

Rare Caregivers may not immediately recognize their experience as traumatic or know the signs of PTSD. Illnesses in children create complex levels of care for both patients and their caregivers. The symptoms of trauma and PTSD may affect the caregivers capacity to care at their typical level. Prioritizing caregiver's mental and physical health is essential to providing the best care for their loved ones.

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is defined as the emotional response to a negative event. The events do not have to only be personally experienced but can be witnessed. For rare caregivers, trauma can be experienced through different types of events such as the day of diagnosis, delivery of their child, medical emergencies, watching invasive medical procedures, and of course, the loss of a child, just to name a few. The emotions that are felt by rare caregivers during these events can leave **lasting** emotional scars. These events can often be overlooked as traumatic because they are not the known "common" types of trauma people hear/speak about.

WHAT IS PTSD?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental condition that is activated by a traumatic event. Though many people experience traumatic events, PTSD is when a person finds it challenging to cope and adjust and symptoms worsen over an extended period, making it hard to function daily. Receiving early support may help reduce the progression of PTSD.

**Only a clinician can diagnose this disorder*

RARE CAREGIVING & PTSD

With the day-to-day demands of rare caregiving, caregivers may find it even more challenging when traumatic events occur. Often times feelings of guilt or shame can deter caregivers from caring for themselves. It is vital to support yourself and stay healthy to care for your loved one.

- Seek help early from a professional
- Take preventative self-care measures
- Recognize when symptoms worsen
- Reach out to support systems



SIGNS

- **Memories:** recurrent, intrusive, flashbacks, nightmares
- **Avoiding:** places, activities, people that are reminders
- **Negative thoughts:** self, others, the world
- **Hopelessness**
- **Memory issues**
- **Detachment:** family and friends
- **Emotionally:** numb, difficult to experience positivity, easily startled/frightened, self-destructive

Women experience PTSD at a significantly higher rate than men

If you or a loved one are experiencing suicidal thoughts please dial 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

To learn how Give an Hour can help you on your journey, visit www.giveanhour.org/rarecaregivers