

## DSM-IV Diagnostic Criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

- A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:
- (3) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others
  - (4) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror. **Note:** In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior.
- B. The traumatic event is persistently reexperienced in one (or more) of the following ways:
- (6) recurrent and intrusive distressing recollection of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. **Note:** In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed
  - (7) recurrent distressing dreams of the event. **Note:** In children, these may be frightening dreams without recognizable content.
  - (8) acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated). **Note:** In young children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur
  - (9) Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
  - (10) Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:
- (1) efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma
  - (2) efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma
  - (3) inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
  - (4) markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
  - (5) feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
  - (6) restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)
  - (7) sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span)
- D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma, as indicated by two (or more) of the following:
- (1) difficulty falling or staying asleep
  - (2) irritability or outbursts of anger
  - (3) difficulty concentrating
  - (4) hypervigilance
  - (5) exaggerated startle response
- E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than 1 month
- F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

**Source:** American Psychiatric Association (1994). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.