

THE 12 STEPS – Long Form

PTSD 12-Step Recovery Fellowship

STEP 1: We admitted we were powerless over the effects of PTSD – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Admitting Powerlessness Over the Past: A person with PTSD cannot simply "will" away flashbacks, hyper vigilance, or intrusive thoughts. These are automatic responses of the brain, not indicators of moral failure or a lack of character. Acknowledging one's powerlessness is not a sign of defeat; rather, it is an act of courageous honesty. By accepting that you cannot control these symptoms on your own, you empower yourself to choose a different path. This could include seeking trauma-informed therapy, followed by participation in our Fellowship, which serves as a continuity of care. Such support can facilitate long-term recovery by utilizing the program's tools and resources.

STEP 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than us could restore us to sanity.

The changes in my life brought me to accept the power of the Steps: The process outlined in the Steps highlights that individuals can achieve healing and a sense of wholeness, regardless of their beliefs about a higher power. Step 2 underscores the importance of personal responsibility and action in the journey toward recovery and fulfillment.

STEP 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

"Turning it over" or Seeking Safety and Wholeness. This often requires trusting a support system or a higher power to manage overwhelming biological responses, especially after accepting that you cannot control them alone.

STEP 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, identifying the effects of PTSD on our lives.

Fearless Inventory of Impact. When dealing with trauma, this step focuses less on "moral failings" and more on recognizing survival patterns. It involves rejecting the belief that the trauma was your fault and understanding how it has influenced your current behaviors.

STEP 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our PTSD.

Shared Honesty. Recognizing your wrongs often leads to expressing your truth about your experiences and survival. This helps to alleviate the isolation and shame brought on by trauma. Recognizing your wrongs can also lead to expressing your truth about your experiences and survival. This helps to alleviate the isolation and shame brought on by trauma.

STEP 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Commitment. We embraced the idea of allowing God to take away all our character flaws. As the Changes in me became obvious, I accepted the power of the Steps. Even if one does not believe in a power beyond themselves, this step emphasizes that healing and wholeness can be achieved by completing the Steps.

STEP 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Readiness for Change. The emphasis is on being prepared to let go of old coping mechanisms, such as dissociation, hyper vigilance, or self-medicating. While these behaviors may have provided safety in the past, they are now hindering your life. Resisting the willingness to change and clinging to these habits, driven by ego, is preventing you from experiencing a more normal life.

STEP 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Repairing Relationships. This process involves creating a list of individuals you may have harmed in response to trauma. It's important to highlight a key point: prioritizing self-amends is often essential. To navigate these significant steps effectively, you must forgive yourself for the actions you took while in a state of survival.

STEP 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Acknowledging the wrongs you have done. Actively pursue the opportunity to make direct amends to individuals you have wronged, whether through words or actions, whenever feasible. You do this with careful consideration of their feelings and circumstances, ensuring that your attempts to make amends do not inadvertently cause harm to them or to others involved.

STEP 10: Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Ongoing Awareness. Continuing to take inventory means being aware of your triggers and emotional states as they occur. It's crucial to acknowledge promptly when you notice yourself slipping back into a "trauma response." Reaching out to a friend in the Fellowship or attending a meeting can often be the best way to navigate these challenging moments. The strength of the Fellowship depends on our commitment to supporting one another.

STEP 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Deepening the Connection. This step emphasizes mindfulness, meditation, and physical practices like yoga or breath work to stabilize the nervous system and improve emotional well-being.

STEP 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others suffering from PTSD, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Service and Integration. After experiencing a spiritual awakening or post-traumatic growth, you spread a message of hope to other survivors and practice safety and self-compassion in every aspect of life.