



NeuRA

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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER LIBRARY

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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

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What are intrusions?

Intrusions are a core symptom of PTSD, with at least one intrusion symptom being required for a diagnosis. Intrusion symptoms include unwanted and upsetting memories, nightmares, flashbacks, and emotional distress and/or physical reactivity after exposure to reminders.

What is the evidence for intrusions in people with PTSD?

Moderate to low quality evidence finds five clusters of intrusion symptoms; distressing memories, distressing dreams, flashbacks, emotional cue distress, and physiological cue reactivity.

Items relating to distressing memories include; *disturbing memories kept coming into my mind, I found myself remembering bad things that happened to me, upsetting thoughts kept coming back to me over and over again, memories of the trauma kept entering my mind, and upsetting thoughts or memories came into my mind against my will.*

Items relating to distressing dreams include; *I had bad dreams about terrible things that have happened to me, my dreams were so real that I woke up and forced myself to stay awake, I had dreams about the trauma, I had bad dreams or nightmares about the trauma, and I had disturbing dreams of a traumatic experience from the past.*

Items relating to flashbacks include; *being in certain situations made me feel as if I am back when the trauma occurred, I acted as if the trauma were happening again, I acted as though the event were happening again, I had flashbacks (sudden, vivid, distracting memories) of the trauma, I felt as though the trauma was happening again, and I felt I was reliving the traumatic event.*

Items relating to emotional cue distress include; *I felt upset when I was reminded of the trauma, reminders of the trauma made me feel nervous, I became distressed and upset when something reminded me of the event, any reminder brought back feelings about the trauma, I felt scared when something reminded me of the trauma, I felt upset by reminders of the event, and I felt nervous when something reminded me of the trauma.*

Items relating to physiological cue reactivity include; *I had sweating or dizziness when something reminded me of my experiences, I got an upset stomach when reminded of bad things that happened to me, when something reminded me of something bad that happened to me, I felt shaky, I had trouble breathing when something reminded me of a stressful experience from the past, reminders of the trauma made me shake, and reminders of the trauma made my heart beat really fast.*

For more information see the technical table



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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

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