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Handout

Getting into a person's mind

I spoke with a receptionist at a dentist office yesterday. It was a strange conversation, because she was very abrupt.

She said, "Do you want to come in tomorrow morning, we have a slot open."

I said, "Well, I don't think I'm ready to come in – you see I have PTSD and so I need to psychologically prepare for some time beforehand."

I said a bit more about the PTSD in attempt to explain why tomorrow was too soon. In my mind it was clear that maybe in 1-2 months I would feel ready.

She asked again, "Do you want to come in tomorrow?"

I was perplexed. Actually my boyfriend was listening and he understood all that I had just communicated perfectly. He was just as surprised as I was that nothing that I had said had made it across to the receptionist – that she literally hadn't heard it. Or more likely had not understood any of it. Had I just been speaking an alien language?

So, I made an appointment for sometime in the future that I will most likely cancel and I forgot to ask if they would accept my health insurance. This illustrates the complete disconnection I experience so much of the time when communicating.

And after getting off the phone I got angry. *All receptionists are assholes!* That's exactly what I thought and my body got overtaken by rage in an instant.

Communication issues:

In this example, we see these communication issues:

- she experienced a huge **disconnect** from the person he was speaking with;
- she became **hypersensitive** to her abrupt way of speaking, and she became **enraged** completely out of proportion to the situation.
- she also forgot, due to **memory** issues, that he needed to ask a specific question, and was not **assertive**.

10 way how PTSD messes with Communication:



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People with PTSD have/are:

1. Powerful Sense of Disconnect
2. Unable to Create Emotional Rapport
3. Lack of Assertiveness
4. Hypersensitivity
5. Rage
6. Rigidity
7. Difficulty Processing Information
8. Difficulty Organizing Information
9. Lack of Concentration and Focus
10. Memory Issues

Try to find some strategies, which would help you to overcome these communication barriers.

Next time, you will be well prepared for the communication with a PTSD person.

Source: Hanson, H. (2019, July 29). PTSD Challenges – Communication. Retrieved from <http://www.new-synapse.com/aps/wordpress/?p=1614>