

Positive Coping Actions for PTSD

- Learn about Trauma and PTSD Responses: Learn about the common reactions to trauma and PTSD. What is normal and what are the signs that you need assistance from others like Physicians or Therapists. Learning these symptoms and reactions lets you know you are not alone, weak, or crazy.
- We know that forgetting or not talking about the trauma as we were told when we came home is not the answer and can be very harmful to us and others we are with and we love. We now know that talking these feelings out with others who have experienced the same trauma is very helpful. Seeking professional help, Physicians and Therapists is essential to our coping with the feelings we have and the fears we experience.
- Practice relaxation exercises: Muscle relaxation, Breathing Exercises, Meditation, Prayer, Physical Exercise such as walking, running, swimming, yoga, our Fishing Program with Greg, or Equine Therapy is very helpful. Volunteering your time to a worthwhile charity, organization or hospital can be very helpful. It is a very essential part of my PTSD recovery.
- Remind yourself that it is natural to have the memories of trauma. Talk to someone you trust. These memories can be overwhelming but can lessen with time.
- Learning to Cope with Panic and Anxiety Attacks: Talk with your therapist about these attacks. Realize that these attacks are not dangerous and do exercises such as breathing slow and deep, realizing your surroundings are not harmful and work through the attack.
- Flashbacks: Keep your eyes open and know your present surroundings. Remind yourself where you are. The trauma is the past and you are safe now. Call someone you trust and talk with them. It is a common response to trauma. Finally bring these occurrences up with your therapist to discuss.
- Nightmares: Again remind yourself it's a dream, not a real danger although sometimes it can be very real at the moment. Get up and walk around and engage in a calming activity like quiet music, reading, or prayer.

- **Insomnia:** Keep a regular bedtime schedule as much as possible. Avoid strenuous exercise hours prior to sleep (sex is OK). Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco. Do not lie in bed and worry, get up and do something calming or get your mind off the worry.
- **Anger and Rage:** Exercise daily to help alleviate stress. Remember that anger is not a good thing and learn how to manage it, maybe through your therapist. If you blow up at someone or family for no reason, talk with them to explain why this is happening.
- **Focusing:** Slow down and give yourself time to focus. Write things down and make a list. Plan a realistic list of projects or chores you want to do, nothing that will overwhelm you. Not being able to focus may be due to depression, talk with your therapist, physician to see if it is depression and discuss ways to combat it. Possibly meds,
- **Trouble Expressing Positive Emotions:** This is common, don't feel guilty. Do activities that you enjoy. Take steps to let your loved ones and friends you do care. Something small like a phone call, a card, gift, or just sitting down and a good conversation. Hugs are great to show how you care.
- Remember all these positive coping methods and activities takes practice like any other skill. Take your time and don't be discouraged.