



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Employee Assistance
Service for Education

CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education

Monthly Article

*Trauma Experiences
During The Pandemic &
Post-Traumatic Growth*

PTSD Awareness Month

EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

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(800) 882-1341

**Free confidential professional
help for
district employees and family
members:**

- Family troubles. Emotional distress.
- Job stress.
- Anxiety. Drug/alcohol use. Grief.
- Loss.
- Life transition issues.

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MESSAGE FROM EASE

People have an amazing capacity to adapt and thrive. The pandemic has impacted our lives in many ways and will be something that is a part of our lens in which we see and experience the world moving forward. What we go through changes us, and the pandemic is no exception. As we move forward, let's begin to make the shift from mere surviving to thriving, a shift from post-traumatic stress to one of post-traumatic growth. This idea suggests a move away from trauma as something that caused debilitating and permanent damage, to a more strengths-based approach. By shifting to this more positive mindset of adversity, people can begin to realize that not only could they recover, but that they could bounce back with an enormous capacity for resilience and personal growth; the idea that adversity can make us stronger, and better people (Achor, 2010). Post-traumatic growth (PTG) refers to the positive psychological changes that individuals experience through a struggle with traumatic events or situations. Most people are mentally resilient after traumatic experiences like the COVID-19 pandemic. Resilience does not mean never having bad days or weeks. It is something you can learn and build, not something people either have or do not have. Resilience is a skill that can be learned, and when practiced we get good at it, just like anything else! One of the keys to being resilient is being able to take the measures needed to rest, recover and repair... in order to be able to reset yourself.

As we approach the summer months, we hope you can take some time to really take care of yourself and practice good self care. To begin making the PTG shift, begin an internal "dig", a reflective deeper dive, to find meaning in the circumstances and events that we have gone through. Begin to think positively about this time - you are at the start of a new chapter in life. Engage with the world around you and appreciate all the good things that it has to offer. Be open to new experiences and opportunities, including new friendships. EASE is available to support you during the process if you need additional support!



There are currently about 8 million people in the United States with PTSD.

National [PTSD Awareness Month](#) is observed annually in June, with June 27th as the designated day for PTSD Awareness. The month is dedicated to raising awareness about the many different PTSD treatment options and ways that you can make a difference in the lives of veterans, survivors of crime or abuse, and others who have experienced trauma.

Definition of PTSD:

Posttraumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that some people can develop as a result of trauma or exposure to life-threatening events. Events due to combat, accidents, violence, natural disasters and abuse are just a few of the causes of PTSD.

Facts about PTSD (U.S population):

- About 7-8% of the population will have PTSD at some point in their lives.
- About 8 million adults have PTSD during a given year.
- About 10% of women develop PTSD sometime in their lives compared with about 4% of men.

Experiencing trauma is not rare. About 60% of men and 50% of women experience at least one trauma in their lives. PTSD can happen to anyone and it is not a sign of weakness.

How to Observe:

- **Spread the Word.** Use the PTSD Awareness Month Calendar to learn about ways to raise awareness for PTSD every day during the month of June.
- **Get Support.** Seek professional help if you or someone you know might be experiencing PTSD.

TRAUMA EXPERIENCES AND THE PANDEMIC

By: EASE STAFF

The pandemic has produced trauma at an enormous scale for many. It has affected millions of people across the world, and many still continue to struggle. As the world slowly begins to recover, we can't expect everything to be back to "normal" without lingering effects. People have experienced pain, suffering, grief, loss, and the effects of the pandemic may be more intense for some than others. The pandemic has significantly impacted our mental health and well-being and it has led to a range of mental health concerns, like anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction, and other trauma and stress-related disorders.

When thinking about the pandemic, trauma may not be the first word that comes to mind. But, COVID has inflicted mass trauma (also known as collective trauma) and its effects may linger for years to come. Trauma isn't just a word for something extremely stressful or life-threatening like an accident or a natural disaster. And, trauma is not the same thing as post-traumatic stress disorder. Trauma is about events and their detrimental effects on the mind and body. It is about the way we relate to these events on a deep level of belief. However, trauma is not the same for everyone and not everyone may experience trauma even if they have gone through the same event. Some may process what has happened differently than others. And this is O.K.

Post-traumatic Growth

In the mid-1990's Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun developed the theory of Post-traumatic Growth (PTG), which explains that those who endure psychological struggle after experiencing life-altering events can see positive growth afterward. After experiencing adversity, people have the ability to gain and develop new understandings about themselves, others, and the world around them. Post-traumatic growth is a process that looks different for everyone. Possible outcomes in this ongoing process include positive responses in five areas: appreciation of life, enhanced relationships with others, new possibilities in life, newly identified personal strength and spiritual or existential change.

Theory Into Practice:

- Discover what's meaningful in your life and schedule time to engage in those activities.
- Develop new principles for living that involve altruistic behavior and develop a mission in life that goes beyond yourself.
- Focus on what you have and practice gratitude for the small things.
- Learn about the aspects of life that you don't have control over and focus on the aspects of life that are within your control.

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/awareness/promo_materials.asp

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210203-after-the-covid-19-pandemic-how-will-we-heal>

TALK TO US

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.

(800) 882-1341

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