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One afternoon I sat gently swaying and patting my son on the back after caring for him. I allowed my hand to rest on his little back as he breathed in and out. When suddenly I heard what sounded like wheezing and crackling as he was breathing. What used to be a moment of peaceful parenthood has now become a full-blown anxiety attack that went from zero to sixty when I desperately lay my ear on my chest to hear him breathe. Something's wrong. He was aspirated, I just know it," I said. Everything about my pregnancy and experience with it has been a problem so far. I struggled with infertility with our eldest and didn't expect to get pregnant again. I found out I was pregnant three days after my husband left for a year in Afghanistan. I was a young military wife without the support of the family where I lived and a daughter with special needs, whom I gave my life to care for her. My pregnancy was high risk, due to my history with my first and my daughter is born with a birth defect. My labor was difficult, my son couldn't breathe, and after two botched epidurals, I screamed until I lost my voice as I brought him into this world. I mentioned before that we were three weeks away from military crossing and I had to drive within 20 hours of giving birth? I came home from the birth of a mattress on the floor and realtors kept coming through with a little notice to show our house. It was my first experience of breastfeeding since my daughter had a cleft palate and couldn't and it was so painful. I ended up being infected and almost needing stitches. I fell into postpartum depression since I struggled with the feeling as I let down my first child without being able to be there here at this difficult time of moving and transitioning. After coming so far into her therapy, she came back and developed such a horrible stutter that no one but me could understand. I sat and talked to her as tears streamed down my face because I didn't know how to help her. She was so upset that after being diagnosed with autism and being completely non-verbal, she worked so hard to be able to speak, and now her ability is running out again. The whole rug was ripped out from under her - we were losing her doctors, surgeons, therapists and specialists that we've known all her life. I haven't left our house for months once we've arrived in Arizona. I was sitting there feeding my son, and I was just crying endlessly in this rocking chair. It wasn't easy adjusting from one child to two. It was losing my whole support system for my daughter and I wasted my time working with her, losing sleep, I had to be fine. I knew my nerves were being shot, but I didn't realize how deeply losing all my experiences with my 1st child took on me. I knew I didn't just have anxiety. It was more than that. To me diagnosis of PTSD, PTSD, parent with an unsustainable point of view with an ass child. When I was sitting in the office of a new pediatrician, in our new state, with my new child... I struggled to breathe as every breath my son took, elevated my already over-the-top anxiety attack. I cried trying to figure out who his doctor should be when I just moved in and didn't get it set up yet. I cried at the nurse's hotline that it sounded like it had fluid in his chest. I cried that I just needed a doctor to listen to the stethoscope and tell me our son was okay. It took less than 2 minutes for the doctor to tell me my baby was OK and his lungs sounded clear and it was the start of so many triggers I'd have with my kids. I see blood in my daughter's mouth from a loose tooth, she was determined to wiggle whether she was ready or not, and my mind flashes in my mouth baked with blood after her cleft palate repair surgery and I feel that my stomach turn and my heart starts to race. I hear my child say their throat hurts a bit and I immediately go over the worst and check the back of my throat as I remember being my daughter bronchitis, pneumonia and tonsillitis with a double ear infection all at once and she almost didn't do it. I held my son as he had to get a daily heel prick, because of the severe jaundice and what might seem so small to the other parent, evoked memories of them pinning my daughter down, time after time in the hospital because they couldn't find veins for her IV, because all her other veins keep blowing. My beautiful Rapunzel with hair I could put in a pony tail since she was born. When I tell you, I could tell you countless other examples such as this, you can't imagine how many. When my children cry, fall, bleed and experience all the usual scratches and falls, that typical active child does-experience is far different to me than for many parents. Did that lead to me becoming something of a helicopter parent? ABSOFRIKINLUTELS! Am I even a little sorry? No. Have I been judged by other moms for this? Much. So that's what I want to tell you. It is impossible to know someone's story from the outside by looking into it. You might not