

## Post-Traumatic Growth (Ptg)

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### Abstract

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) is the idea that people can experience positive changes in their lives after a stressful or traumatic event. It's a theory that was developed by psychologists Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun in the mid-1990s

**Keywords:** - (PTSD)- post traumatic stress disorder, (PTG) Post-traumatic growth

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Date of Submission: 11-09-2024

Date of Acceptance: 21-09-2024

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### I. Introduction

Traumatic event can shatter someone's fundamental assumptions about both themselves and the world around them. The negative impacts on the trauma survivors can hinder their day to day living, quality of life, and overall well being. Without proper professional therapy for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), this adversity can last for years. However, with the right support system, strategies, and desire to change, PTSD can, over time, turn into what is called post traumatic growth.

### II. Definition

**Post traumatic growth** is defined as someone who's development surpasses what was present before their initial struggle/crisis occurred. Along healing journey, notice some positive change come from what they have been through. This is known as **post-traumatic growth**.

It is no secret that the focus on strength instead of weaknesses is the underlying, basic tenant of recovery. But for those who experienced trauma, that tactic can be hard to utilise since most survivors tend to see themselves as inherently weak. Though it may be challenging, and quite diverse based on the type of trauma someone went through, there can come a time when they are able to shift their views and perspectives, moving away from what is wrong with them to what has happened to them instead. This is in addition to the fact that some people who have gone through trauma may not just survive the experience, but also enter into what is known as Post Traumatic Growth. People come out brighter, better, and stronger than before the trauma took place, as if the experience helped them grow to new levels. They may have an entire change of viewpoint, more self-awareness, and may elevate the importance of relationships that they once took for granted.

The PTG theory was developed in the 1990s by Richard Tedeschi, PhD, and Lawrence Calhoun, PhD. The theory states that following adversity or crisis, people often see positive growth. This could be in their relationships, worldview, or other personal areas. Growth after trauma is part of your natural human capacity to make meaning, heal, and learn from hardship, says Ginelle Krummey, a licensed clinical mental health counselor in Marshall, North Carolina. Post-traumatic growth is the new awareness, insight, and perspective that emerges after a crisis, says Dr. Debi Silber, a psychologist in Huntington Station, New York. "The crisis can be the death of a loved one, disease, natural disaster, or devastation of some kind like abuse or betrayal," she explains. "It results from a 'psychological earthquake' where your world is now divided between before it happened, and after it happened. It's a defining moment that changes life as you've known it."

### III. Signs Of Post Traumatic Growth

There are some pretty transparent signs that someone, maybe even you, have fostered post traumatic growth over the course of your treatment from PTSD. Through counselling and psychological therapies, you can be helped to get to this point of growth as well as highlighting where the growth has taken place. In general look for positive growth in these five areas:

1. You have a newly founded appreciation for life.

2. The relationships you have with others are much healthier, balanced, and are overall happier. You are hyper-aware of all the opportunities you have around you that you can pursue if you wanted to. You see possibilities and new doors you can check out that you never previously observed.
3. You have demonstrated much more resilience and personal strength over the course of your treatment. You feel stronger both mentally and physically, are very in tune with who you are as a person, and do not allow outside influences to hinder your personal happiness or growth.
4. Frequently, trauma survivors have a very large shift in their spirituality.

After experiencing trauma, it's expected to experience challenges in personal life, relationships, and work. How long this lasts are different for everybody, and there's no "right" timeline for processing trauma. At some point, you might begin to notice new growth that wasn't there before the trauma happened.

According to Tedeschi and Calhoun's historical 1996 study, key signs that you're experiencing PTG include:

- A greater appreciation of life:** appreciating the value of life, or appreciating each day in a way you didn't before
- Improved relationships with others:** you might develop a sense of closeness with others, increased compassion, or the knowledge that you can count on others in times of crisis
- New possibilities:** such as developing new interests, a new life path, or a willingness to change things that need changing
- Personal strength:** the knowledge that you can handle difficult things, that you're stronger than you thought, or an increased sense of self-reliance
- Spiritual change:** A deeper understanding of spirituality, or stronger faith than before

"Traumas almost always include the removal of personal power or agency, and taking back choice is a huge part of recovering from trauma," says Krummey. "Restoration of a sense of safety and security with the world, with other people, and/or with yourself is another factor that leads to PTG." There are many ways that you can go about this — so consider leaning into what feels right for you.

### **Therapy:**

"One of the biggest factors encouraging post-traumatic growth is being able to emotionally process grief and other feelings related to the traumatic event," says Derwin K.K. Nunes III, a certified substance abuse counselor on the big island of Hawaii.

"Working with a therapist can be a big part of this," he explains. "Therapy can help a person who has experienced trauma cope with PTSD symptoms, anxiety, or depression, which is key to experiencing growth after a traumatic event."

### **Learning About Trauma**

The impact of trauma is complex, from how it affects your brain and body, to your emotions and how it impacts your relationships.

### **Community Support**

Research shows that socializing with your loved ones and others who have been through similar experiences can help accelerate PTG.

### **Support Groups: -**

After Silence

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)
- C-PTSD Foundation
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- National Department for Veterans Affairs

## **IV. Conclusion**

Post Traumatic Growth is an enriching, vibrant outcome to something that was so dark and debilitating. It is an experience that allows trauma survivors to view life in a different way, perhaps making them more inspired and appreciative of the people and things around them than before. Though not every person who experiences trauma will obtain this favourable outcome, it is still crucial that they work on themselves to minimise the symptoms and the impacts of the trauma to live a well-balanced, happy life regardless. Always remember, growth does not mean that there is an absence of distress, and everyone recovers and copes at their own pace.

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