

# PTSD

## Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and How it Affects the Physical Body

Prepared for FPPTA

Sherril Cheevers

Saxena White P.A.

Health and Wellness Coordinator

Certified Holistic Cancer Coach

Stay Healthy and Enjoy Your Pension!

# What is PTSD?

- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event.
- First responders often witness, or are exposed to: death, grief, pain, loss, injury, threats to personal safety, long days of work, poor sleep, physical hardships, and other negative experiences. First responders have a difficult job in that they are constantly exposed to disasters and traumatic events.



# Neurological Impact can Contribute to Physical Symptoms and Affect Overall Well-Being

- Hyperactivity of the amygdala (emotional center)
- Impaired functioning of the pre-frontal cortex (decision making and emotional regulation)
- Altered neurotransmitter balance (serotonin and dopamine)

# Two Main Modes of Nervous System Operation

## Sympathetic-Fight or Flight



- Resting heart rate increases
- Heart Rate variability decreases
- Respiration speeds up
- Blood flow increases to muscles and lungs
- Blood flow decreases to deprioritized areas
- Stress hormone levels rise

## Parasympathetic- Rest and Digest



- Resting Heart Rate decreases
- Heart rate variability increases
- Respiration slows
- Blood Flow increases to reprioritized digestive system
- Organs resume their day to day functions
- Stress Hormone levels fall

# During Fight or Flight


- During the fight-or-flight response, your body is trying to prioritize, so anything it doesn't need for immediate survival is placed on the back burner. This means that digestion, reproductive and growth hormone production, and tissue repair are all temporarily halted.
- Traumatic events push the nervous system outside its ability to regulate itself. For some, the system gets stuck in the “on” position, and the person is overstimulated and unable to calm. Anxiety, anger, restlessness, panic, and hyperactivity can all result when you stay in this ready-to-react mode.



# Stress is Sickening

Death of a spouse	100	Marriage	50
Divorce	73	Marital Reconciliation	45
Marital Separation	65	Pregnancy	40
Jail term	63	Outstanding Achievement	28
Death of family member	63	Finishing School	26
Injury/illness	53	Vacation	13
Loss of job	47	Christmas	12
Retirement	45		
Death of close friend	37		
Mortgage foreclosure	30		
Child leaving home	29		

***Your body doesn't know the difference  
between good and bad stress!***





# Chance of Getting Sick

Add your numbers together from previous chart:

>300	80%
150-299	50%
<150	30%

Now add onto this the stress experienced as a first responder.



# How to Rest and Digest

Developing  
a healthy support  
system

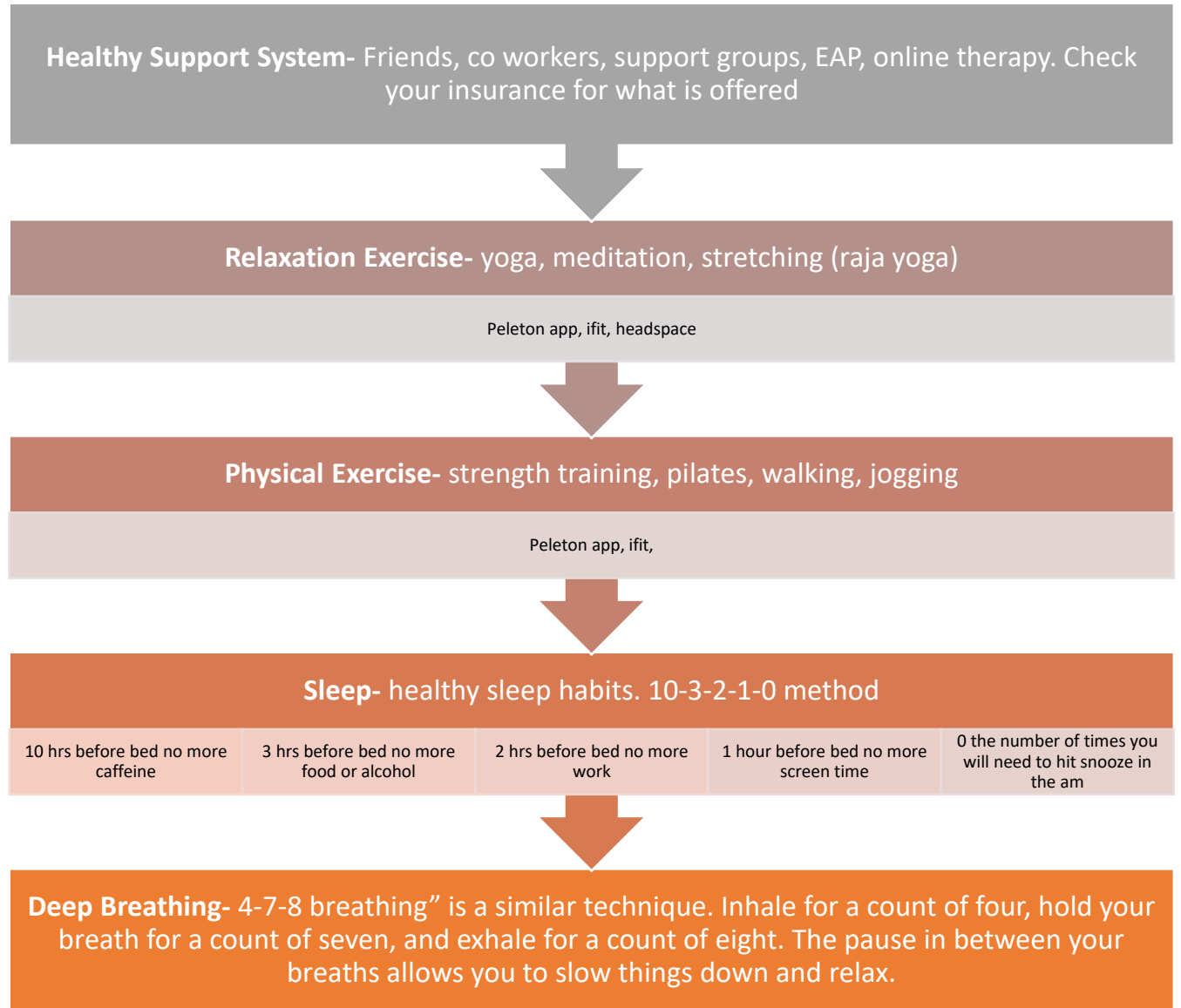
Engaging in  
relaxation  
exercises

Getting  
regular physical  
exercise

Making sleep a  
priority

Practice deep  
breathing exercises

# Resources



# Look for GLIMMERS

Have you heard about **Glimmers**? They are the opposite of Triggers. A glimmer is a tiny micro moment of happiness; a sign of hope. Once you begin to look for the them, they will start to appear everywhere.

Thank you for your time and please reach out to me if you would like more information.

Sherril Cheevers

561-542-2230

