

# PTSD Symptom Clusters

Diagnosis of PTSD can be challenging due to the variable onset of symptoms and the inherent heterogeneity in presentation.<sup>1\*</sup> And patients often seek care for physical symptoms without mentioning psychiatric symptoms or trauma histories.<sup>2</sup>

\*The American Psychiatric Association defines the complete PTSD diagnostic criteria in the DSM-5. Representative symptoms are listed below.<sup>3,4</sup>

DSM-5=Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.



## Intrusion (re-experiencing)<sup>3,4</sup>

- Recurrent intrusive memories
- Traumatic nightmares
- Flashbacks



## Persistent avoidance of stimuli<sup>3,4</sup>

- Avoiding trauma-related thoughts and feelings and/or objects, people, or places associated with the trauma



## Negative alterations in cognitions and mood<sup>3,4</sup>

- Distorted beliefs about oneself or the world
- Persistent shame or guilt
- Emotional numbing
- Feelings of alienation
- Inability to recall key details of the trauma



## Marked alterations in arousal and reactivity<sup>3,4</sup>

- Irritability
- Hypervigilance
- Reckless behavior
- Sleep disturbance
- Difficulty in concentrating

### References:

1. IOM (Institute of Medicine). Treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder in military and veteran populations: final assessment. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press: 2014.
2. Greene T, et al. Prevalence, detection and correlates of PTSD in the primary care setting: a systematic review. *J Clin Psychol Med Settings*. 2016;23:160-180.
3. American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Fifth Edition. DSM-5™. American Psychiatric Publishing; 2013.
4. Lancaster CL, et al. Posttraumatic stress disorder: overview of evidence-based assessment and treatment. *J Clin Med*. 2016;5:E105.

