

# PTSD PATHOCHART

## PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a condition that develops when a person has been exposed to a serious situation such as a natural disaster, serious accident, death of a loved one or life-threatening event. This condition causes debilitating symptoms that, depending on the severity, can negatively affect relationships, communication and daily activities. Clients may also experience physical manifestations such as chronic pain and headaches.

## ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Recurrent memories, flashbacks
- Traumatic nightmares
- Prolonged distress following traumatic reminders
- Inability to recall key features of the event
- Persistent distorted blame
- Persistent negative emotions
- Significant lack of interest
- Aggressiveness, self-destructive behavior
- Hypervigilance
- Difficulty concentrating

## DIAGNOSTICS

- Exposure to trauma, directly or indirectly
- Intrusion of symptoms after exposure to stressors
- Avoidance of trauma-related stressors after the event
- Negative alterations in mood and cognition
- Alterations in reactivity since the traumatic event.
- Duration of symptoms greater than one month
- Functional impairment from symptoms
- Can't be attributed to substance use or other illness

## NURSING PRIORITIES

- Promote adequate coping skills
- Maintain safety and prevent injury
- Assess and monitor cognition

## THERAPEUTIC MANAGEMENT

- Rule out other sources of symptoms
- Assess for suicidal/homicidal ideations
- Group or individual therapy/counseling
- Identify and avoid triggers

## MEDICATION THERAPY

- Antidepressants - SSRI's and SNRI's
- Anxiolytics - Benzodiazepines