

# PTSD Strategies for Healing

Empower  
people  
living with  
PTSD

# Importance of Healing Strategies

**Fearless has noticed a gap in appropriate and timely treatment available to people who live with PTSD, both those affected by PTSD and those who care for them.**

People affected by PTSD often do not have the resources and services readily available to help treat and manage the symptoms and effects of PTSD. And those who care for people with PTSD often lack the resources to help them manage the myriad issues that might arise.

Clinical treatment of PTSD requires access to a psychologist, which often includes financial and timely constraints leading to prolonged treatment.

This toolkit aims to serve as a bridging resource until further help can be accessed from health practitioners and additional resources.

Fearless sees and understands the gap in PTS & PTSD support resources and sought to create a free and evidence-based toolkit to: **empower self-management, support family and carers, and provide educational subsistence**

## **Disclaimer**

This resource does not provide professional advice or services. Instead, it offers a curated collection of ideas and information intended to support constructive conversations with family members and others affected by PTSD, as well as individuals seeking tools to help manage their own experiences. For diagnosis, treatment or professional support, please consult a qualified healthcare provider.

# What is PTSD?

PTSD is a series of reactions that may result from exposure to a single traumatic event or it may be cumulative, resulting from several traumatic events. A traumatic event can include any event that involves experiencing or witnessing actual or threatened death or serious injury, a physical or psychological threat, or exposure to a physically or psychologically threatening environment. Exposure can be both intense and sustained.

**Uncomplicated PTSD:** This type of PTSD happens after a singular traumatic event, like an accident or assault.

**Complex PTSD (C-PTSD):** This type is caused by prolonged or repeated trauma, like childhood abuse or long-term captivity.

**Co-morbid PTSD:** Occurs simultaneously with one or more other medical or psychiatric conditions, e.g. depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders.

[Phoenix Australia](#)

[Black Dog Institute](#)

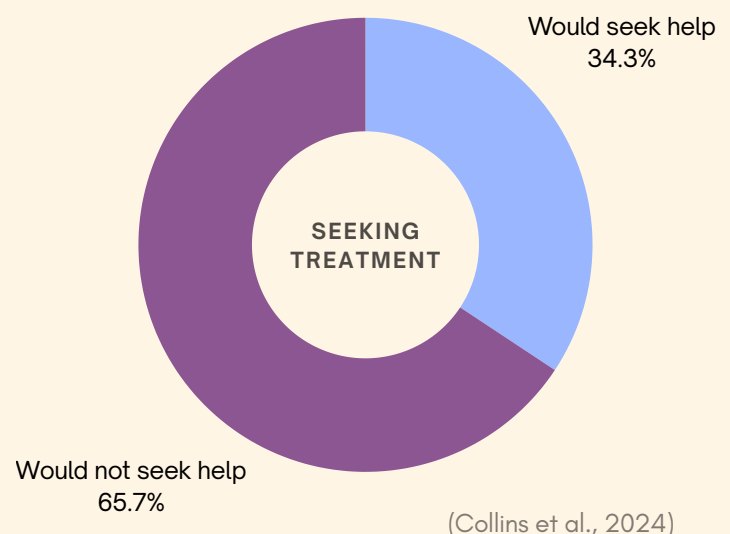
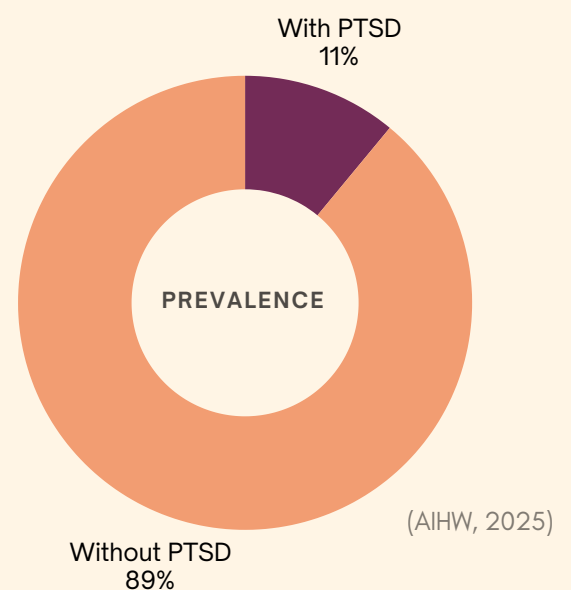
[Beyond Blue](#)

[Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Brain and Mind Hub](#)

**Suicide Call Back Service**  
**1300 659 467**

**Lifeline**  
**13 11 14**



# Causes of PTSD

These causes can trigger a person to feel intense fear, helplessness or horror.

