



MEDICAL TRAUMA & PTSD

It's okay to not be okay. Parents and guardians of children that have experienced a stressful event in the form of ongoing medical tests, procedures, medical emergencies, hospitalizations, and sudden or serious health problems can experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event – either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. People who go through traumatic events may have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping, but with time and good self-care, they usually get better. If the symptoms get worse, last for months, and interfere with your day-to-day functioning, you may have PTSD.

Symptoms of PTSD

- Recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event
- Reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again (flashbacks)
- Trouble sleeping, upsetting dreams about the traumatic event
- Severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that reminds you of the traumatic event
- Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event
- Avoiding places, activities, or people that remind you of the traumatic event
- Negative thoughts and feeling hopeless
- Memory problems about the event details
- Feeling numb and detached from family and friends
- Being easily startled or frightened and always being on guard for danger
- Overwhelming guilt or shame

Finding your new normal after a traumatic event can take some time, however if you are experiencing any of these symptoms for more than a month, please seek professional advice. Speaking with a trained therapist that specializes in PTSD and medical trauma can be extremely beneficial. Look for support groups through the hospital and request to speak with the hospital social worker for support. Use social media to search for local support groups to connect with other families that have experienced a similar trauma. Talk with other family members and siblings to evaluate if they too need help. Just know that you are not alone. I write this from my own personal experience as a mother of a child with Kabuki Syndrome that was diagnosed with epilepsy at six weeks old. For years I lived with the trauma, unaware that I in fact had PTSD.



Sincerely,

Violet's Mom