Treatment Recommendations for Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Methodology - Key</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Recommendation FOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditional Recommendation FOR</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Interventions within the first three months of trauma

**Universal interventions**
(for all adults who experience trauma)

- **Conditional recommendation AGAINST individual psychological debriefing**
  For adults within the first three months of trauma, we suggest providing information, emotional support, and practical assistance in preference to individual psychological debriefing.

- **Conditional recommendation AGAINST group psychological debriefing**
  For adults within the first three months of trauma, we suggest providing information, emotional support, and practical assistance in preference to group psychological debriefing.

**Indicated interventions**
(for adults with PTSD symptoms within the first three months of trauma)

- **Strong recommendation FOR a stepped/collaborative care model**
  For adults with PTSD symptoms within the first three months of trauma, we recommend a stepped/collaborative care model. In this, individuals receive evidence-based care commensurate with the severity and complexity of their need.

- **Conditional recommendation FOR trauma-focused CBT**
  For adults with PTSD symptoms within the first three months of trauma, we suggest offering trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies (includes prolonged exposure, cognitive processing therapy, cognitive therapy) in preference to doing nothing.

- **Conditional recommendation FOR brief eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR)**
  For adults with PTSD symptoms within the first three months of trauma, we suggest offering brief EMDR in preference to doing nothing.
## Interventions for adults with PTSD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Interventions</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong recommendation FOR cognitive processing therapy (CPT)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD, we recommend cognitive processing therapy (CPT).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strong recommendation FOR cognitive therapy (trauma-focused) (CT)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD, we recommend cognitive therapy (trauma-focused) (CT).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strong recommendation FOR EMDR</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD, we recommend EMDR.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strong recommendation FOR prolonged exposure (PE)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD, we recommend prolonged exposure (PE).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strong recommendation FOR trauma-focused CBT</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD, we recommend trauma-focused CBT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional recommendation FOR guided internet-based trauma-focused CBT</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD where trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies or EMDR are unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest guided internet-based trauma-focused CBT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional recommendation FOR guided trauma-focused CBT via telehealth (video conferencing)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD where face-to-face trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies or EMDR are unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest offering guided trauma-focused CBT delivered via telehealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional recommendation FOR narrative exposure therapy (NET)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD where trauma is linked to genocide, civil conflict, torture, political detention, or displacement, we suggest narrative exposure therapy (NET).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional recommendation FOR present-centred therapy (PCT)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD where trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies or EMDR are unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest present-centred therapy (PCT).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional recommendation FOR stress inoculation training (SIT)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD where trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies or EMDR are unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest stress inoculation training (SIT).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional recommendation FOR trauma-focused CBT (group)</strong></td>
<td>For adults with PTSD where individual trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies or EMDR are unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest group trauma-focused CBT.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Pharmacological Interventions

**Conditional recommendation FOR SSRIs (sertraline, paroxetine or fluoxetine) or venlafaxine (an SNRI)**

For adults with PTSD, we suggest SSRIs (sertraline, paroxetine or fluoxetine) or venlafaxine (an SNRI) in circumstances where any of the following applies:
- The person is unwilling or not in a position to engage in or access recommended psychological therapy (trauma-focused CBT, PE, CT, CPT, EMDR).
- The person has a comorbid condition or associated symptoms (e.g. clinically significant depression and high levels of dissociation) where SSRIs are indicated.
- The person’s circumstances are not sufficiently stable to commence recommended psychological therapy (for example as a result of significant ongoing life stress such as domestic violence).
- The person has not gained significant benefit from recommended psychological therapy.
- There is a significant wait time before psychological treatment is available.

### Interventions for adults with comorbid PTSD

**Psychological interventions**

(For comorbid PTSD and Substance Use Disorder)

**Conditional recommendation FOR trauma-focused CBT**

For adults with comorbid PTSD and Substance Use Disorder, we suggest trauma-focused CBT in preference to treatment as usual.

**Conditional recommendation FOR non-trauma-focused CBT**

For adults with comorbid PTSD and Substance Use Disorder, where trauma-focused CBT is unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest non-trauma-focused CBT (Seeking Safety or Integrated CBT).

### Alternative treatment delivery modalities

**Psychological interventions**

(For adults with PTSD)

**Conditional recommendation FOR guided internet-based trauma-focused CBT**

For adults with PTSD where trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies or EMDR are unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest guided internet-based trauma-focused CBT.

**Conditional recommendation FOR trauma-focused CBT via telehealth (video conferencing)**

For adults with PTSD where face-to-face trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapies or EMDR are unavailable or unacceptable, we suggest offering trauma-focused CBT delivered via telehealth.

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View the [Australian PTSD Guidelines](app.magicapp.org) for full details of the research studies included in the systematic review, summaries of the evidence for each research question and the rationale behind recommendations.

Please visit [Phoenix Australia](phoenixaustralia.org/australian-guidelines-for-ptsd) for further supporting information and helpful resources.

Effective: 22 December 2021