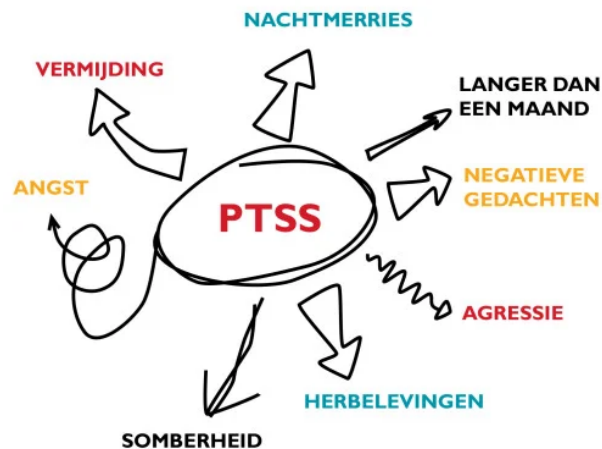


Medication

Finally, there is a (limited) role for **medication**. This should only be used if someone is too sick for psychotherapy, if someone prefers medication to psychotherapy, if psychotherapy does not work, or if someone is so sick that he or she is a danger to himself or others. However, it has become clear quite recently that there are certain medicines that are effective for the treatment of nightmares. For example, they can be used in combination with psychotherapy or in anticipation of psychotherapy.



More information

FUNDACION SALUD MENTAL ARUBA RESPALDO

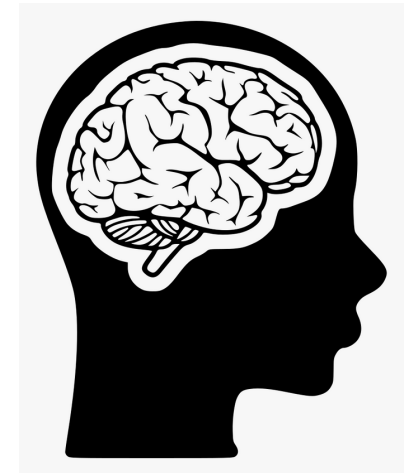
Mahuma 54
Oranjestad, Aruba

(+297) 281 5000
info@respaldo.aw

www.respaldo.aw



Fundacion Salud Mental Aruba RESPALDO



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

General information



Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

When people experience a stressful event, such as an accident, rape or a robbery, this can cause psychological problems. Such an event is referred to as a “traumatic event”. Sometimes people suffer from so many complaints afterwards that they may have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Diagnosis

People with PTSD can suffer from a number of symptoms. They are often very **alert** and can be easily **startled**. They also do their best to stop thinking about the unpleasant event. People with PTSD often suffer from nightmares. They can also experience **flashbacks**. During a flashback, they can relive feelings, images and sounds of the traumatic event while being awake. For example, someone keeps replaying the event “like a film” in his mind. Or someone hears the sounds that were also heard at the time. A flashback often causes a lot of fear. People with PTSD also have a tendency to avoid all sorts of things that remind them of the trauma. This is called **avoidance**. For example, avoiding the place where the trauma occurred or avoiding television programs that remind them of the trauma.

Diagnosis

When summarizing it in a simple way, people with PTSD suffer from a traumatic memory that “**leads a life of its own**”, as it were. It comes uninvited when you do not want to, it makes you anxious, it gives you nightmares. People are therefore very afraid of the memory and do everything possible not to be bothered by it (especially **avoidance**).

Cause

PTSD can develop soon after the traumatic memory, but also much later (sometimes even years later). We are not sure yet why one person develops PTSD after a trauma and the other person does not. A lot of research is presently being done into the prevention of PTSD after a traumatic event.

PTSD is known to not disappear on its own. People think up all kinds of tricks to deal with the symptoms, but it does not go away. Also, the problems caused by PTSD can increase when people get caught in a circle of fear and avoidance. Life then becomes smaller because the person suffering from PTSD avoids more and more things, for fear of, for example, flashbacks.

Treatment

PTSD responds well to treatment. Meanwhile, there are several proven **effective treatments** that can be offered.

A much-offered treatment is **EMDR** (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). A person is distracted, as it were, by a stimulus (for example, following a moving light, or auditory tones alternately in one ear and the other), while the therapist asks you to think about the trauma very consciously. The mechanism of action is not quite clear yet, but we think that by taxing working memory, the effects of the traumatic event eventually decrease.

Another form of treatment is **cognitive behavioral therapy**, namely with “**imaginal exposure and in vivo exposure**”. Here, the therapist helps you go through the traumatic memory in great detail and to relive it again and again in your mind. This will eventually cause the traumatic burden of the memory to disappear. In addition, you will go looking for those very places and things that remind you of the trauma in daily life, to learn that you no longer have to avoid those things. These are not the only forms of psychotherapy in case of PTSD, but it would be impossible to discuss all forms in this brochure.