



ASSESSING AND MANAGING PTSD WITH TOTAL BRAIN

Learn how the Total Brain platform can help users manage stress and anxiety associated with PTSD.

About PTSD



PTSD is a complex response to psychological trauma, including intrusive thoughts and flashbacks re-experiencing the events, ongoing feelings of anxiety and hypervigilance, and disturbed sleep, to the extent it impacts day to day functions. PTSD can occur from a single major traumatic event or from multiple traumatic events over time^{1,2}. This places people in occupations with high levels of repeat exposure to traumatic events at increased risk for PTSD, including military veterans, police officers, firefighters, and health care workers.

Who is at Risk?

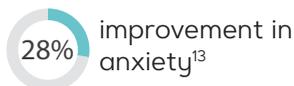
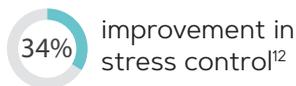


Not everyone exposed to a traumatic event will develop PTSD. People with higher anxiety and higher heart rate and sweat rate, and less effective coping strategies, are more likely to develop PTSD when they encounter a traumatic event. Emotional responses and coping within the first few weeks following traumatic events are also indicative of the development of PTSD, and early intervention at this stage with Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) and other similar techniques has been found to lessen the risk for PTSD development^{3,4}.

Managing Anxiety With Total Brain

Total Brain offers assessment and insights into the cognitive and emotional states that impact PTSD and training exercises that can provide a valuable adjunctive therapeutic tool to other standard clinical treatment practices. The platform can help to increase awareness of stress and anxiety experiences, and can help with strategies for managing stress and anxiety.

Among people who train with Total Brain, there is a:



GAD-2

is used to screen for the presence of a potential Anxiety disorder.

The DASS-21 scale

measures current anxiety and stress levels in comparison to other people the same age and gender. These measures are also relevant for people who experience a low level of stress and anxiety but do not have a diagnosable condition.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Exposure Therapy are the most prominent treatment approaches for PTSD and their efficacy has now been well documented^{3,4}. Other interventions shown to benefit people with PTSD, albeit to a lesser extent, include relaxation exercises^{5,6}, and mindfulness and meditation exercises^{7,8} which help switch from a state of fight-flight stress and vigilance into a calm and more cognitively flexible state.



Thought Tamer is a CBT-based exercise in Total Brain, which helps users to identify problematic thought and worry patterns, and ways to change them.



Total Brain offers a range of mindfulness meditation and relaxation exercises, including several awareness meditations that help to gain insights into thoughts and feelings that are being experienced, and several breathing exercises for relaxation and cognitive focus.



Negativity Bias, Resilience, and Coping Strategies

One of the main aspects of PTSD involves concentration on negative or catastrophic thoughts. Reappraisal CBT, a common treatment approach in PTSD, is focused around identifying and changing these thoughts and feelings on both a conscious and nonconscious level.

People who train on Total Brain see a:

21% improvement in nonconscious negativity bias

11% improvement in conscious negativity bias



The Total Brain exercise Self Regulate provides specific training in building resilience by reappraising negative thoughts and feelings, and may be a helpful adjunctive tool to this kind of treatment approach.



Thought tamer provides further strategies for noticing negative thought patterns and thought traps, and how to reappraise and challenge them.



Several game-like exercises within Total Brain are designed to activate brain networks associated with positivity, safety and reward, and to dampen overactivity of fear and anxiety networks at both conscious and nonconscious level. These include Bubble Topia, Word Smith, Character Builder, Happy Seeker, and Positive Affirmations.

References

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12. Among Total Brain users who completed 2 or more hours of training, a 34% improvement in stress control was found.
13. Among those flagged as at risk for depression or anxiety, a 28% improvement in anxiety levels was found for those who completed 2 or more hours of training.

Learn More:

To learn more about how Total Brain can benefit you and your organization, visit totalbrain.com/learnmore.