

# Why is PTSD Still So Overlooked?

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We now know, and experts agree, that millions of people are affected by trauma.

Here is a story about one such person who did something about it. Jonathon was diagnosed with PTSD after he was taken to the hospital, for what he and his wife thought was a heart attack. Turns out that what Jonathon had was a panic attack. The emergency room doctor told him that this was one of the most common reasons people come to the emergency room; heart attacks that turn out to be panic or anxiety attacks. Jonathon was relieved his heart was okay but wondered what in the heck was this panic all about? The doctor encouraged him to meet with a mental health provider that specializes in treating anxiety. Jonathon followed up and did just that, and subsequently learned that he had PTSD.

The therapist connected the anxiety and panic to a near drowning incident he had six years prior. Jonathon was shocked to learn that something he thought he had gotten over and that had happened so many years prior, could cause this. As he tells the story, he had been fishing with a friend on a nearby lake when, due to high winds and waves, the boat capsized. He lost track of his friend after screaming his name. "I said to myself as I began to sink in the water, exhausted from trying to stay afloat, God, please take care of my family, I love them so much." Another boat carrying fishermen rescued him shortly after this but his friend was not so lucky. He drowned that day and Jonathon had witnessed this. Jonathon, his wife, and family, mourned with his friend's family and went through what you might expect to be a normal grief process over the next year and a half.

"This was so sad and truth be told I haven't got into a boat since, but I thought I was long over this," Jonathon recalls.

Jonathon learned from therapy that things triggered him: water, waves, wind, yelling, and feelings of helplessness or powerlessness, to name a few. However, he had not made the connection. "I think I was in denial – I guess in order to protect me my brain didn't want to remember this or feel it," says Jonathon. He goes on to add, "What is humbling



is how fast I became anxious when triggered, I mean in the space of just thirty to forty five seconds I was in panic." He later learned that he was experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD and that this was causal in his panic.

Jonathon feels lucky to have gotten a diagnosis. It is highly common for the disorder to go undiagnosed. What is more, many suffer from myths or misinformation about who develops PTSD, and even medical professionals can have confusion over its complex cluster of symptoms, which in turn can prevent people with the disorder from seeking treatment — or realizing they have it at all.

Jonathon received RTM which stands for Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories, a new, well-researched, and novel neurological intervention for post-traumatic stress.

In just three sessions, Jonathon no longer suffered from any symptoms of PTSD and reports that the panic has completely stopped as well. Even better, he is sleeping well and not having any nightmares. "RTM did not take the memory away, nothing will do that. But it eliminated the feelings of fear, terror, and helplessness that I used to feel about the memory I have of this experience."

Some people have multiple or complex trauma that may require more than 3 sessions. However, even people with complex or numerous traumas can be helped and the best part is they don't have to face the full impact of their experience – the RTM therapist can keep the client relatively comfortable during the procedure.

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