

# 5

## facts about physiotherapy and post-traumatic stress disorder



### 1

#### It is important to understand post-traumatic stress disorder



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, which must be present for at least one month, causing distress and functional impairment, include:

- re-experiencing the event through memories, nightmares and flashbacks
- avoidance behaviours such as avoiding trauma-related thoughts, feelings and external reminders
- cognitive and mood alterations, including negative affect, decreased interest in activities, exaggerated blame of self and others, negative thoughts and poor memory recall
- hyper-arousal, such as irritability, aggression, risky or hypervigilant behaviours and difficulty sleeping.

### 3

#### Mind-body exercise can reduce symptoms of PTSD



Mind-body exercise is an effective tool for managing PTSD symptoms and may include a combination of:

- psychological strategies
- behavioural techniques
- body awareness
- breathing and traditional exercise
- yoga, mindfulness and meditation.

### 2



#### Trauma-informed care can be integrated into physio practice

An approach emphasising physical, psychological and emotional safety involves:

- demonstrating trauma awareness
- promoting safety and trust
- rebuilding control
- focusing on strengths
- promoting connections
- communicating belief in recovery.

### 4

#### Service dogs help veterans with PTSD

Service dogs can support and augment treatment of PTSD, resulting in:

- a reduction in PTSD symptoms
- reduced depression and anxiety
- reduced sleep disturbance
- positive effects on welfare.



### 5

#### Improved sleep quality can reduce PTSD symptoms



Physiotherapists can encourage healthy sleep behaviours through interventions including:

- sleep hygiene and sleep rituals
- physical activity
- relaxation and breathing
- education about the impacts of alcohol, caffeine and heavy meals on sleep.

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