

## News Release

For More Information Call: Angela deGravelles 225-202-5073

For interviews with Stephen Aguillard, LCSW-BACS, can be made by requests at [prpro@eatel.net](mailto:prpro@eatel.net)

Capital Area Human Services (CAHS) is pleased to join with the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to educate the public on Trauma/PTSD and effective treatment options during the month of June. Due to the tremendous interest in this topic, the agency will be providing **Lunch N' Learn sessions on the topic of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Tuesday, July 21, 2015, noon – 1pm at its main locations:**

-Center for Adult Behavioral Health, 4615 Government St, Baton Rouge, Bldg 2, conf. room 200

-Margaret Dumas Mental Health Center, 3843 Harding Blvd., Baton Rouge, conf. room

-Gonzales Mental Health Center, 1112 S. E. Ascension Complex Ave., Gonzales, conf. room

Sessions are targeted to the general public. No registration required. Bring bag lunch.

People with PTSD present with a range of symptoms, the cause of which may be overlooked or undiagnosed as having resulted from past trauma. According to Stephen Aguillard, LCSW-BACS, CAHS clinical services director, it is important for the public to learn about PTSD and treatment, take action to seek help, and support others experiencing trauma to get resources to promote recovery and well-being.

An estimated 8% of Americans – that's 24.4 million people – have PTSD at any given time. Studies estimate that 1 in every 5 military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan has PTSD. An estimated 1 out of 10 women develop PTSD; women are about twice as likely as men to experience this disorder. According to the National Center for PTSD: "Studies have shown that as many as 100% of children who witness a parental homicide or sexual assault develop PTSD. Similarly, 90% of sexually abused children, 77% of children exposed to a school

shooting, and 35% of urban youth exposed to community violence develop PTSD.” Almost 50% of all outpatient mental health patients have PTSD.

Educational resource information on PTSD is available by visiting the national center's website at [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov) Capital Area Human Services offers trauma-informed behavioral health services at its clinics in seven parishes. Go to [www.cahsd.org](http://www.cahsd.org) for clinic locations. The agency serves the parishes of Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, West Baton Rouge, and Pointe Coupee.

For clinic appointments, call 225-925-1906 or 800-768-8824.

#####

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### **What is PTSD?**

Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms may start within three months of a traumatic event, but sometimes symptoms may not appear until years after the event. These symptoms cause significant problems in social or work situations and in relationships.

PTSD symptoms are generally grouped into four types: intrusive memories, avoidance, negative changes in thinking and mood, or changes in emotional reactions.

### **Intrusive memories**

Symptoms of intrusive memories may include:

- Recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event
- Reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again (flashbacks)
- Upsetting dreams about the traumatic event
- Severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that reminds you of the event

### **Avoidance**

Symptoms of avoidance may include:

- Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event
- Avoiding places, activities or people that remind you of the traumatic event

### **Negative changes in thinking and mood**

Symptoms of negative changes in thinking and mood may include:

- Negative feelings about yourself or other people
- Inability to experience positive emotions
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Lack of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Hopelessness about the future
- Memory problems, including not remembering important aspects of the traumatic event
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships

Changes in emotional reactions

Symptoms of changes in emotional reactions (also called arousal symptoms) may include:

- Irritability, angry outbursts or aggressive behavior
- Always being on guard for danger
- Overwhelming guilt or shame
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drinking too much or driving too fast
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Being easily startled or frightened

Intensity of symptoms

PTSD symptoms can vary in intensity over time. You may have more PTSD symptoms when you are stressed in general, or when you run into reminders of what you went through. For example, you may hear a car backfire and relive combat experiences. Or you may see a report on the news about a sexual assault and feel overcome by memories of your own assault.

### **When to see a doctor**

If you have disturbing thoughts and feelings about a traumatic event for more than a month, if they are severe, or if you feel you are having trouble getting your life back under control, talk to your health care professional. Get treatment as soon as possible to help prevent PTSD symptoms from getting worse.

## **If you have suicidal thoughts**

If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, get help right away through one or more of these resources:

- Reach out to a close friend or loved one.
- Contact a minister, a spiritual leader or someone in your faith community.
- Call a suicide hotline number — in the United States, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255) to reach a trained counselor. Use that same number and press 1 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line.
- For the Baton Rouge area, the Crisis Intervention Center provides a 24/7 crisis phone line at (225) 924-3900. Outside of Baton Rouge, call 1-800-437-0303. For online crisis intervention services (when available), visit [crisischat.org](http://crisischat.org) For other questions, referrals, or assistance meeting basic needs, DIAL 2-1-1
- Make an appointment with your doctor, mental health provider or other health care professional.
- Go to the nearest Emergency Department.

## **When to get emergency help**

If you think you may hurt yourself or attempt suicide, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately, or go to the closest Emergency Department for help.

If you know someone who's in danger of committing suicide or has made a suicide attempt, make sure someone stays with that person. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately. Or, if you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room for help.

**Capital Area Human Services  
225-925-1906 or 800-768-8824**

**[www.cahsd.org](http://www.cahsd.org) or [www.realhelpbr.com](http://www.realhelpbr.com)**