



REDMAN GALL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS

# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF PTSD

By Kelly Gall



Most people will experience one or more traumatic events – exposure to serious injury, actual or threatened death or sexual violence for example – during the course of their lives.

These events impact us differently to other stressful life events. For some people, it might be a one-off event, such as a natural disaster or car accident; whereas others, such as those experiencing domestic violence or sexual abuse, may be repeatedly traumatised.

Most people exposed to such events will experience some symptoms in an immediate reaction to the event, which then dissipate in the days and weeks that follow.

When the symptoms continue, it may be that the individual is experiencing PTSD or another mental health condition.



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## Signs & Symptoms of PTSD

People with PTSD experience a range of distressing, and often disabling symptoms following their exposure/involvement in one or more highly stressful or threatening events. More recently, the PTSD diagnosis has been expanded to better capture those whose exposure to a critical incident is secondary, where they were not the 'victim' – such as first responders, clean-up crews, even counsellors exposed vicariously.

The symptoms of PTSD are clustered into four main categories:

- ❖ 're-experiencing' symptoms;
- ❖ 'avoidance' symptoms;
- ❖ 'arousal' symptoms (physiological symptoms); and
- ❖ negative changes in thinking and mood associated with the event.

More specifically, these signs and symptoms of PTSD could include:

- ❖ Recurrent involuntary distressing memories;
- ❖ Distressing dreams or nightmares relating to the event;
- ❖ Dissociative experiences such as flashbacks;
- ❖ Physiological reactions and/or distress in response to trauma related triggers;
- ❖ Avoidance of memories, thoughts or feelings about the event;
- ❖ Avoidance of reminders (situations, places, objects etc) that are related to the event;
- ❖ Problems/not remembering important aspects of an event;
- ❖ Changed beliefs about the future;
- ❖ Negative beliefs about their own role in an event (eg blame);
- ❖ Exaggerated negative beliefs about the self, the world or other eg 'everyone is a threat', 'I'm never safe', 'I am bad';
- ❖ Withdrawal from or disinterest in life activities;
- ❖ Withdrawal in relationships with others (feeling detached or estranged);
- ❖ Inability to experience positive feelings;



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- ❖ Persistent negative emotions (fear, horror, anger, guilt or shame);
- ❖ Being irritable, angry or aggressive;
- ❖ Being reckless or self-destructive;
- ❖ Difficulties concentrating;
- ❖ Hypervigilance (being overly alert or on-guard);
- ❖ Disturbed sleep.

People with PTSD also often suffer from other mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety.

### Treatment for PTSD

Evidence-based treatments for PTSD include Trauma-Focused CBT, Prolonged Exposure and EMDR. Kelly provides Trauma-Focused CBT and Prolonged Exposure. For more information on these therapies please see our information pages.

### So .... Ready to See a Psychologist?

Visit us at [www.redmangallpsychologists.com.au](http://www.redmangallpsychologists.com.au) and see if we might be a good fit for you.

Questions?

Check out our website or contact us with your specific questions, we are happy to help.



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## ABOUT US

Redman and Gall are Leia Redman and Kelly Gall, Clinical Psychologists with extensive training and experience in the field of psychology. We have been working alongside each other for a number of years and have identified a common commitment to the provision of professional, high quality psychological services.

We are all about helping to make a genuine difference in people's lives by giving them the psychological tools they need to address their challenges and move forward.

### KELLY GALL

Clinical & Health Psychologist  
BSc (hons), MPSYCH (Health), MClInPsych,  
MAPS, MCHP

We both work with common mental health issues such as stress, adjustment, depression, anxiety, grief and loss. We also each have particular interests and expertise in working with different groups and the challenges they face. See our website for more information.



### LEIA REDMAN

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