Natural Disasters

Warfare

Physical or Sexual  
Assault or Abuse

Witnessing Death or  
Serious Injury

## The 4 Symptom Forms of PTSD

1.

### RE-EXPERIENCING

Involves re-living the traumatic event through intrusive thoughts, vivid nightmares and/or flashbacks, and distressing and unwanted memories.

2.

### HYPER-VIGILANCE

Involves being constantly alert for danger, sleeping difficulties, irritability, anger, finding it difficult to concentrate, and being easily startled.

3.

### AVOIDANCE

Involves avoiding activities, places, people, thoughts or feelings that bring back memories of the trauma

4.

### EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT

Involves losing interest in day to day activities, feeling detached from family and friends, thinking negatively



# Anxiety & Depression

Anxiety and depression are common co-morbidities with PTSD; many people meet criteria for one or both alongside trauma symptoms. This overlap matters as hyper-arousal, focused and unfocused anger, irritability, avoidance, low mood and sleep disruption can feed into each other and complicate recovery. Good care starts with recognising the full picture, then sequencing or integrating treatment so one condition's care doesn't undermine another's.

In practice, trauma-focused therapies (e.g., TF-CBT, EMDR) remain core for PTSD, but clinicians often stabilise first as some standard anxiety/depression strategies need tailoring. Prior to PTSD it is beneficial to screen for co-morbidities early, choose compatible tools, and coordinate timing so symptom relief builds capacity for - rather than competes with - trauma processing.

[Understanding Anxiety | Beyond Blue](#)

[Understanding Depression | Beyond Blue](#)

## Moral Injury

Moral injury refers to the emotional, psychological and spiritual distress that occurs when an individual is exposed to events where they either perpetrate or witness actions that violate their core moral or ethical beliefs. It can also arise from a perceived betrayal by a leader or trusted authority. This violation or betrayal disrupts a person's [sense of self, self-identity](#), sense of family and peer group identity and belonging, adherence to religious beliefs and practices, values, and worldview, leading to significant emotional and psychological turmoil.

### Co-occurrence with PTSD

Given the overlap in symptoms and the similar nature of the distress caused by both moral injury and PTSD, treatments designed for PTSD are often considered for treating moral injury as well. However, while they share commonalities, **moral injury is unique from PTSD and requires specialised attention.**

### Effects and Symptoms:

The impact of moral injury is as profound as it is widespread and often overlaps with other symptoms of PTSD. Key effects and symptoms of moral injury include:

- Anger
- Guilt and shame
- Social alienation and ruptured social bonds
- Negative shifts in psycho-spiritual development
- Anhedonia: The inability to feel pleasure or interest in activities that were once enjoyable

Griffin (2019)

# Treatment of PTSD

**Finding person specific treatment of PTSD is essential. Speaking with your GP can be the first step in reaching support.**

**To receive a PTSD diagnosis a trained mental health professional will take a detailed history, through discussion and often the use of questionnaires, to understand symptoms and past trauma and check whether they fit the formal criteria. Only a qualified clinician can make an official diagnosis.**

The types of treatment for PTSD range from physical and psychological, employing both pharmacological and other complementary medical interventions, and can be self-actualised or require a health practitioner with relevant PTSD expertise.

The following links could be useful in discovering the right treatment for you or someone you know.

[Treatment recommendations | Phoenix Australia](#)  
[Post-traumatic stress disorder treatment | Black Dog Institute](#)

If speaking to a GP or relevant health practitioner is not readily available to you, completing an online mental healthy assessment could be valuable to you.

[Online Mental Health Assessment | Black Dog Institute](#)

# Psychological Treatment

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## Guideline Recommended Therapy

In Australia, the [guideline-recommended](#) first-line treatments for PTSD are trauma-focused psychological therapies.

