

Have you ever heard of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

PTSD is a mental health condition that can be caused by experiencing or observing virtually any kind of deep emotional trauma, especially one that is unexpected. Millions of people in the United States suffer from PTSD, resulting from many different types of trauma—from enduring years of domestic violence to a single violent attack that only lasts a few seconds. PTSD is characterized by both emotional and physical suffering; many afflicted by it find themselves unintentionally revisiting their trauma through flashbacks or nightmares. PTSD can make you feel isolated, disconnected, and “different” than other people—and it can even begin to affect the most routine activities of everyday life. PTSD is a potentially serious condition that should not be taken lightly.

Why is substance abuse common after a traumatic event?

Since violent trauma can bring about so many changes, questions, and uncertainties, many survivors turn to alcohol and illicit drugs in an attempt to get some relief from their almost round-the-clock emotional turmoil and suffering. Substance abuse and mental health problems often accompany violent trauma. All survivors of trauma manage their experiences in different ways. Substance abuse, however, is not only an ineffective tool in healing from trauma, but it can also present a host of additional problems that make the healing process even more difficult.

What can I do if I am experiencing PTSD or substance abuse problems?

According to a recent study conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, the most effective way to combat trauma, substance abuse, and mental health problems is through an integrated, holistic approach, taking into account how each individual problem affects others. To begin, it can help to share your experiences and concerns with a service provider (e.g. counselor, physician, victim advocate) who can assist in developing a plan to address all of your struggles comprehensively. Psychologists and counselors with experience treating trauma survivors can be very helpful in working through PTSD, and there are prescription drugs available to help ease PTSD symptoms.



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Emotions are part of our everyday life. However, in the aftermath of a violent crime, your emotions may seem to be out of control. It is normal to be asking questions which may trigger highly emotional responses. *Why me? Why now? Why don't I feel normal? When my life get back to normal? What IS normal anymore?* There is no single answer that works for everyone.

There is something you have in common with many other victims of trauma—the way you are affected is strikingly similar. The healing process is similar. Understanding the process brings hope and strength because you know that what you are experiencing is normal. You will also know that because others have made it—so can you.

It is our hope that the information in this brochure will help you through the process and give you a guide as you walk down the healing path.

**What can I do to start
The healing process?**

Here are some positive steps you can begin taking right now to help begin the healing process.

- Recognize your loss
- Establish safety for yourself
- Respect the way you feel and your right to feel that way
- Talk about your feelings with those that you trust
- Connect with other survivors of violence, many of whom experience similar difficulties
- Do not be afraid to seek professional help
- Try to recognize triggers that may take you back to the memory of your fear and trauma
- Try to be patient and avoid making rash decisions—it can take time to figure out where you are, where you want to be, and how to get there
- Take care of yourself—exercise, eat right, and take a deep breath when you feel tense
- Try to turn your negative experience into something positive—volunteer, donate, or do something else to constructively channel your energy and emotions
- Do not abandon hope—believe that healing can and will take place



**Where can I go
For Help?**

The healing process takes time and many questions, hurdles and frustrations may surface along the way.

Please call:

City Life

208.365.1615

Or

208.870.5532

1648 N Washington, Ste 104

Emmett ID 83617

**We can assist you and help you find local
counselors or treatment centers.**

Contact Information:

SAMSHA's National Mental Health Information Center

1-800-789-2647

1-866-2647 (tdd)

SAMSHA's Toll Free Substance Abuse Treatment

Referral Helpline

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

SAMHSA's Substance Abuse Treatment

Facility Locator

[Www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

SAMSHA Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration is a division of the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services



*Healing
In the
Aftermath*

*City Life Advocates helping
Victims of:*

Domestic violence

Sexual Assault

Crisis

208.365.1615

208.870.5532