social justice for all that are marginalized, weaker, less than, vulnerable etc. I know I have challenged his patience at times but I think he's getting the picture of what makes me me and why. I react/overreact and freak out at times when I hear the word father or have to even acknowledge a human being that seems to correlate to a father. I feel so defective and low. All the education, positive thinking classes, living my strengths etc., are meaningless when PTSD hits, and it's hit full force, wears me down and makes me wonder if I can beat it. My family and husband have been affected.

Posted Mon, May. 3, 2010 at 12:42 pm EDT

Deborah

Sometimes I've wondered if it would be easier to go through a war because it would make more sense for me. Shell shock and IEDs at least have substance. When someone is sabotaging your being and "gas lighting" you then you don't know what is reality or truth anymore day in and day out. At any moment my earth-dad could or would explode and seeing my mother beat up and glasses smashed bleeding would well it still makes my nerves.....keeps me edgy. Then he'd blast crazy opera music "Wagner" and I couldn't think at all. I guess from reading this site there can be some brain changes. I've worked hard to keep my sense of self and being intact. After my mom died I wanted to give up being a nurse/caregiver/mother and didn't want my nickname of Debbie anymore. I rarely talk to my siblings or anyone and it's been 4 yrs. God bless you all and especially you who serve as vets. Tell those going into service what really happens. I'm telling my story because I want people who have children to be made responsible and to have to be obligated to parenting with sanity and maybe some laws need to be made so vulnerable children don't go through such insanity when there isn't even a real war going on. At least a war is real. What is real about domestic violence or abuse sexually for a child? You don't feel like you exist but I'm here and present now. I wonder what it would be like to sleep a whole night without continued stress and hypervigilance.

Posted Mon, May. 3, 2010 at 11:45 am EDT

Deborah

I want to also thank everyone for sharing on this site. It's hard for me to be personal. I have a hard time communicating, often am misunderstood and therefore shunned or rejected because I underreact or overreact to someone or something, and just don't know what to do or say. Trust is very difficult for me. I've had so many mixed messages and mind games played by adults or authority figures in my life. Children I still trust because they haven't learned to not be true and real. Authority figures scare me as I know they don't know what they are doing or saying all of times. They confuse me and present mixed messages and don't tell the truth. I can tell when words don't match someone's body language but then I'm sure I don't match either and people don't like me. It's a sad and lonely way to live. I don't know how to be who I am or have the freedom to be. I did hear a teaching that discussed that what happens to our bodies really does affect our inward beings, souls if you will-mind, will and emotions, intuition, conscience, and perceptions etc. and relating to others and oneself becomes very disjointed. I speak for myself because that's the way it is for me everyday. My daughter just miscarried and what has happened to her body along with a broken relationship is affecting every dimension in her life. Our bodies are good and shouldn't have to be or endure abuse through war or by others. But, life just happens sometimes and events are beyond our control. My only hope is that people like you all would understand and maybe just maybe be my friend if you met me somewhere someday.

Posted Mon, May. 3, 2010 at 11:29 am EDT

Deborah

I think about vets everyday and wonder how it must be to survive war and such experiences. I too wonder why or how I'm alive one more day but haven't gone through anything compared to what our countries vets have gone through. I wonder about children in war torn countries. I'm finally admitting to PTSD and learning that I'm sane but the people and situation experience wasn't sane but insane. I have a brother that is so confused and messed up (not in reality) and that reality hurts me all of. He's there but not there. I'm just now realizing the mind-games and brainwashing we went through by the adults surrounding us. No one should have to suffer or go through war or child abuse or abuse of any kind. I heard a saying once; "It is what it is and was what it was." I'm not minimizing trauma, but it can't be changed and although real I believe that surviving and telling of the insanity of our experiences maybe will change and stop these horrors from happening in our world. All I have is hope and hope for love and peace everyday. I gain courage knowing that there are others that know what I'm talking about and look up to vets whenever I see them. I've seen soldiers in the stores and at airports and in church at times. I want to go up and hug them but am unsure they'd think I'm crazy and don't want to offend those that have sacrificed or are sacrificing for me and our country. I want to say; thank you but a hug, a thank you seems so trite when I know how much pain and suffering that is seen and experienced. I don't know what to do or say or not do or not say.

