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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

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What are family therapies?

PTSD avoidance symptoms can reduce involvement in family activities, while symptoms of emotional numbing can inhibit self-disclosure and intimacy. Hyperarousal symptoms are linked to irritability and anger and can also precipitate aggression and family conflict. Therefore, several couple and family therapies for PTSD have been developed. These are mostly based on cognitive-behavioural models and attachment theory. Interventions that enhance relationship skills and communication can equip families to better manage interpersonal difficulties, while also facilitating self-disclosure and related experiences of intimacy. Therapies that promote understanding of PTSD symptoms and their impact on relationships assist in correcting false beliefs about interpersonal behaviour which can further reduce family conflict.

What is the evidence for family therapies?

Moderate to low quality evidence found large improvements in PTSD, anxiety, and depression symptoms, but not relationship satisfaction, with cognitive behavioural conjoint/couple's therapy compared to no treatment in people with PTSD. There was also a large improvement in PTSD symptoms, but not anxiety, depression, or relationship satisfaction, with structural approach therapy compared to family education. There were no improvements in relationship satisfaction, depression, or anxiety in partners with either treatment.

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