

## About Deborah Tucker

Deborah is a licensed marriage, family and child therapist. She has lived and practiced in Simi Valley for over 20 years. As owner of Families Counseling Center, she is privileged to work with several other therapists with many specialty areas.

Deborah enjoys working with many types of clients, and feels honored that so many of her former clients refer friends and family members, sometimes years after their own therapy experience.

Deborah has been married for over 25 years, and is the proud mother of two sons, both currently away at college. She is a member of St. Rose of Lima parish in Simi, and has often given talks at many local churches and schools on topics related to family life, personal growth, and emotional health.

Currently, Deborah's practice is focused on three areas:

- Recovery from trauma, both old and recent
- Negotiating life's transitions
- Helping parents help their children

- If you are ready to make changes in your life
- If you have emotional wounds you would like to heal
- If you would like to improve your parenting, communication and relationship skills

Call or e-mail Deborah Tucker. She has worked with hundreds of individuals, couples and families during over twenty years of private practice.

**Families Counseling Center**

**and**

**Coaching for a Better Life**

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## **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Recovering from Past or Recent Trauma**

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# Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

## What is it?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder occurs when upsetting events become “locked” in our minds, causing us to react as though the triggering event is still happening, even though we know it is over. PTSD can be caused by long-term or chronic trauma, such as past child abuse, or by recent acute trauma, like an auto accident or robbery.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of PTSD fall into three main categories: intrusion, avoidance, and hyperarousal.

**Intrusion:** Intrusion symptoms arrive suddenly and occur when memories of the past event invade your current life. The most common intrusion symptom is the flashback. Flashbacks are vivid memories that can be triggered by sights, smells, or sounds, and cause you to relive the traumatic experience over and over again. These flashbacks can seem very real and are often detailed and filled with emotion. Another intrusion symptom is the nightmare, which can occur unexpectedly, causing extreme anxiety and fear.

**Avoidance:** Avoidance symptoms describe a sufferer’s unconscious attempts to prevent remembering anything to do with the traumatic event. These signs of post-traumatic stress disorder often interfere with family relationships, marriages, and careers. You may avoid being with family and friends in order to hide your illness. You may experience an overall feeling of numbness. You may alternate between feelings of intense emotion and simply no emotion at all. Consciously and unconsciously you will avoid reminders of the traumatic events in order to escape flashbacks. Depression is often an avoidance symptom.

**Hyperarousal:** Hyperarousal symptoms are the result of stimulated nerves and hormones. You may experience severe insomnia, trouble remembering the entire traumatic event, and difficulty concentrating. You may experience irritability or explosions of emotion for no apparent reason and more frequent startling responses.

**Physical symptoms** are often part of the PTSD syndrome, as well. Headaches, stomach problems, dizziness, and chest pain are all commonly experienced by sufferers of the disorder. You may also experience nausea, diarrhea, skin problems, rapid heart beat, and high blood pressure.

( symptom list thanks to [www.epigee.org](http://www.epigee.org))

## What can help?

Therapy can be very helpful in treating PTSD. As we learn more about how the body and brain work together to process upsetting events, more techniques have been developed to unblock our natural healing ability. Often, when the triggering event is a recent one, and there are no underlying emotional conditions, clients experience resolution in 3 to 10 sessions. You and your therapist can decide together what treatment techniques will be most helpful for you.

You don’t have to continue to suffer from PTSD. Asking for help is the first step on the road to healing.