Post-traumatic Stress

You have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This condition causes many different symptoms including: **emotional outbursts, anxiety, sleeping problems, social withdrawal, and drug abuse**. PTSD often follows a particularly traumatic event such as war, or natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, or floods. It can also be seen after personal traumas such as accidents, rape, or the death of someone you love. **Symptoms may be delayed for days or even years**. Emotional numbing and the inability to feel your emotions, may be the earliest sign. Periods of agitation, aggression, and inability to perform ordinary tasks are common with PTSD.

Nightmares and daytime memories of the trauma often bring on uncontrolled symptoms. Sufferers typically startle easily and avoid reminders of the trauma. Panic attacks, feelings of extreme guilt, and blackouts are often reported. **Treatment is very helpful, especially group therapy**. Healing happens when emotional traumas are shared with others who have a sympathetic ear. The VA Vietnam Veteran Counseling Centers have helped over 185,000 veterans with this problem. Medication is also very effective. **The symptoms can become chronic and lifelong, so it is important to get help**. Call your caregiver or a counselor who deals with this type of problem for further assistance.

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