



Understanding trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in kids and teens

What is trauma?

Trauma is something very scary or dangerous that happens to a child.

These could be things like accidents, abuse, violence, or natural disasters.

What is PTSD?

PTSD is when a child keeps having problems after a scary event. The child may not feel better over time.

Signs to look for:

- Feels very scared, sad, or angry
- Has bad dreams
- Keeps thinking about the scary event
- Acts like it is happening again
- Avoids places or people that remind them of it
- Has trouble sleeping
- Gets angry easily
- Has headaches or stomach aches
- Has trouble paying attention
- Acts younger than their age (clingy or whining)

How trauma affects kids:

Some kids may feel numb or shut down. They may stop enjoying things or pull away from others.

How long does it last?

These feelings can last for months or even years if not treated.

How to help:

- Make the child feel safe
- Give support at home and at school
- Let them talk, draw, or play about their feelings

Treatment options:

Therapy:

- Talking with a therapist helps children process trauma
- Activities like drawing and play can help

Support:

- Family and school support are very important

Medicine:

- Sometimes medicine helps with anxiety, sadness, or anger

Good news: With help and support, kids can learn to feel safe again and live happy, healthy lives.