

Trauma Survivors Deserve Therapy That Actually Works

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The Huffington Post:

The mind-boggling events of the past month — the Boston Marathon bombings, the fertilizer plant explosion near Waco, a deadly collapse of a garment factory in Bangladesh — will undoubtedly leave in their wake a host of survivors suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Many victims will get over the short-term trauma of those events, but others — in the coming weeks and months — will begin experiencing the chronic bad dreams, flashbacks, sleep difficulties, and frightening thoughts that characterize PTSD. Those individuals will likely avoid places, events or objects that remind them of the experience.

In the United States alone, PTSD affects nearly 8 million adults in any given year, federal statistics show. Fortunately, clinical research has identified certain psychological interventions that effectively ameliorate the symptoms of PTSD. But most people struggling with the disorder don't receive those treatments.

One of the most widely-researched treatments for PTSD is prolonged exposure therapy (PE), pioneered by psychological scientist Edna Foa of the University of Pennsylvania. In PE, patients approach — in both imaginary and real-life settings — situations, places, and people they have been avoiding. The repeated exposure to the perceived threat disconfirms individual's expectations of experiencing harm and over time leads to a reduction in their fear.

Read the whole story: [The Huffington Post](#)

See Edna Foa at the [25th APS Annual Convention](#).