

HEALING

Coping cont'd

Here are some steps to follow when experiencing anxiety:

1. STOP and get STILL. Sit down if possible. Close your eyes, if it is safe and breathe deeply. This will help you relax and calm down.
2. Use a nasal inhaler or a small amount of vapor rub to put into your nostrils to help open up your nasal and sinus passages in order to get oxygen to your brain. You should start to feel calmer.
3. If you feel like you must ISOLATE for awhile:

DON'T carry anything with you that is dangerous, negative, or mind altering (such as weapons, alcohol, drugs or pornography). These are destructive stimulants that will create more problems for you now and in the future.

DO drink water or non-caffeinated beverages. Eat something; listen to soft and relaxing music, read positive, uplifting, self-help literature (such as Bibles, books, magazines with pro-family themes, etc). Perform any activity that is positive or calming to help you RE-FOCUS your thoughts.

DISCLAIMER: Although these techniques have worked for us, we cannot guarantee they work for everyone. Always seek professional help as deemed appropriate.

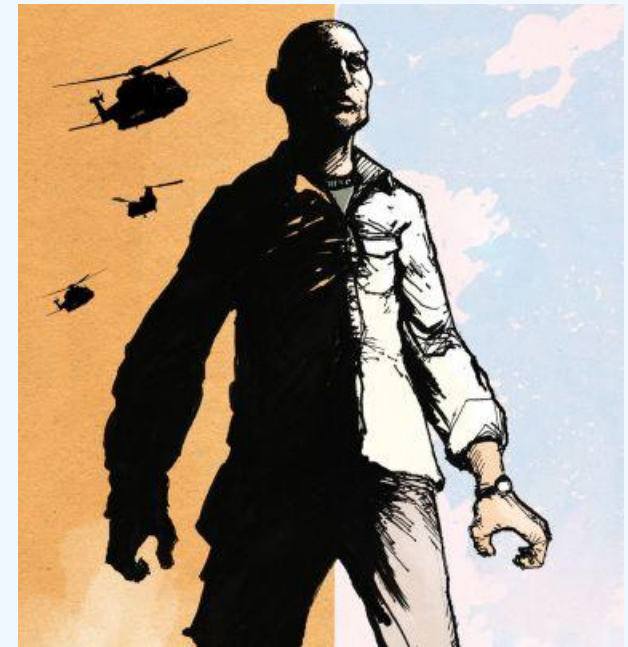
After acknowledging you have PTS, you will be faced with the decision of whether or not you want to get better. You have to evaluate every aspect of your life and remove anything that provokes or incites you to feel anger, irritability, or hypertension. Stop using any thought-provoking stimulant and realize that it could destroy everything you love and care about. You may have to choose between "substance" and Family.

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out!

1. Draw a line in the sand between YESTERDAY and TODAY. Make today the First day of the rest of your life. You START from HERE !
2. Set a GOAL of where you'd like to be 10 years from now.
3. FOCUS ! "If you forget your past, you will probably repeat it, but if you DWELL on your Past, it will ROB your FUTURE." Don't let anything or anyone distract or discourage you in reaching your GOAL. IT IS OBTAINABLE.
4. CHOOSE your FRIENDS WISELY because you will probably end up just like them. Don't hang around PESSIMIST or those prone to ADDICTION.
5. Determine to make BETTER CHOICES and FEWER REGRETS. You'll have to live with yourself for the rest of your life.
6. Be the BEST person, spouse, friend, parent, and HERO to your family and treat step-children like they are your own. BE THERE FOR THEM !
7. The Best Home Improvement you can do is to "take" your family to church.

LIFE AFTER TRAUMA

A SURVIVOR'S GUIDE TO WINNING THE BATTLES OF LIFE



In collaboration with:



SUMMITCARE
HEALTH SERVICES

Joint Veteran's Crisis Response Team: 1-919-907-0577
Chaplains H. Kendrick: 252-266-1858 Ray Clark: 252-675-5900
V.A. Hotline - Durham, N.C: 1-888-878-6890
Emergency Hotline: 911
www.theeverendingwar.com www.summitcarehs.org

WHO ARE WE?

"A few years ago, I got lost in the woods while hunting. I first panicked and found myself plowing through the briars, thorns and thickets trying to get myself out of my dilemma. Suddenly, I made myself stop, closed my eyes, and started breathing deeply to clear my head so I could think. I began to remember how the deer use trails to get to the bean fields. I began to take the path of least resistance and looked for a well used deer trail. It wasn't long before I was out of the woods."

- Ray Clark, "The Never-Ending War"



Created by Veterans for Veterans

We are Veterans who have found our way out of the "dark forest" of Post Traumatic Stress (PTS). We have been where you are and the following information reflects methods we have used to cope with life after War. Follow us and we will lead you out of the forest too.

WHAT IS PTS?



POST = Later or after trauma (sometimes many years after a trauma occurred)

TRAUMATIC = Extremely distressing, frightening, or life threatening

STRESS = Physical or mental pressure

Anxiety

Anxiety or panic attacks happen when a sight, sound, or smell *triggers* your brain into thinking you are reliving your traumatic experience again. Your brain originally produced adrenalin to help you escape your life threatening experience, but NOW through a memory, you are reliving the experience again. Your brain is producing adrenalin and you don't really need it. The sudden urge of fight or flight causes you to have an anxiety or panic attack as your emotions are in hyper-speed. You experience hypertension, irritability, fear, hyper-ventilation, hyper-vigilance, anger, tunnel vision, aggression, and you tend to *isolate* yourself from others to calm down.

Who Can Experience Symptoms of PTS?

Anyone who has experienced trauma can have PTS. Those who have experienced "sustained" trauma from any form of combat are more likely to have "severe" PTS. Veterans, Law Enforcement, or those who suffer daily from physical, emotional, sexual, or verbal trauma are more likely to experience symptoms associated with PTS. There is no cure for PTS because *triggers* will continue to produce adrenaline, thus causing the symptoms.

Coping

You may not be able to get over PTS, but you can learn to cope with the symptoms. You don't have to let it rule your life. You can learn how to *neutralize* the effects of the adrenalin before they destroy you and your family.