Posted Mon, May. 3, 2010 at 11:19 am EDT

Vee

This is some heavy stuff especially when you are a vet from Iraq. There were lots of shocking surprises walking or driving into IED's. Or having mortars and rockets rain down on you. It's amazing that we still have brains, although I still question my own personal sanity. Reading things like this isn't even near the experience. This is a horrifying fight sometimes just to stay alive for today. No one should have to suffer such horrors let alone live from day to day like this.

Posted Sun, May. 2, 2010 at 8:38 pm EDT

Shannon

Your information and comments made by victims/survivors was an emotional epiphany for me. I am 26 years old. I have dealt with years of therapists, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and so on. All saying I have anxiety disorder, panic attacks, bipolar, I'm a adult child of alcoholics, with self-mutilation, bulimia, add/adhd, depression, child abuse, domestic violence, battered wife syndrome, and sooo much more. I have been given every type of antidepressants, anti-anxiety, mood-stabilizing, and much more. I have been a perfect beautiful honor students, played sports and then became a drug addict, hooters girl, stripper, porn star, pornography model, young single mom of 2 beautiful kids. I have felt out-of-place, not normal, scared, frustrated, alone, abandoned, confused, no memory, misunderstood, lost, angry, sad, people pleasing, peacemaker, slave, broken, damaged, and so much more. I realize I have had hypervigilance. Its obvious I have PTSD or complex PTSD from years of never-ending chaos. Thank you for everyone's thoughts they bravely typed and sent into this site. It has helped me today to not feel like I am the only person who feels crazy, unsure, and desiring to change my thoughts and get over the past if that is even possible. Thank you, Shannon

Posted Sun, May. 2, 2010 at 6:44 pm EDT

Deborah

Sometimes when I'm riding out a past event or memory I can't recall, I don't even know what's happening. I'm riding out a series of emotions/feelings (like) tidal waves and it is "scary" and "stressful". I have chosen to go through them as long as I can until I can't take it anymore but sometimes I feel like my mind is going to give out, and I'll go into nothingness or really go "crazy" but then perhaps I wouldn't know it so it wouldn't matter. I can either go through the feelings/memories, medicate as prescribed, drug as unprescribed, use addictions, or lose my "mind" but I'm hoping and praying that I'll make it through this. It's been 4 yrs. since I really started processing this stuff and it's wearing me out. How long can I go on I wonder some days/nights. Sleep deprivation, and just the process of processing is exhausting. I have found a Pastor who is allowing me to e-mail him (good, bad and the ugly). I told him he could just delete the e-mails but it helps writing and finding words; using words and at least hoping that someday someone will hear you. For now all I can hope for is that GOD OR A HIGHER POWER HEARS ME SOMEWHERE. I don't have too much faith that anybody really hears the cries and voice or has time in today's world for child abuse. With tsunamis, earthquakes, oil spills and I wonder if I have any right to even complain about a "little child abuse" or "ptsd". I still don't remember graduation. A friend tells me some things about my family at times that she remembers. That helps because I can't or won't remember. People have said exercise. Well, I'm just plain too tired to do anything when I'm going through a flashback of any type. It takes everything out of me. I feel useless as a person and hope for a day when I can be "doing" and "living" without being hit with nerves on edge.

Posted Sun, May. 2, 2010 at 4:08 am EDT

Deborah

Why should I be labeled "mental" "emotional" "a over-reactor" "crazy" "nuts" when in fact it was the victimizer in my life who was and is "crazy" and doing "the next wrong thing" to his family. Why should I have to be ashamed when my abuser should be ashamed? That's the crazy part: I'm bearing the shame and labeling of "loser" when in fact the abuser is the TRUE LOSER".

