

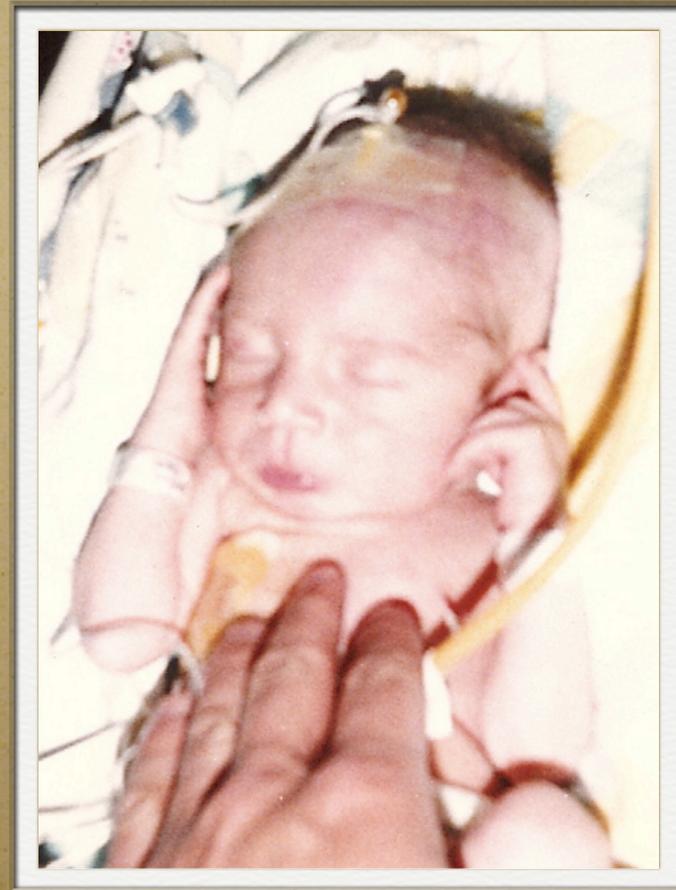
# Post-Traumatic Stress in Children

6 Myths and Misconceptions

# Our Son's PTSD Story

Allen

72 hours after birth  
48 hours after surgery  
No pain medication



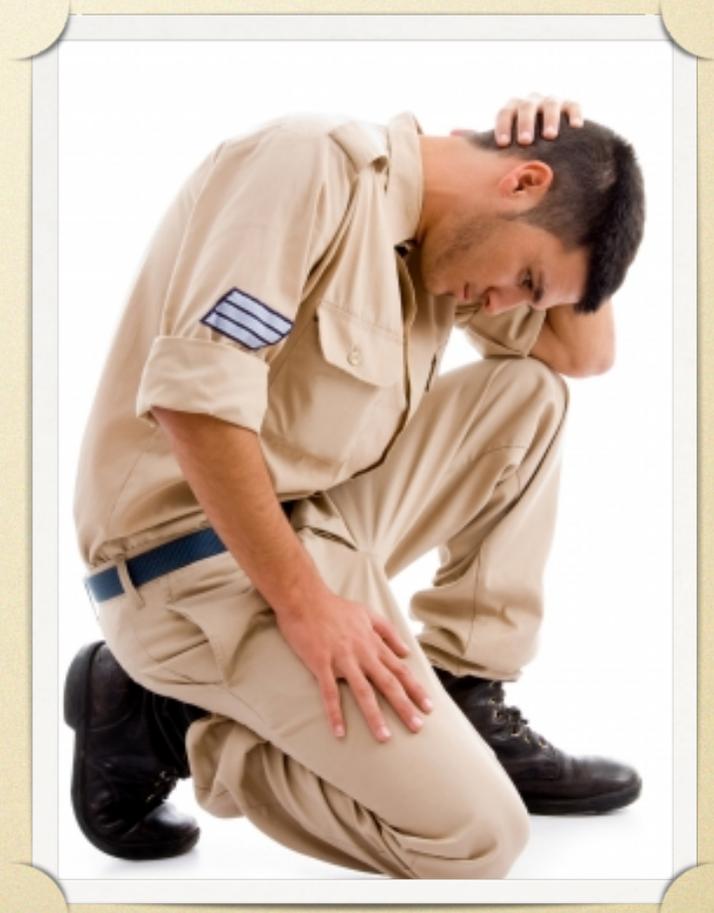
# 6 Myths and Misconceptions

1. Only soldiers get PTSD

2. It's not PTSD. It's bad  
parenting

3. It's not PTSD. It's sin.

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# 6 Myths and

4. Kids don't remember

what happened when  
they were babies.

# Misconceptions, Cont.

5. Newborns can't feel  
pain.

6. Fetuses can't experience  
trauma.

• image courtesy of [www.freedigitalphotos.net](http://www.freedigitalphotos.net)



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# Only Soldiers Get PTSD

- Misconception is that *only* soldiers get PTSD
- True if:
  - War is the *only* source of trauma
  - *Only* soldiers are traumatized during war
- Soldiers are at risk of developing PTSD, but they aren't the *only* ones.

# It's Bad Parenting, Not PTSD

- Behavior of traumatized children can mimic results of poor parenting.
- Parental neglect, abuse, and long-term inconsistency can traumatize children.
- Doesn't explain aberrant behavior in children from loving, structured, well-parented homes.

# It's Bad Parenting, Not PTSD, cont.

- How to determine the difference?
  - Study family dynamics over long period of time
  - Consider extenuating circumstances instead of blaming parents
  - Share information about PTSD with families when evidence of childhood trauma exists

# It's Sin, Not PTSD

- Children responding to a PTSD trigger often exhibit “naughty” behavior.
- In Christian circles behavior that appears to be “naughty” is perceived as sinful.
- PTSD trigger responses are involuntary, instinctual reactions of an injured mind.
- Like physical injuries, mental injuries need proper treatment and prayer, rather than judgement for healing to occur.

# Kids Don't Remember

- Children store traumatic pre-verbal memories differently.
- Children store good pre-verbal memories differently, too.
- Memories are stored as images, sounds, smells, and other sensations that can't be put into words.

# Newborns Don't Feel Pain

- An early 1900s study of newborns is the source of this myth.
- Clinical trials in the early 1980s proved that potent pain medication given to newborns in surgery reduced stress and complications, and improved chances of recovery.
- Pain medication protocol for newborns changed overnight worldwide.

# Fetuses Can't Experience Pain

- 2004 study showed that early pre-natal and post-natal experiences, including early trauma, are encoded into the memory of a fetus.
- 2007 study found that increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the mother's blood resulted in higher levels in amniotic fluid at 17 weeks of gestation. The correlation increased as gestation progressed.

# Why Bust These Myths and Misconceptions?

- Effective treatments and preventative measures exist.
- We can share this truth with affected families.
- We can encourage parents to find treatment for their children.
- *You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free ~ John 8:32*