



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing PTSD

The symptoms of PTSD can be debilitating if left untreated, so it's important to educate yourself about your diagnosis and treatment options. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)	A type of psychotherapy that has been shown to be helpful in treating PTSD. It focuses on helping clients modify dysfunctional thinking and behavior.
Cognitive restructuring	A cognitive behavioral therapy technique that helps people identify, challenge, and alter stress-inducing thought patterns and beliefs.
Dual diagnosis	When someone experiences a mental illness and a substance use disorder simultaneously, which can be common in individuals with PTSD.
Exposure therapy	A type of therapy that is used to help people confront their fears and break a pattern of avoidance. The exposure to a feared object or situation takes place in a safe environment.
Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)	EMDR is a form of therapy that combines exposure therapy with a series of guided eye movements that help people process traumatic events and change the way an individual reacts to them. It's commonly prescribed for people with PTSD.
Hyperarousal (Fight-or-flight response)	An abnormally heightened state of anxiety. Even though an individual is no longer in a state of danger, that individual's body will react as if they were in a life or death situation.
Prazosin (Minipress)	A drug that may suppress nightmares in some people with PTSD
Trauma	The emotional response someone has to an extremely negative event.



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage PTSD.

About Symptoms

- Can you develop symptoms of PTSD after a long period of time has lapsed since the traumatic event?
- Is my irritability and anger issues related to PTSD?
- Could trouble sleeping be related to PTSD?
- Why does PTSD cause nightmares and flashbacks?
- Will my symptoms change over time?
- Are there likely going to be certain events, times of year, or situations that I should anticipate making my symptoms worse?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- Why do some people develop PTSD and others don't?
- What are the risk factors that make someone more likely to experience PTSD?
- What type of traumatic events can lead to PTSD?
- What factors help someone build resilience against developing PTSD?

About Diagnosis

- How is PTSD diagnosed? Is there a test that determines if I have PTSD?
- Are there any other medical problems or mental health issues that often occur along with PTSD?

About Treatment

- Are there medications that can help treat my symptoms? What can I expect from medication?
- Should I see a therapist? How does talking about my past help me feel better?
- Does PTSD ever really go away?
- Could a support group help me?