Posted Sun, May. 2, 2010 at 3:43 am EDT

Deborah

I was thinking that "this isn't my fault" and tonight thought; "why am I the one so humiliated and shamed?" My stepmother added to my humiliation and shame criticizing and condemning my mother's 4 kids; almost viciously. It's like we went from one abusive situation to another; one trauma after another. Perhaps the abusers should have to walk around with a scarlet CA on their foreheads for "child abuser". Perhaps they should bear the shame. Perhaps all of our victimizers should be "brought out" and told on and they should be told "SHAME ON YOU!" Anyone that shames another for any reason should be labeled ABUSER; especially a vulnerable child without defense. I hope that someday true healing can be had, but until the victimizers know what they've done, that isn't possible; at least for me. However, facing abusers is a scary notion for me and I wouldn't want to do it alone. THOSE STRONG ABUSERS SHOULD BE SHAMED!!!! I'm tired of being weak, humiliated, and feeling like a defect. It's been over 50 yrs of this. I'm worn out but not going to "GIVE UP OR SHUT UP".

Posted Sun, May. 2, 2010 at 3:39 am EDT

Deborah

It helps me to stay in the moment by repeating to myself "be in the here and now; be present; be aware of what is going around you right now." I'm not able to dissociate or deny as well anymore since "waking up" and at times that's frustrating because I have to find new ways to handle stress and memories as they flood back being triggered by seemingly minor things at times. I go into a chapel and ride out the feelings and deal with the stress; deep breathing helps and prayer/meditation/reading/being around other people/hearing noise and music around me/ looking at art. I think as you let the memories come back and go through the stress of them kind of like debriefing that helps dissociation but it's a 'one day at a time' deal and if I use OH or pills or food or anyother addiction then it's a bit of a setback but there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Posted Sun, May. 2, 2010 at 3:32 am EDT

Ruth

My heart goes out to the other readers. I'm 57 this year. I could not remember anything of my 0-12 years. Then almost 20 years ago, I started with a snapshot. My hand being placed on a hot plate (to teach me not to touch the stove as I eventually remembered!!). Since then I have had the help of doctors and psychologists. I keep getting snapshots. I've tried so hard remembering the good things of my years at kindergarten and primary school but only have some snippets not a full picture. About 6 months ago my husband and I traveled through a town where I spent some time on holidays on my own with relatives I'd never met before. Not sure how old, though probably about 10-12. The snapshots are of being raped and having my virginity taken. My life has been one of up and down depression, angry response for no reason, irritability, lack of focus, self loathing, lack of trust, shunning friendship, some alcohol use and many years of sleeping around. The good things now for the past 30 years - I have a wonderful husband (who also was abused) who I trust implicitly, a good job, a great sense of humour and a positive outlook on life (which gets harder and harder sometimes especially after my latest snapshot). But I wait to see the psych to help me through. After each snap I get better and better at managing my self and how I respond but I must say though the latest was a doozy. Its left me shell-shocked.

Posted Sat, May. 1, 2010 at 11:06 pm EDT

Sherry

I was diagnosed with PTSD just last year but now I realize I have been suffering from it most of my life. Although it is a relief that I am not "crazy" or a bad person, every day is a struggle. I went for in-patient treatment for four months, I went there for depression but while there learned that not only was I depressed, the childhood abuse I suffered caused me to have PTSD. It's hard not to blame myself for my bouts of rage, my hyper-vigilance my extreme annoyance of loud noise, or very limited patience, but I now realize that everyday I deal with triggers and those behaviors are symptoms of PTSD, I am not just a terrible person as I once thought. I am so glad I found this information regarding memory. No one told me about PTSD and memory; after reading this my lack of memory is explained. It is hard to not remember your life, as someone else mentioned. I do not remember my wedding day and many other events in my life. I don't even know my favorite toy as a kid and remember only fragments of my childhood. When friends ask me things about when I was a kid like what my room looked like I can't answer, and it makes you feel less than whole. I keep fighting this disorder one day at a time. Thank god I have people that love me, although they have had to endure many of my symptoms. If anyone has any idea how to "stay in the moment" and not dissociate please post.

