

3. Where there is a persistence of the post-traumatic stress symptoms beyond six months the child/young adult is then considered to be suffering from PTSD.

## **PTSD And The Young Person**

*"...Controlled studies document that between 85 to 90% of children exposed to traumatic events develop PTSD...depending upon the event. Universally, however, the rates of children developing PTSD following traumatic events is higher than those reported for adults. This is consistent with the growing recognition that children are, if anything, more vulnerable to traumatic experiences than adults."*

Stress, Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders in Children, B.D. Perry MD, PhD

## **PTSD And Destructive Groups**

Cults (high control, destructive groups) are by definition, *stress and trauma producing environments*. Not only do many destructive groups create experiences of acute (deep/intense) trauma for their members, but they also create environments of chronic stress.

## **Some Helpful Suggestions**

1. If PTSD is suspected a competent counselor with expertise in PTSD should be consulted for diagnosis. Medication may be necessary to reduce anxiety. Psychoeducation (explaining to the young person and family what the expected signs and symptoms are), individual counseling (dealing with issues of self esteem, competence, social skills, specific fears, etc.) are anxiety reducing processes necessary for the young person.
2. As a caregiver the most important thing you can do is to provide a *caring, predictable, and stable* environment for the child.