The therapies recommended for PTSD must be trauma focused or PTSD specialised.

Specialist training for mental health professionals:

[Practical courses. Created by experts. | Phoenix Institute](#)

[Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. | Phoenix Institute](#)

### Trauma Focused Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (TF-CBT)

CBT is a form of talk therapy (psychotherapy) that focuses on identifying and changing unhelpful thought patterns, emotional responses and behaviours. The central idea is that how we think influences how we feel and behave. By learning to reframe thoughts and develop healthier coping strategies, people can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, trauma, and other mental health conditions.

You can access 1:1 or group TF-CBT treatment from TF-CBT trained therapists/providers through referrals from primary care doctors.

### Eye Movement Desensitisation & Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is a specialised psychotherapy developed to treat trauma and PTSD. It involves recalling distressing memories while simultaneously engaging in bilateral stimulation (usually side-to-side eye movements, tapping or tones). This process is thought to help the brain “reprocess” traumatic memories so they become less emotionally overwhelming.

You can access EMDR therapy through a referral from a health practitioner or you can [find an EMDR therapist online](#).

# Psychological Treatment

## Prolonged Exposure (PE)

PE is a trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy developed to treat PTSD. The main idea is that avoidance of trauma reminders maintains PTSD symptoms. By gradually and safely confronting trauma-related memories, thoughts and situations, people can reduce their distress over time.

## Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)

CPT is a cognitive-behavioural therapy that focuses on identifying and challenging “stuck points” which are maladaptive beliefs formed after trauma (e.g., guilt, shame, mistrust, self-blame). The therapy helps people reframe these beliefs, reducing distress and allowing healthier ways of thinking.

## Other Trauma Focused Therapy

### Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)

DBT - similar CBT - is a type of cognitive-behavioural therapy that teaches skills in mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation and interpersonal effectiveness. DBT aims to find harmony between embracing and validating identity and individual challenges, and also the benefits of change.

DBT-trained therapists can be accessed through health practitioners and health insurance.

### e-Therapy

E-therapy uses digital platforms and tools such as video calls, e-chat and apps to deliver mental health treatment. It can provide individual therapy, group therapy, or even CBT/DBT-based skill programs. It increases access for people who live remotely or prefer flexibility. It is important that people accessing online advice do so on the basis of advice and guidance. It is sometimes counterproductive for people to apply self-help measures without expert validation.

### Animal Therapy (AAT)

AAT integrates trained animals, most often dogs or horses, into mental health treatment. Animals can reduce anxiety, improve mood, and help people feel safer when working through difficult emotions. Equine therapy is especially common in trauma treatment.

[Animal Therapies Ltd](#) is a company that specialises in animal therapies and offers trauma specific mitigations.

### Art Therapy

Art therapy uses creative processes such as drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, or digital media within a supportive therapeutic relationship to help people express and work through experiences that can be hard to put into words. For people living with PTSD, it offers a safe, structured way to externalise intrusive memories, reduce physiological arousal and rebuild a sense of control.

[Art Therapy](#) | [Brain and Mind Hub](#)

### Group Therapy

Group therapy brings together several people with similar issues to work with a therapist. Groups can be support-focused (sharing experiences) or therapy-focused (using structured approaches like CBT or trauma groups). Benefits include peer support, reduced isolation and practicing skills with others.

Group therapy can be available online or through many hospitals, private practices and support organisations.

[Group Therapy Services](#) | [Black Dog Institute](#)



### Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been referred to as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment”.<sup>1</sup>

Mindfulness-based treatments are emerging as promising approaches for individuals with PTSD. Programs like mindfulness-based stress reduction, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, and meta mindfulness have shown strong results, with low dropout rates and medium to large improvements in symptoms. Research suggests mindfulness helps regulate the brain’s emotional responses. These findings highlight mindfulness as a valuable tool in healing trauma, with potential as both an adjunct and alternative to traditional PTSD treatments.<sup>2</sup>

### Meditation

Mindfulness meditation, especially the well-researched Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, has been widely documented to ease stress-related symptoms, including depression, anxiety and PTSD. For individuals living with PTSD, practices like focused breath awareness, body scans, and non-judgmental attention to thoughts and sensations can reduce physiological arousal and help interrupt automatic avoidance or hyper-vigilance. Notably, studies in military populations report decreases in negative mood states such as guilt and shame, suggesting that mindfulness may support emotional processing alongside symptom relief.<sup>3</sup> While it isn’t a stand-alone cure, integrating structured mindfulness training such as MBSR into care plans can provide a practical, skills-based path to alleviating PTSD-related distress.