Posted Thu, Apr. 29, 2010 at 6:49 pm EDT

deborah

I would like to confront (with legal people) the victimizer(s) to see if he remembers anything or cares. However, I once said, "I forgive you"; although I didn't know what I was forgiving and he said, "for what?" His philosophy was you're born, you live, you die and there is no past. I'd like to sue him and his wife for the sake of my brother who doesn't have medical insurance and make them help him. The rest of us survived well enough; I guess.

Posted Wed, Apr. 28, 2010 at 1:20 pm EDT

deborah

I've learned to "pretend" that I'm not afraid and prayer helps. When I'm scared I will actually try to have the opposite emotion; "putting on a brave face" or "I don't care face/attitude" when in fact I'm "dying"inside. At least I'm aware of that now. Loud noises and crowds aren't tolerable for me, and I don't even like sitting in movie theatres. It makes me sad because I see other people in groups having great times and enjoy watching them, but it's just too much stimulation. I get edgy with too much noise. Loud music drives me "nuts" and I can't focus; never mind remember anything. I've been diagnosed with ADD but I think it's a cascade of cause/effects when there is so much that has happened. Trauma (major/minor) upon trauma just adds up and at times I feel like I'm going to shatter completely in my head but somehow keep moving. I noticed that I "freeze" alot when I'm scared and just drop almost like a scared rabbit "playing dead". I don't want to have to be like this. I do wonder if an antidepressant would help, but with a broken back (was repaired 10 yrs ago) weight gain is something that makes everything worse. I don't want my head to get worse so am considering requesting something the next time I see the doctor. Music helps alot and I enjoy the symphony or church "good" music. I hope and pray for all abuse victims that they don't have to feel like this and that abuse is noticed and stopped in all areas of life. It's a one day at a time deal. I wonder if I'm going to make it at times, but I'm 50 and planning to be 51 this september. Why not?

Posted Wed, Apr. 28, 2010 at 1:16 pm EDT

deborah

I have bits and pieces of memory but very little recall of ages 1-13 when "he" finally moved out. It wasn't only

sex abuse but violence. He would go into rages and beat my mother up, throwing dishes. We were very alone. I don't know how to share socially very well and sharing emotions is hard; identifying them at the moment is harder. Yet I can see children's reactions and faces so quickly because they are so honest. My sister recalls stuff that I don't remember too. She remembers bruises on her legs that she was ashamed of. I remember my mother saying when I was in a crib; "Oh, Lawrence, she's just a baby". He was fulling around. I wasn't able to verbalize well; I was probably 3? I pulled a blanket over my face when he was near.

Posted Wed, Apr. 28, 2010 at 1:04 pm EDT

Tis

DEEDEE, I'm 41 and can't remember anything from my childhood. I also have other memory problems. I feel terrible when one of my sisters says, "Remember when.." and I don't and she can't understand it. I'm the oldest and it happen to me when I was 5, 19 and 23.... only once did I press charges, the last time. No one knows about the thing when I was 5. Anyway... I never associated this with my memory problems(among other things). I recently spoke with a psychologist and will be making a long awaited, '35 year old' appointment this week.

Posted Wed, Apr. 28, 2010 at 4:58 am EDT

deborah

Please don't post my last name if you post my writing at all. I don't know how these sites work. I've always been ashamed and hard on myself (people tell me I'm hard on myself) because I've known that something is wrong with me. Well, nothing is wrong with me. I just went through a tough child-hood and witnessed what I sholdn't have had to witness. I'm the oldest of 4 siblings and grew up with a silent no talk rule to protect my earth-dad's job and of course the "you should be ashamed of yourself-you don't tell people private things like that-don't air your dirty linens" etc. Well, it's helping me to vent. I'm ok with "me" but see my siblings hurting and grieve over so much loss of memory (memories) in my own life raising my kids as I've been in survival mode. I hope this makes sense. Sometimes i don't feel like I exist at all, have rejection issues etc. but it's more than that and I'm going to "beat this".

