



Improving the mental health of the community through awareness, advocacy, and support.

**Mental Health America of Northeast Florida**

8280 Princeton Square Blvd. West Suite 8  
Jacksonville, FL 32256

**(904) 738-8420** [www.mhjax.org](http://www.mhjax.org)  
[info@mhjax.org](mailto:info@mhjax.org)

Also look for us on Facebook and Twitter

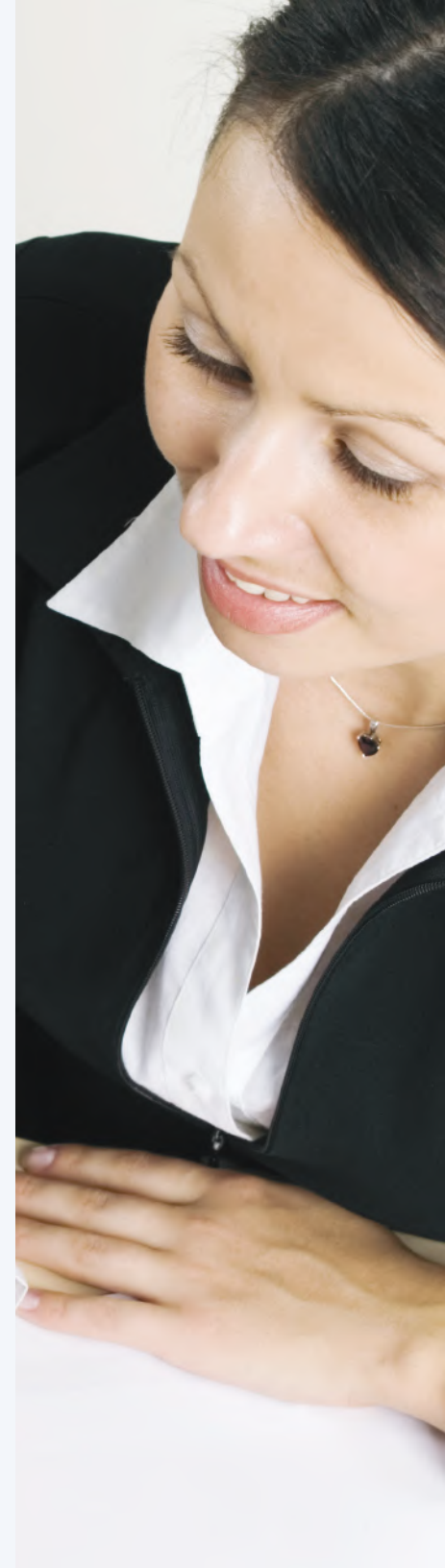
If you or someone you know is in crisis now, seek help immediately.  
Call United Way crisis center **211**. Or dial **911** for immediate assistance.



Living with  
**POST-TRAUMATIC  
STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)**



We all have something  
special to give.





**Did you know** that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affects nearly eight million American adults? Fortunately, large strides have been made over the past decade in the research of PTSD, including prevention and effective treatments.

### WHAT IS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER?

Post-traumatic stress disorder, commonly known as PTSD, is an anxiety disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of a traumatic event. While it's natural to feel afraid in a dangerous situation, people with PTSD feel stressed or frightened even when they're no longer in danger. This can be caused by military combat, being kidnapped or held captive, a car accident, plane crash, being raped or mugged, or the involvement in a natural disaster like a flood or earthquake. Most people start to feel better days or weeks after a traumatic event. But for those with symptoms lasting a month or more, they could be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

### WHO GETS PTSD?

There are a number of factors that can lead to the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. Scientists have done extensive research on the genes and brain areas that play a role in creating fear memories. But unless an individual experiences or witnesses a traumatic event, these fears are never realized. PTSD can occur at any age, including childhood, and is more likely to develop in women than men.

### SYMPTOMS

Post-traumatic stress disorder can cause a variety of symptoms. For many people, these symptoms begin almost right after trauma occurs. For others, it could take months or years. Symptoms of PTSD include:

- Repeatedly thinking about the traumatic events, including nightmares or flashbacks
- Being constantly alert or on guard
- Avoiding reminders of the trauma
- Panic attacks
- Physical symptoms like chronic pain, headaches, stomach pain, or muscle cramps
- Feelings of mistrust
- Problems functioning on a daily basis
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Problems with intimacy or feeling detached from family and friends
- Depression and feelings of hopelessness about the future
- Suicidal thoughts

### TREATMENT

Although you can't erase the memories of a traumatic event, you can learn how to manage your response to the memories and the feelings they bring up. A combination of therapy, medication, support groups, and self-care can help you on the road to recovery.



### HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

**MHA offers online screenings to help identify symptoms, and to find the help you need to feel your best and healthiest. To learn more about our screenings, visit the MHA website at [www.mhajax.org](http://www.mhajax.org). Our screenings are confidential, online, and will take just a few minutes of your time.**