

Could anxiety as seen with PTSD contribute to a catatonic stupor presentation?

Dr. McCall:

I think the answer is yes. And the reason I say that is not every person with PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder exhibits exactly the same profile of symptoms. But we know that for some people, especially maybe the more severe cases, it can proceed to a phenomenon called “dissociation.” In dissociation, the person basically loses touch with reality, and they enter almost a dreamlike state. If that were to persist, they certainly could look like they are bizarre and would have trouble communicating effectively — perhaps end up in a “frozen” position.

So I think it's possible, that while we focus on mood disorders and schizophrenia and some medical conditions as precipitants of catatonia, that post-traumatic stress disorder probably should be considered as a possible contributor as well.