 [13-Minute Mindful Meditation for Winding Down \(Trauma-Informed\)](#)

[Mindfulness and Meditation | Black Dog Institute](#)

[Mindfulness in Everyday Life | Black Dog Institute](#)



<sup>1</sup> Kabat-Zinn (2003)

<sup>2</sup> Boyd et al. (2017)

<sup>3</sup> Sun et al. (2021)



# Physical Treatment

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## Prescription Medication

**Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs):** Commonly prescribed for PTSD, SSRIs increase serotonin levels in the brain, helping to improve mood and reduce anxiety. SSRIs are especially helpful for symptoms like flashbacks and nightmares.

**Serotonin-Norepinephrine Re-uptake Inhibitors (SNRIs):** Similar to SSRIs, SNRIs also increase serotonin but also boost norepinephrine. This helps regulate mood and reduce anxiety, particularly for symptoms like hyper-vigilance and irritability.

**Prazosin:** Originally used for high blood pressure, Prazosin is also effective for PTSD. It blocks norepinephrine in the brain, helping to reduce hyper-arousal and improve sleep, especially for nightmares.

**Benzodiazepines:** These are typically used for short-term relief from PTSD symptoms but can be addictive and have side effects. These medications reduce anxiety by boosting the effects of a calming brain chemical called GABA.

**Antipsychotics:** These are used when PTSD causes symptoms like hallucinations or delusions. They block dopamine in the brain, which can help control these psychotic symptoms.

\* Prescription medications are **not a first-line treatment** per the [Australian guidelines](#) for PTSD. Pharmaceutical intervention must always be advised by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner and medication dosage should be followed meticulously.

# Mobility

Regular movement and mobility practices - whether walking, stretching, yoga, or gentle exercise - can be profoundly beneficial for people living with PTSD.<sup>1</sup> Physical activity helps regulate the nervous system, easing hyper-arousal and reducing stress hormones like cortisol. Movement also stimulates the release of endorphins and serotonin, which boost mood and resilience against anxiety and depression.

Engaging the body in safe, controlled activity can improve mind-body awareness, helping individuals reconnect with their physical presence and reduce dissociation. Mobility routines provide structure, restore a sense of agency, and offer grounding through rhythmic, repetitive motion. Even simple acts like a daily walk or mindful stretching can foster calm, improve sleep, and support recovery.

## Yoga

Yoga has been shown to benefit individuals with PTSD by combining physical movement, mindfulness, and controlled breathing.<sup>2</sup> Its emphasis on body awareness and grounding techniques can help reduce hyper-arousal and intrusive symptoms. Trauma-informed yoga, in particular, adapts language, posture choices, and environmental setup to ensure a sense of safety, which is essential for people who may otherwise find traditional yoga settings triggering. Research indicates that yoga can lower cortisol levels, regulate the nervous system and improve emotional regulation, making it a valuable adjunct to traditional PTSD therapies.

If you are a qualified yoga instructor interested in offering trauma-focused yoga, [Frontline Yoga](#), [Yoga Australia](#) both offer self-paced online courses.

## Exercise

Both strength and cardiovascular exercise contribute positively to PTSD management.<sup>3</sup> Regular aerobic activity, such as running, cycling or swimming, promotes the release of endorphins, reduces stress hormones and improves sleep quality - all factors which are often disrupted in PTSD. Strength training, meanwhile, can enhance self-efficacy and provide a sense of mastery and resilience, which counters feelings of helplessness common in people with trauma. Evidence suggests that consistent physical activity reduces overall symptom severity and supports long-term mental health stability.

Exercise in groups can enhance the effects of exercise generally, both by providing motivation to exercise regularly and by adding connectivity and teamwork to common purpose and shared experience.