Posted Sun, Apr. 25, 2010 at 5:35 pm EDT

Deborah

I have unfortunately come to realize that Ptsd is real and happens. I have scrutinized myself for years always doublechecking with others (directly and indirectly)to make sure I wasn't a mistake, making mistakes, living illusions, etc. (search my conscience and pray constantly for answers and truth) Then my mother dies and everything "blows" within me. Actually, it's like the books I had shelved so neatly, that were dusty, all fell out of the bookcase and opened up. This article came almost from nowhere and I have read some of the stuff before but it doesn't really explain the feelings/emotions of ptsd or this type of stress. I won't admit to doctors about it because I heard insurance companies don't like to cover this condition so am fighting my best each day (1 day at a time) to "beat it-this". Just when I'm thinking; maybe the whole thing is made up I read some writings on another web-site per my brother and I know everything I've always felt and known are true. I hold no bitterness anymore but truly want to live whatever is left of my life normal if there is such a life. I've cried, wept, shared with a counselor in depth, shared with others etc. No-one seems to "get it". My therapist told me that I had a situational stress disorder and that I had alexethmia. I have a p-doc too that follows me closely. I need them because I've always been suicidal and had depression as they call it but basically I love simple things in life and do want to live but sadness and loss prevade so much of me that I despair and wear out. Then the sun rises another morning and I'm amazed (sort of) that I'm here; still living. Driving, thinking I'm a defect, thinking I'm crazy, hysterical, psychosomatic, looney-tunes, stupid, dumb, making things up, etc., etc. are always things I fight and weigh out searching for truth.

Posted Sun, Apr. 25, 2010 at 5:29 pm EDT

Jay

Ayahuasca tea is the best form of healing PTSD I have found. Anyone can be healed.

Posted Thu, Apr. 15, 2010 at 8:35 pm EDT

Sue

I have complex PTSD. Events occurred during childhood, then again in my early 20s and in my 30s (a physically abusive relationship). Several separate traumatic events are involved. Is it possible to assess the damage due to elevated cortisol levels over time? Can the extent of damage due to traumatic stress be determined? Can one follow the recovery of the brain as it is healing?

Posted Wed, Apr. 14, 2010 at 2:14 pm EDT

vikram

I have a model congress debate on child abuse and mentioning ways to help with PTSD is a great idea. Great piece.

Posted Sun, Apr. 11, 2010 at 11:35 am EDT

holgie

(Georgia) You have really great taste on catch article titles, even when you are not interested in this topic you push to read it

Posted Fri, Mar. 26, 2010 at 5:54 am EDT

Pamela

Great piece, one of the most evolved articles I have read on the subject without having to read twenty pages, thank you and it was easy for me to understand

Posted Sat, Mar. 13, 2010 at 9:58 pm EST

Valerie

Wow, I'm so glad I read this article. This explains so much for me. I suffered many traumas through out my life including gang rape and dying twice. One of the people in my PTSD support group was interested in knowing why she had such memory problems and now I can explain it to her in hopes it helps her as much as it helps me. Thank you!

Posted Tue, Mar. 2, 2010 at 1:11 pm EST

Dee

I severely beaten and mistreated by my mother. One scar stands out from the others; you could see clear to the white part of my flesh. Never was taken to a doctor. I shudder today when i think of the pain. I have memories--- bits an pieces of my childhood. My family is always saying to me "don't you remember?" Sometimes I don't have a clue as to what they are talking about! Just today, I decided that she was NEVER a

Sometimes I don't have a clue as to what they are talking about! Just today, I decided that she was never a mother to me. Can't believe I wasted all those years trying to be decent to her.

Posted Mon, Mar. 1, 2010 at 10:47 pm EST

Anonymous

Thanks for sharing Valentina. I am 23 now and am barely learning what Complex PTSD is after 20 years of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. I used to think that I was crazy. Now I see that I am not alone.

