

Anxiety With C PTSD

General anxiety & anxiety associated with C-PTSD are very different. Generalized anxiety involves things that might happen. What if I get fired? What if I get into a car accident? Anxiety that stems from C-PTSD is nothing like that. For me, I seldom even know the cause of my anxiety. I just feel crippling anxiety with no clue why.

One aspect of this anxiety that has baffled me the most is sometimes when I wake up, either during the night or first thing in the morning, it attacks. It comes in these awful waves where I feel like the anxiety is going to overwhelm me, then it passes, then it comes back again & passes again. This happens usually for a good half hour at least until eventually the anxiety just stays away until the next time. For quite some time now, I've tried learning what this is about with no luck... that is until recently. I wanted to share what I learned since I have no doubt many others live with this obnoxious phenomenon, too. If you're one of the "lucky" ones like me, I hope this helps you.

After having survived trauma, in particular repeated traumas, your brain knows the worst case scenario. It's seen some really ugly things, up close & personal, & quite frankly does NOT want to go back to that. Understandable, of course. The problem is the brain will do anything to avoid this, & can take things too far.

The traumatized brain is in a constant state of fight, flight or freeze. Sometimes, the brain acts like it believes danger is about to happen at random, such as I mentioned happens to me when I first wake up. Whether danger is actually there or not, it thinks danger is lurking & triggers the fight, flight or freeze responses kick into overdrive. It's kind of like car alarms when they first became popular in the late 1980's & early 1990's. They were so easily triggered that virtually nothing could make them sound. This is like anxiety in a brain that's experienced repeated traumas.

And good luck at this point convincing your panicked brain that no danger exists. It knows better because it's seen some pretty terrible things. It won't be reassured that there is no danger because of that.

When this type of anxiety kicks in, you can handle it. I know it's hard, but it's possible.

Remind yourself of what is happening, that this anxiety is only a symptom of C-PTSD. It isn't a sign that there is any potential danger. It's a symptom of a brain that has been broken due to experiencing horrific traumas. Nothing more. Maybe think of it like a toothache. If you have a cavity, your tooth will hurt until you've seen the dentist. If you don't know that you have a cavity, that pain will scare you. However, if you are aware of having a cavity, the pain will still hurt of course, but at least you won't be scared because you know why you have the pain. When you know what is happening, it can make it much easier to cope with a difficult situation.

Try to understand why the anxiety is so bad. You may not be able to figure that out, but hopefully you can. If you can, then you can calm the anxiety by figuring out a solution to the problem or reassuring yourself that the problem isn't so bad.

Never forget to pray, too. God understands us even better than we understand ourselves. When you don't understand why the anxiety is happening or how to calm it down, He will. Let Him help you! He will be glad to!