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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

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What is avoidance?

Avoidance is a core symptom of PTSD, with at least one avoidance symptom being required for a diagnosis. People often try to cope with the trauma and escape painful or difficult emotions by avoiding the distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings associated with the event. Avoidance may be effective in the short-term but in the long run, it may be associated with increased severity of symptoms.

What is the evidence for avoidance in PTSD?

Moderate to low quality evidence finds three clusters of avoidance symptoms; avoidance of thoughts and feelings, activity, and memory. Thoughts/feelings avoidance items include; I tried not to talk about the trauma, I tried not to think of things that remind me of something bad that happened to me, I tried not to think about the trauma, I avoided thinking about or talking about a stressful experience from the past, and I avoided thinking about or talking about the trauma. Activity avoidance items include; I felt less connected to people after the trauma, I avoided situations because they reminded me of a stressful experience, I tried to avoid situations or people that reminded me of the trauma, I avoided situations that might remind me of something terrible that happened to me, I tried to avoid activities, people or places that remind me of the traumatic event, and I avoided activities that reminded me of the trauma. Memory avoidance items include; I stayed away from reminders of the trauma, I tried to forget about the bad things that happened to me, I had trouble remembering important parts of the stressful experience, I could not remember much about bad things that have happened to me, I had difficulty remembering, and I had difficulty remembering some things that happened during the event/trauma.

For more information see the technical table



NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about PTSD and its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate