



PRAIRIE ST. JOHN'S

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

What are the symptoms?

- Nightmares or flashbacks (re-experiencing the trauma in one's mind, along with a sudden feeling of fear that the trauma is happening again)
- Avoiding situations that bring the trauma back into memory
- Difficulty remembering the trauma
- Losing interest in things
- Hopelessness (the future doesn't look good)
- Constant fears about not being safe
- Severe anxiety and depression symptoms

Who can have PTSD?

People with PTSD have had a very bad experience (the trauma), which leads to intense and continuing feelings of threat and helplessness. Examples of trauma are having been physically or sexually abused, having been in a natural disaster, or having been seriously injured. Anyone, of any age, who has lived through a traumatic event might show PTSD symptoms.

What causes PTSD?

The experience (the trauma) that caused PTSD is so intensely frightening that the fears and memories are present for a long time. It is almost as if some parts of the brain such as the parts involved in remembering things, become overcharged and stay too active. It is not clear why some people who experience the trauma can live without ever getting PTSD or why others do.

What may happen to people who have PTSD?

In some people, the symptoms of PTSD are present only for a few weeks or months. In others, the symptoms continue to be present for years. Untreated PTSD can lead to depression, substance abuse, aggressive behavior, or personality changes.

What treatments are available for PTSD?

Treatments used for depression or anxiety may also be useful, such as antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Individual and Family Therapy.