<sup>1</sup> Van de Kamp, et al., (2023)

<sup>2</sup> Van der Kolk et al., (2014); Gallegos et al., (2017))

<sup>3</sup> Björkman & Ekblom, (2022)

## Mobility

### Cerebellum Exercises

The cerebellum, traditionally associated with motor control, also plays an important role in emotion regulation and cognitive processing. Exercises that stimulate cerebellar function, such as balance training, coordination drills and activities that challenge spatial awareness, may help strengthen neural pathways that support adaptive coping mechanisms. In the context of PTSD, these exercises can improve concentration, reduce dissociation and enhance the brain's capacity to regulate fear responses. Though research in this area is emerging, early studies highlight promising links between cerebellar engagement and reduced PTSD symptomatology.<sup>1</sup>



[Putative Cerebellum Exercise](#)

### Breathwork

Breathwork is a powerful tool for managing the physiological dysregulation often experienced in PTSD. Techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing, box breathing or coherent breathing activate the parasympathetic nervous system, lowering heart rate and reducing hyper-vigilance. Controlled breathing practices can also interrupt panic cycles and provide individuals with a tangible coping strategy during flashbacks or heightened stress. Over time, breathwork fosters greater self-awareness, emotional regulation and a sense of calm, making it both a preventative and in-the-moment strategy for symptom relief.<sup>2</sup>



[Box Breathing](#)



[Diaphragmatic Breathing](#)



[Coherent Breathing](#)

### Massage

Massage therapy has demonstrated tangible, measurable benefits for individuals with PTSD—particularly veterans. In a controlled study,<sup>3</sup> just four weekly sessions of moderate-pressure massage notably reduced stress, improved heart rate, boosted cognitive accuracy and alleviated symptoms like disturbed sleep and self-harm ideation. Although many of these improvements faded within a month, the sustained reduction in self-harm thoughts suggests that ongoing massage can help maintain recovery momentum. Through its calming effects on the nervous system, its promotion of mood-enhancing neurotransmitters, and its gentle reestablishment of mind-body safety, massage therapy serves as a powerful complement to traditional PTSD treatments.



<sup>1</sup> Rabellino et al. (2018)

<sup>2</sup> Fincham et al., (2023)

<sup>3</sup> Field T et al., (2020)

