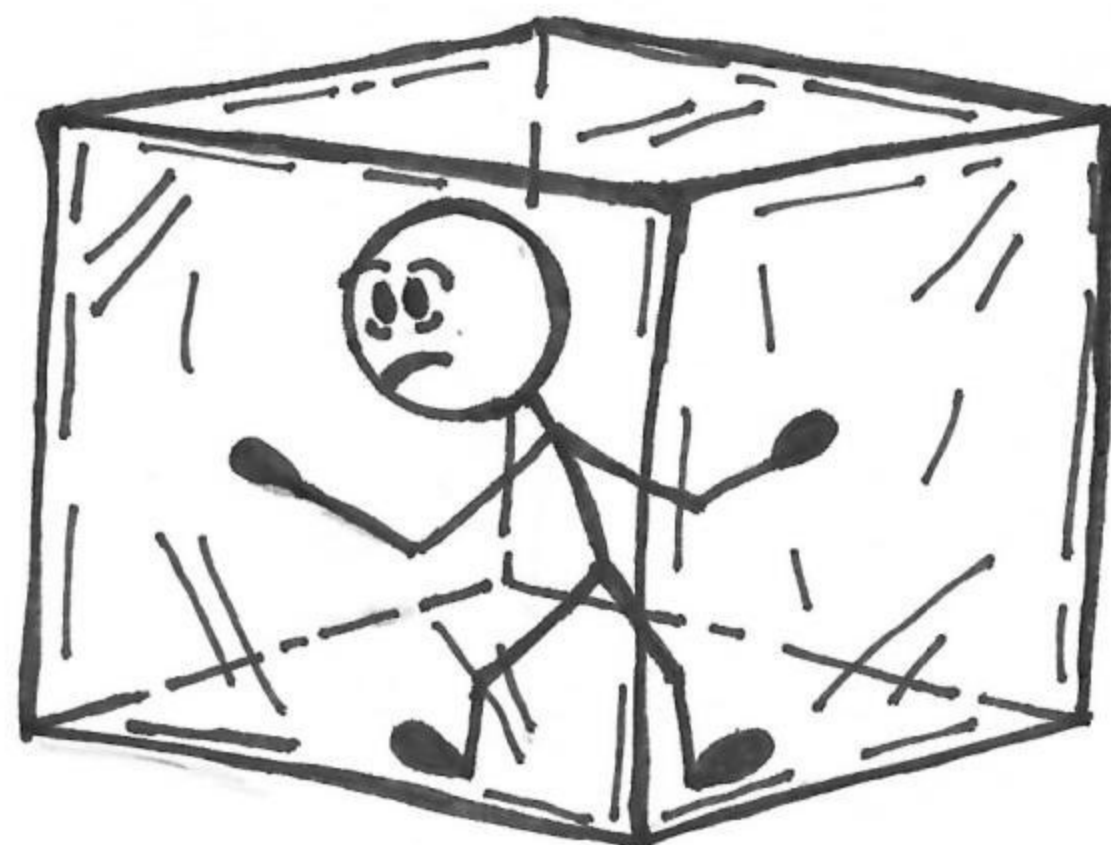


# PTSD 101

## What is PTSD?

In a nutshell, it is a physical & psychological response to one or more potentially traumatizing events (i.e. exposure to death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence - whether you personally experienced it, witnessed it in person, or are repeatedly exposed to aversive details of trauma in the course of your job).



Physical &/or observable symptoms of PTSD	Psychological & behavioral symptoms of PTSD
Gastrointestinal & appetite issues	Perceives threat in potentially benign situations
Headaches	Rigidity/inflexibility & rule-governed behavior
Muscle & joint pain	Avoidance (people, places, feelings)
Insomnia & nightmares	Guardedness/distrust/stoicism
Fatigue & daytime sleepiness	High alert (watches surroundings like a hawk)
Vision & hearing sensitivity	Difficulty recovering after being triggered
Difficulty communicating during high emotion	Depression &/or anxiety
Difficulty processing inbound verbal communication	Anger, irritability &/or aggression (as well as other emotion dysregulation)
Immune system suppression	Cynicism, despair, hopelessness, &/or suicidality
Heart disease	Social & relational isolation
Sexual problems	Risky & self-destructive behaviors
Memory & concentration problems	Jumpy (jumps easily & jumps hard)
Increased blood levels of glucose, cholesterol, & fatty acids	Escapism/numbing through alcohol misuse/abuse
Chronic pain	Relationship problems
	Self-blame, shame, & guilt

## Recommendations

- Do not touch the person without permission.
- Do not plan surprise parties or do other things that will catch them off guard.
- Minimize competing sensory stimuli.
- Minimize unpredictability. Give all information possible. Keep them informed/updated.
- Respect their personal space. (Don't stand too close.)
- Keep the volume of your voice down, & keep your tone calm.
- Honor their agency/choice.
- Sometimes they'll want to talk about it; sometimes they won't.
- Do not verbally or nonverbally express pity.

