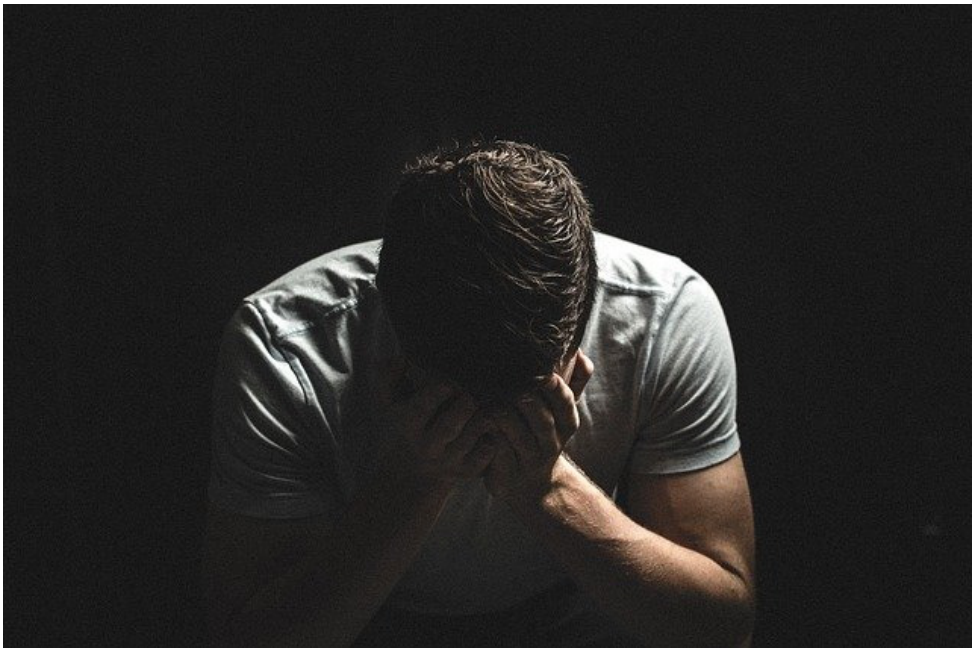




Ålands hälso-
& sjukvård

PTSD



**When you feel distressed
after a terrifying experience**

When you feel distressed after a terrifying experience – PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder)

You may be distressed for an extended period of time after a terrifying experience. You may, for example, have trouble sleeping, experience physical pain or intense anxiety. You can seek help to alleviate your symptoms - treatment is available.

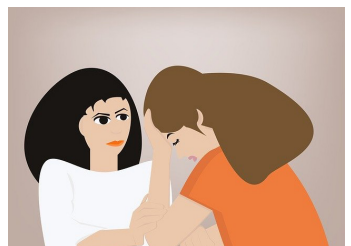
It is common to be distressed after a terrifying experience. Such experiences include, for example:

- Having been subjected to threats, torture or abuse.
- Having seen others be subjected to threats, torture or abuse.
- Having suddenly lost a close friend or a family member.
- Having experienced war, a natural catastrophe or an accident.

You can be traumatized by an event you experienced as frightening even if others are not. The symptoms of post-traumatic stress can manifest themselves right away or after an extended period of time.

Some symptoms of PTSD

- You have difficulty sleeping and have nightmares more frequently than usual.
- You often think of the experience that frightened you, and it may feel very real.
- You often feel sad or angry.
- You experience sudden anxiety or fear that affects you physically.
- You have difficulty concentrating.
- Your body feels stiff or aches.
- You avoid situations that remind you of what has taken place.
- You avoid other people, sometimes even your own family.
- You may feel that nothing makes you happy or that nothing matters.



Post-traumatic stress and PTSD

It is common to feel distressed after a traumatic experience, and often such feelings can pass on their own. However, if you continue to experience distress for a prolonged period of time, you may suffer from PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder).

You can get help to move beyond the trauma. Treatment is available in many different forms. Most often, treatment involves talking with a health care expert on several occasions. Medication is also available.

When and where should I seek medical attention?

Any time you feel distressed following a terrifying experience, you can turn to any of the following health care providers:

- The health care centers in Mariehamn and Godby
- Student health care
- The school nurse
- The psychiatric unit at Åland Central Hospital, 018-535 100

If you need advice regarding where to turn for help, call 018-538 500.

If you are feeling severely distressed or have lost your will to live, call 112 or turn to the emergency reception at the Åland Central Hospital in Mariehamn.

You have the right to feel safe as a patient

All medical personnel are subject to the rules of professional secrecy. In other words, what you tell them is confidential. If you don't speak Swedish, you may have the right to an interpreter. The interpreter is also bound by the rules of professional secrecy.

You can also bring along a friend or a family member if you wish. Family and friends who help to interpret a discussion are not bound by the rules of professional secrecy.

What can I do to feel better?

It can be good to talk to someone about how you are feeling. You might want to talk to a friend or a healthcare professional. You may also want to write about what happened and how it makes you feel. This can help you feel better.

Some other things that may help:

- Spending time outdoors and exercising. Walking can be of help.
- Trying to sleep and eat at regular intervals each day.
- Avoiding alcohol and drugs. They may seem to help initially, but will in fact make you feel worse.

Source: www.1177.se, www.ahs.ax



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