Posted Thu, Feb. 25, 2010 at 4:42 pm EST

Valentina

I've been suffering with PTSD as long as I can remember but was diagnosed when I was 22. I'm 31 now. I was abused by my stepfather for 9 years and I told anyone who would listen but no-one helped. I've had Psychological treatments for 8 years now including CBT but I do feel brain damaged. I have a wide range of symptoms: depression, bad memory, ability to focus, sleep patterns, recurrent cystitis, flashbacks, avoidance, agoraphobia, panic attacks, sexual disfunction, fear of anything, lack of confidence, hives, fatigue, anxiety, general physical and mental discomfort, the list goes on. My brother committed suicide when I was 21 after six years of mental illness after an attempt at suicide with large quantities of class A drugs. My sister received a large payout from the compensation authority for her experiences of abuse in my family so I'm pursuing the same in the hopes that I can pursue more successful forms of treatment which the NHS don't provide. I fear my brain might never recover fully.

Posted Sun, Feb. 7, 2010 at 9:52 am EST

Anonymous

Hi nigella that's so odd u mentioned your driving I have that too thank god it's not just me. That makes me feel heaps better

Posted Wed, Feb. 3, 2010 at 6:45 pm EST

hope123

my mom and dad struggle with this and i suspect i do too. i have no way to prove anything that happened in my childhood, i remember little, but what i do remember i do not talk about. my mom denies it strongly. i really dont think she remembers some of the stuff she did to me. it is really hard to figure out what to believe when you dont know or remember. i am looking for the truth, but maybe it would be easier to just forget and move on... who knows.

Posted Thu, Jan. 28, 2010 at 12:28 pm EST

tiger1965

I don't remember enough of what happened to convince my mother that i'm not lying. I remember enough to know that he did something, but not what. This helps explain a lot to me . I'm not sure i want to remember anymore but i feel i should. I didn't do well in school, enough to get by. I just didn't have any confidence in my abilities so didn't try. Ptsd makes sense to me on many levels.

Posted Fri, Jan. 22, 2010 at 3:44 am EST

alexg722

(USA) Very nice site!

Posted Tue, Jan. 12, 2010 at 12:13 am EST

DEE DEE

I was abused as a child. I do not have any memory of my youth. My child is 4 i can't remember bringing her home. i can not remember my wedding day either. I Have block out my life. I would have horrible PTSD. I am

thankful i do not have to relive those emotions anymore. I am sad that i can't remember my happiest moments of my life. If you suffer from PTSD. please get help. don't turn out like me.

Posted Mon, Jan. 11, 2010 at 8:27 pm EST

Mary Ann Bowers

I am 51 and to this day I struggle to get through, each day.. my brother is two years younger and also a victim of child abuse, he has become mental ill walking the world, me I have kept myself strong with prayer, with out that I could not cope... always looking for help, but learned in life there is none.

Posted Tue, Jan. 5, 2010 at 4:55 pm EST

Art Doctor

Excellent research and article- explains many cases.

Posted Tue, Jan. 5, 2010 at 4:17 pm EST

Rebecca Moise

These important findings are usually ignored in the investigation of childhood sexual abuse. The child's ability to describe clearly what he or she experienced is limited by many factors, including the disturbance of memory discussed here. Case after case is thus "unfounded" and the child sent back to court-ordered visitation with the perpetrator. As a child therapist I have seen many such tragedies, and have started documenting them. These scientific findings seem not to register with the judicial process, child protective services, Guardian ad Litem programs, etc. Something needs to be done about this.

Posted Sun, Jan. 3, 2010 at 8:35 pm EST

nigella

so, so interesting. explains why driving is hard for me: although i am a good driver, each time i come to do it i wonder/worry if i will be able to, even when i stop at traffic lights; it is as if i suddenly cannot remember what i am supposed to do. this happens to me a lot, in other areas too, such as meeting people, paying at a till. thank you for this research. i know i have been damaged by my abuse, how could i not. it is interesting to know that this damage is concrete and actual within the brain, and it makes me feel better, in that it is no weakness to be damaged by child abuse. the brain, i feel, re-structures itself to cope with and endure it's suffering, which is, wonderfully, why we can put ourselves back together and recover, even after the most horrific incidences. god bless.

Posted Sun, Jan. 3, 2010 at 7:37 am EST

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