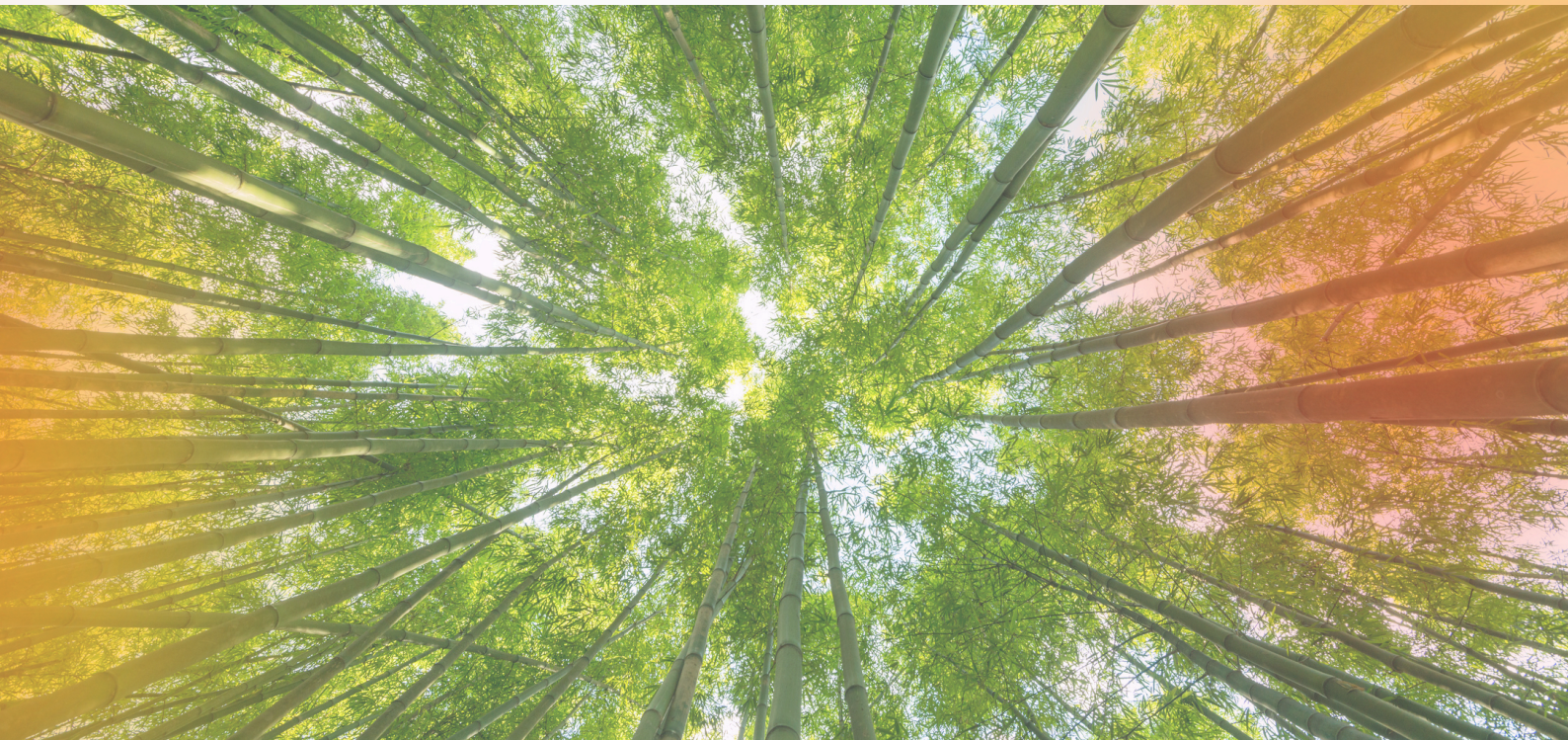


# Connecting with Nature

Spending time in nature or even simply feeling connected to it, can offer powerful benefits for individuals living with PTSD. Both green spaces, like parks and forests, and blue spaces, such as rivers and oceans, support improvements in mood, cognitive functioning and emotional well-being. Research shows that nature experiences are linked to greater positive affect, happiness and life satisfaction, as well as stronger social connections and a deeper sense of meaning and purpose. Importantly, these benefits arise even from brief or everyday encounters with nature, such as walking in a city park or noticing street trees. More biodiverse and remote environments may enhance these effects, but even small interactions with natural settings can reduce negative emotions, improve the manageability of life's challenges and support mental health recovery. For people with PTSD, nature can be a grounding, restorative resource that complements other healing approaches.<sup>1</sup>

[Out Bush On Country](#)

[Nutured by Nature | American Psychology Association](#)



[How Spending Time in Nature Helps Veterans | NEEF](#)

[Natures Therapy | Enhanced Lifestyle](#)

[Health Benefits of being in Nature | UNSW](#)

[Understanding Bush Therapy | Human Nature](#)

<sup>1</sup> Bettmann et al., (2022); Bratman et al., (2019); Robinson & Breed, (2019); Wheeler et al., (2020); Wang et al., (2022); Shirazi et al., (2024)

# Socialisation

Social connections play a vital role in both the development and recovery of PTSD. Trauma often disrupts a person's sense of safety and belonging, leaving them feeling isolated. Social bonds, whether with family, friends, or therapists, provide the reassurance and support needed to rebuild trust. These connections help create a sense of safety, which is a core element in preventing PTSD from worsening and in promoting healing.

Therapy itself can be seen as a structured form of social bonding. The therapeutic alliance — the relationship between therapist and client — is a powerful predictor of positive outcomes. In this safe, supportive relationship, individuals can process trauma, learn coping skills and begin to reconnect with others. Research also shows that the neurobiology of social bonding overlaps with brain pathways involved in PTSD, highlighting the healing power of human connection.<sup>1</sup>

Becoming more social doesn't mean rushing into large groups. Small, manageable steps can help, such as joining a support group, attending group therapy, reaching out to a trusted friend or even volunteering. Activities that combine shared purpose and connection, such as team sports or community projects, can also ease social anxiety. Over time, these interactions foster resilience and help counter the isolating effects of PTSD.

And remember, socialisation is an intrinsic part of group exercise and community activities like landcare, choral singing, drama societies, men's sheds and the many other community-based activities.