have the slightest idea of how thin the threads that mom hovers over their kids hangs on through. You can never experience the battles she leads against her mind that always tells her the worst that can happen to her child will come true because they have. Please be kind. Please don't embarrass your mom. Please don't attack the other person's parenting style because you don't know what led that mom to be so protective of her baby. Maybe he grabbed their hands while they turned pale and stopped breathing. Can it shock them awake when their their levels have plummeted. Maybe it wasn't able to be there or help their child since they were wheeled back into the operating room, crying for their mom. Parenting is hard enough as it is. Parenting with PTSD and anxiety can feel like dang is almost impossible for a few days and we could use all the support we can get. This post comes from the TODAY parent team community, where all members can post and discuss parenting decisions. Find out more and join us! Because we're all in this together. Getty Images Flashbacks and nightmares are common, but there are lesser known signs of post-traumatic stress disorder to watch too. The concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been with us for centuries, but there were many names. It was a shell of shock and combat fatigue before it had PTSD and is now known to affect not only military veterans but anyone who has gone through an intense traumatic experience. In fact, about one in 11 people will have PTSD in their lifetime, according to the American Psychiatric Association. While anxiety symptoms are a huge part of PTSD, they're not the whole picture. People with PTSD often suffer from depression, negative thoughts, and impulsive or self-destructive behavior as well. PTSD also has its own treatments, so it is important to get the right diagnosis. With the right treatment, veterans and all Americans can lead happy, whole, healthy lives with PTSD, said Emily Blair, military policy manager and veterans at the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Here are the signs and symptoms to watch out for. RELATED: 12 Signs You May Have Anxiety Disorder Advertising Advertising by Thomas Cristofolletti/Getty Images PTSD can hit anyone who has gone through a life-threatening event. This means not only war, but also sexual violence, natural disasters such as earthquakes or hurricanes, mass shootings, traffic accidents and more. There must be exposure to some very extreme type of horrific events, says Jack Nitschke, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry and psychology at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. Something has to happen in the outside world. Not everyone who has experienced the trauma will develop PTSD. Also, for some people, learning about violence or tragedy, what happened to someone else, like killing a family member or friend, can lead to disorder. RELATED: 7 things you should never tell someone with PTSD Thomas Barwick/Getty Images Flashbacks and unwanted, haunting memories are known as re-experiencing symptoms that can make a survivor's injury feel like they are going through a traumatic event. Smells, sights and sounds Car backfiring, buzzing helicopter, or news report all can evoke flashbacks. These triggers go to the deepest part of your brain. Your instincts take over, says says Cameron Ritchie, MD, MPH, retired military psychiatrist. RELATED: How to tell if you have normal post-traumatic stress disorder or something more serious advertising GARO/PHANIE/Getty Images Flashbacks are some of the most famous symptoms of PTSD, but nightmares are one of the many reasons people with PTSD often have poor sleep are actually more common. Nightmares or precipitation dreams of a traumatic event are also considered to re-experience symptoms, as they can make people with PTSD feel like they are back in time and place of their injury. Nightmares and other new symptoms can sometimes be caused by a person's own thoughts or certain words. RELATED: 5 Signs You Might Have a Sleep Disorder by Kate Alexander/Getty Images Many people with PTSD try their way to avoid anything that reminds them of an initial injury or could be a trigger. For example, someone with PTSD can stop driving after a car accident or avoid watching hurricane movies if they have gone through one. This avoidance can become wider than a particular person or settings, says Nitschke. If someone is a victim of sexual assault, they not only avoid this person who may still be at their university, but they can avoid men in general by avoiding going to classes, he says. They become immobilized. In some cases, avoidance takes the form of emotional numbness. Some people with PTSD may refuse to think or talk about trauma, instead of finding distractions in activities or alcohol or drugs, according to the American Psychological Association. RELATED: How surviving injuries helped me find love for my life PBNJ Productions/Getty Images This symptom of PTSD is called