MARTIN & JONES PLLC
Attorneys at Law

Post-traumatic stress disorder, or "PTSD" for short, is a condition that has earned increased attention in recent years. It is commonly understood as something experienced by soldiers who have been in combat, but anyone can experience PTSD as a result of trauma, including vehicle accident victims. If you have been involved in a car accident and believe that you are suffering from PTSD, a personal injury lawyer can review your case and evaluate your options.

What is PTSD?

PTSD is a psychiatric disorder caused by witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event, series of events, or circumstances. People suffering from PTSD will experience things like severe anxiety, nightmares, and flashbacks within a month of experiencing trauma, such as a car accident. PTSD can lead to other complications, such as substance abuse or depression. It can resolve on its own over time or may require intensive psychiatric treatment.

Common Symptoms of PTSD

PTSD can sometimes be difficult to identify, particularly when the victims do not understand what is happening to them or do not trust their instincts. The symptoms are also subjective, which can also make it difficult to identify. The specific symptoms of PTSD can vary widely but fall into four general categories:

1. **Intrusion** - intrusive thoughts, recurring memories, flashbacks, nightmares, severe emotional or physical reactions to reminders of the event. For a car accident victim, this could look like repeatedly reliving the accident or recurring nightmares about the accident.
2. **Avoidance** - avoiding thinking or talking about the event, avoiding places, activities, or situations that remind you of the event. Car accident victims will often say that they no longer wish to drive or even ride in a car after their accident. Some victims may avoid highways or heavy traffic.
3. **Alterations in thinking and mood** - feeling emotionally numb, feelings of hopelessness or detachment, difficulty maintaining relationships, negative thoughts about yourself or others, lack of

interest in activities you once enjoyed, or difficulty experiencing positive emotions. People involved in serious car accidents often experience overwhelmingly negative thoughts and intense changes in their moods.

4. **Alterations in physical and emotional reactions** - being easily startled, irritability, difficulty focusing, trouble sleeping, being constantly on edge, angry outbursts, or self-destructive behavior. For car accident victims, this could manifest as sudden, extreme reactions to car horns, screeching tires, or other sounds that remind them of their accident.

It is important to recognize that PTSD can look very different from one person to the next, both in terms of symptoms and severity. And while these symptoms are subjective, that does not make PTSD any less "real" than a physical injury. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms or think you may be suffering from PTSD as a result of a car accident, seek professional help and consider contacting a personal injury lawyer to discuss your options.

What Treatment is Available for PTSD?

PTSD can be difficult to treat. In some cases, it may slowly resolve itself over time. Some cases can be resolved through intentional care provided by friends, family members, or clergy. Other cases may require professional intervention, utilizing various forms of cognitive behavioral therapy. Some of the more commonly used cognitive behavioral therapies being used to treat PTSD include the following:

- Cognitive processing therapy
- Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy
- Prolonged exposure therapy
- Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) for PTSD
- Group therapy

If you are suffering from PTSD, a psychologist or psychiatrist can recommend what treatment they think would be effective in your case.

Can You Pursue an Injury Claim for PTSD?

This is a complex question that does not always have am easy answer. Every case is unique, and the ability to pursue a claim will depend on the facts and circumstances specific to each case. Before deciding whether or not to pursue a claim, you should contact a personal injury lawyer to discuss your options.

It is important to emphasize that, under the law, you are entitled to be made whole. This means that you are entitled to not just your medical expenses for your physical injuries but also your lost income and pain and suffering.

You may be able to pursue compensation for the PTSD you have suffered, as well as the following:

- Any lost income caused by your PTSD
- Any medical expenses required to treat your PTSD
- The mental anguish and suffering you experience as a result of your PTSD

The last element, your mental anguish and suffering, will be difficult to assign a value to because it is a non-economic loss. A car accident lawyer will be able to evaluate this portion of your claim and establish a reasonable estimate of its worth. They can also help you gather the necessary documentation to substantiate your lost income and medical expenses.

While claims for non-economic damages are always difficult to assert, insurance companies, judges, and juries tend to push back even harder when they are not backed by objectively verifiable losses such as physical injuries. A claim for PTSD-related damages is more likely to be successful if you also suffered significant physical injuries in the accident. Do not decide for yourself that you do not have a claim without first speaking with an experienced personal injury lawyer.

Talk to a Personal Injury Lawyer at Martin & Jones to Discuss How PTSD Can Affect Your Claim

If you have been in a car accident, it is vital that you get all of the compensation you need to make a full recovery. At Martin & Jones, we understand that your mental health is no less important than your physical health, which is why we fight hard to make sure our clients are compensated for PTSD or other mental and emotional trauma. To discuss your case and your options, call us today at 800-662-1234 or contact us online to schedule a free consultation.

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