[Social Bonds and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder<sup>1</sup>](#)

[Trauma-Informed Care: A Sociocultural Perspective](#)

RESEARCH

## Simple Ways

Go for coffee - maybe decaf or natural drinks (see below)

Walk and chat

Spontaneously call a friend

Volunteer in the community

Attend gatherings and events

Chat with strangers

## e - Social Support

[SANE.ORG](https://www.sane.org) [MATES4MATES.ORG](https://www.mates4mates.org)

[MHFA.ORG](https://www.mhfa.org)

[GROW.ORG](https://www.grow.org)





### Nutrition

Negative patterns of eating amongst those with PTSD are likened to food addiction or bingeing, which is why there is a direct correlation between PTSD and obesity. These eating patterns include:

- Skipping meals
- Poor appetite and desire for food
- Desire for sweet foods

Consumption of the following can negatively influence symptoms of PTSD:

- **Alcohol** often provides temporary relief from hyper-arousal or intrusive symptoms. Still, it disrupts normal sleep cycles, heightens emotional reactivity and chronically blunts the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, worsening cortisol dysregulation. **\*\*Caution when consuming whilst on medication\*\***
- **Caffeine**, while sometimes used to counteract fatigue, increases sympathetic nervous system activity and cortisol release, which can intensify hyper-vigilance, anxiety, and sleep disturbances common in PTSD.
- **High sugar** intake causes rapid spikes and crashes in blood glucose, triggering stress responses and fluctuating cortisol levels, which may exacerbate mood instability and irritability.

A diet high in anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatory micronutrients, and low in free glutamate/aspartate and pesticides, has been found to have some benefits for reducing symptoms of PTSD<sup>1</sup>.

### Anti-inflammatory

When someone goes through intense or long-lasting stress, their body can trigger inflammation even without infection — this is called “sterile” inflammation. In PTSD, this makes it harder to calm fear and can hurt thinking and memory. Normally, stress hormones like cortisol help the body shut off the stress response. But in PTSD, cortisol is often too low, so the stress system (HPA axis) stays switched on, driving ongoing inflammation.

Diets high in fat and saturated fat can make the brain’s inflammation response stronger, especially in the hippocampus (a key area for memory and learning). This worsens stress reactions and memory problems.

On the flip side, anti-inflammatory foods may help protect the brain, and eating them before stressful events seems more helpful than adding them during stress.

Anti-inflammatory foods proven to mitigate PTSD symptoms:

- **Berries**, especially grapes and blueberries: These fruits help scavenge free radicals and reduce the expression of inflammatory cytokines.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids**, particularly from fish oils: Omega-3s replace the cell-damaging, pro-inflammatory molecules produced from arachidonic acid with less inflammatory cells.

[Omega-3 and mood disorders | Black Dog Institute](#)

<sup>1</sup> Murray & Holton (2024).

# Nutrition

## Anti-oxidants

Stress and trauma can increase oxidative stress in the brain — this happens when harmful molecules (free radicals) build up and damage cells. In PTSD, high oxidative stress can worsen memory problems, mood issues and difficulty calming down after reminders of trauma.

Antioxidants help neutralise free radicals and protect brain cells. They may reduce inflammation, support better brain function, and improve resilience to stress.

Research suggests that diets rich in antioxidants might lower PTSD symptoms by protecting memory areas of the brain and helping the body handle stress more effectively.<sup>1</sup>

High antioxidant foods:

- **Berries**, particularly blueberries and grapes.
- **Greens**, particularly spinach and broccoli.
- **Lean meats**, particularly kidney and liver.
- **Whole foods** such as fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts. These contain phytochemicals that processed foods often lose.

## Diets

### Organic

The low glutamate diet focuses on reducing foods and drinks high in free glutamate and aspartate, which can overstimulate brain cells and cause damage. By cutting back on these excitotoxins, the diet promotes eating more foods rich in micronutrients and antioxidants, which help protect the brain from damage caused by inflammation and oxidative stress.

**Going organic:** Research suggests that pesticides can worsen brain damage by increasing oxidative stress, inflammation, and excitotoxicity (damage from overstimulation of brain cells). Choosing organic foods can help avoid these harmful effects.

