

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Some children or adolescents who experience or witness a scary event will then have PTSD as a reaction to the scary event. To be diagnosed with PTSD, children who experienced a scary event show the following for **more than 1 month**:

- **Intrusive memories** of the event (dreams, memories, distress)
- **Avoidance** of any reminders of the event (including people, places, objects and situations that remind them of it)
- **Changes in thinking and mood** which may include having a hard time remembering event, having negative beliefs about the world, blaming self, having less interest in things they used to enjoy, and experiencing few positive emotions
- **Changes in reactivity** which may include irritability, self-destructive behavior, hypervigilance, being easily startled, and having problems sleeping and concentrating

Given that behavioral issues are a symptom of PTSD, and it can be helpful to explain this to your child's teachers or other adults in their lives. These behavioral issues will also decrease with treatment.

Treatments for PTSD

- The treatment for post traumatic stress with the most evidence is cognitive behavioral therapy with a **focus on exposure to and processing of the traumatic event through written or other narratives.**
- These treatments often involve parents or caregivers.
- To learn more about PTSD you can go to: <https://www.nctsn.org/>