hyperbidity. You scan the environment all the time, says Dr. Ritchie, or on high alert constantly. This can mean always sitting with your back against the wall in restaurants or lecture halls, so you can see everything and everything that happens in front of you. They don't want anyone sneaking behind them, said Sonia Norman, Ph.D., director of the PTSD counseling program at the National Center for PTSD and Psychiatry professor at the University of California, San Diego. They want to be prepared to answer. Like nightmares, this heightened awareness can contribute to sleep problems in people with PTSD. Falling asleep and sleeping can be tricky if any slight noise or change wakes you up. RELATED: The most common triggers of PTSD - and how to manage them are Advertising Advertising Todor Tsvetkov / Getty Images This symptom, sometimes called hyper-cancerous, is closely related to hyperbidity. People with PTSD often have an exaggerated reaction when they are surprised or amazed, especially if the intrusion-sound, smell, noise, or vision-reminds them of the initial injury. Someone's coming, behind you, and you jump a mile, explains Nitschke. Nitschke, injuries, you wouldn't have done. Hyperarousal can interfere with sleep and concentration, and it can also come out as outbursts of anger, he adds. Strikingly easy is the hallmark of PTSD; it is not such a noticeable symptom of other anxiety disorders. RELATED: 3 Ways to Manage JGI PTSD/Jamie Grill/Getty Images Since 2013, diagnostic criteria for PTSD have included moods associated with symptoms like depression, anger, guilt, shame, and hopelessness about the future. It's not necessarily just for PTSD, but I think there's a change after the injury, says Norman. Because of what they saw or what they did, or because they couldn't save the day, they feel a lot of guilt. It is very often overestimated how much control they had and blame themselves. These emotions can lead to negative beliefs about myself, like it was my fault or if I didn't take that one drink, says Nitschke. Soldiers may feel ready for some of what they experience in war, but no one is prepared for trauma like sexual violence. Survivors of sexual violence often feel very vulnerable and ashamed, says Dr Ritchie. They feel like they've contributed to it in some way. RELATED: Evan Rachel Wood says sexual assault allegations in the news are making her PTSD worse, and she's not alone with PTSD has chronic pain, and not all with chronic PTSD pain, but two conditions do overlap. Between 15% and 35% of people with chronic pain also have PTSD, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. We don't fully understand the relationship, Norman said. Having your stress level in a turbo nonstop can just carry down your body after a while. Trauma itself can also cause pain: headaches from traumatic brain injury, or back pain from a spinal injury, for example. But even removing physical causes from the equation, there seems to be a higher rate of chronic pain in people with PTSD than without. This suggests that there may be some common neurobiological pathways, says Norman. We don't know for sure. RELATED: What Do Stranger Things 2 Get Right (and Wrong) About PTSD? Here's what the expert thinks advertising Martinan /Getty Images In addition to pain, people with PTSD may experience other physical symptoms, like those of panic: Your heart races, you sweat, your blood pressure goes up, your muscles are tense. Some people get dizzy, develop blurred vision, or hear tinnitus. It's not that common, but some people with PTSD feel nauseous or even vomiting in response to certain triggers like a specific odor, says Norman. Having PTSD is also associated with a higher risk of certain physical conditions down the line, including diabetes, heart disease (especially high blood pressure), and immune, digestive, and sleep Lady Gaga clears the general myth of PTSD Getty Images When these symptoms last only a few weeks after an injury, it is commonly referred to as acute stress disorder or ASD. If the symptoms last more than a month, they are most likely PTSD. In both cases, medical problems, as well as drug or alcohol abuse, should be ruled out as the main causes of these symptoms. ASD often comes before PTSD, but not always. Symptoms of PTSD may appear immediately after a traumatic event, or they may appear weeks, months or even years after that. PTSD can also come and go. In many people, you have chronic symptoms that wax and weakens, says Dr Ritchie. In some people, they leave, and in others they remain bad. Anyone with symptoms that last longer than a month should talk to a doctor or a mental health professional about what they are experiencing. Conversation therapy, medications, or both can often help alleviate the symptoms of PTSD. RELATED: Parkland School Shooting Survivor Dies of Suicide Due to Wine Survivor to Get Our Best Stories Delivered to Your Inbox, Subscribe to Healthy Lifestyle Newsletter

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