### Mediterranean Diet

A study from Harvard University<sup>2</sup> explored the effects of a Mediterranean diet, which includes vegetables, fruits, and fish, on PTSD symptoms. The study found that eating red and processed meats was linked to more severe PTSD symptoms, while consuming plant-based foods appeared to reduce PTSD symptoms.



<sup>1</sup> Murray & Holton (2024); Nutrition and PTSD. (2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ke et al. (2023)

# Digital Detox

Undertaking a digital detox, such as limiting video gaming and social media use, can be extremely beneficial for people with PTSD.

For some individuals with PTSD, social media use and video gaming becomes a coping mechanism to block out traumatic memories. Still, this avoidance strategy often turns into an addiction, further damaging cognitive functions and emotional regulation. The content on social media can also serve as a trigger for traumatic memories, intensifying the emotional distress of PTSD patients. As a result, individuals may become more dependent on social media, creating a cycle where their symptoms worsen, ultimately undermining their mental health and well-being.

It is important to remember that replacing the isolation of social media use with the sociability of family and community conversations can have a strongly affirming effect, reinforcing both self-worth and social acceptability.

## Social Media Use

Excessive use of social media has been shown to have detrimental effects on individuals with PTSD, particularly within military veteran communities.<sup>1</sup> While social media platforms are often used as coping mechanisms, poor platform moderation can lead to exposure of triggering content.

Tools:

- Setting phone usage limits. For **Apple** users, this can be done by activating Screen Time limits, and for **Android** users, it can be done by activating the Digital Wellbeing function
- Using Apps such as the **Opal**, **Flipd** and **Flora** that are multi-platform compatible and encourage users to detox from using social media apps or the phone in general.

Tips:

- Establish rituals that promote relaxation and detachment from screens, such as journaling, reading, or listening to calming music.
- Replace social media\gaming time with activities that engage the body (e.g., physical exercise, mindfulness, art).
- Create screen-free zones such as no phones at meals, in bed, or during social interactions.
- If quitting outright feels overwhelming, reduce gradually by 15–30 minutes a day.

## Video Gaming

Research has linked prolonged gaming to grey matter atrophy, particularly in brain regions responsible for emotional regulation and impulse control.<sup>2</sup> This atrophy can amplify vulnerabilities to addictive behaviours, making it harder to disengage even when play is causing harm. Many games also contain triggering content such as violence, sudden loud noises, or themes of loss that can intensify flashbacks or hyper-arousal.

Tools:

- Use time-tracking apps or built-in console/game limits.
- Work with a trauma-informed therapist for professional guidance.
- Join peer-support groups for gaming addiction or PTSD recovery.

<sup>1</sup> Fantasia et al. (2023)

<sup>2</sup> Mohammadi et al. (2020)



# Family & Carers

## Pointers for family and carers of people living with PTSD

People living with PTSD often have family and carers who lend support in a range of ways such as help with daily tasks, emotional support and informed advice.

### 01 Safeguard your own well-being

If you begin to feel burnout or mentally burdened knowing when to step back or get extra help is crucial. Your own GP can give you advice of help from the community and names of counsellors.

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### 02 Understand practical vs emotional support

Practical support involves hands-on help and realistic advice best used when action needs to happen. Emotional support involves offering empathy, a listening ear and encouragement, best suited when validation is needed.

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### 03 Know when to get extra support

Extra support could be in the form of:

- Reaching out to trusted family or friends
  - Utilising support services from relevant mental health organisations
  - [Getting support from Carers Gateway](#)
  - Undertaking educational courses such as:
    - [Trauma-informed Care](#)
    - [Mental Health First Aid Australia](#)
- 

### 04 Stay on top of [guideline recommendations](#)

Keep an eye on trends and emerging research within the PTSD sphere will ensure support offered remains relevant.

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# If you want to learn more

Visit the organisations below if you are interested in learning more about PTSD



In person programs for support and education about PTSD may also be valuable to you

Organisation	Subject	Audience	Cost
Blue Knot	<a href="#">Workshop for Survivors</a>	Adults 16+	Free with registration
Quest for Life	<a href="#">Moving Beyond Trauma 5-day Retreat</a>	Women Only	TBC
Quest for Life	<a href="#">Moving Beyond Trauma 5-day Retreat</a>	N/A	TBC
Mind Spot	<a href="#">PTSD Course</a>	Adults 18+	TBC



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