PTSD and DSM-5

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association revised the PTSD diagnostic criteria in the fifth edition of its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM-5*; 1). PTSD is included in a new category in *DSM-5*, Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders. All of the conditions included in this classification require exposure to a traumatic or stressful event as a diagnostic criterion. For a review of the *DSM-5*changes to the criteria for PTSD, see the American Psychiatric Association website on [Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](https://psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm?_ga=1.8367346.1782582538.1481136819)Link will take you outside the VA website. VA is not responsible for the content of the linked site..

*DSM-5* Criteria for PTSD

Full copyrighted criteria are available from the American Psychiatric Association (1). All of the criteria are required for the diagnosis of PTSD. The following text summarizes the diagnostic criteria:

**Criterion A (one required):** The person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, in the following way(s):

* Direct exposure
* Witnessing the trauma
* Learning that a relative or close friend was exposed to a trauma
* Indirect exposure to aversive details of the trauma, usually in the course of professional duties (e.g., first responders, medics)

**Criterion B (one required):** The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced, in the following way(s):

* Intrusive thoughts
* Nightmares
* Flashbacks
* Emotional distress after exposure to traumatic reminders
* Physical reactivity after exposure to traumatic reminders

**Criterion C (one required):** Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli after the trauma, in the following way(s):

* Trauma-related thoughts or feelings
* Trauma-related reminders

**Criterion D (two required):** Negative thoughts or feelings that began or worsened after the trauma, in the following way(s):

* Inability to recall key features of the trauma
* Overly negative thoughts and assumptions about oneself or the world
* Exaggerated blame of self or others for causing the trauma
* Negative affect
* Decreased interest in activities
* Feeling isolated
* Difficulty experiencing positive affect

**Criterion E (two required):** Trauma-related arousal and reactivity that began or worsened after the trauma, in the following way(s):

* Irritability or aggression
* Risky or destructive behavior
* Hypervigilance
* Heightened startle reaction
* Difficulty concentrating
* Difficulty sleeping