



Psychological Reactions to Combat; 12 Years into the Long War

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OUTLINE

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2. 9/11 at the Pentagon
3. Behavioral Health in the Army
4. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
5. Complementary and Alternative Medicine for PTSD
 1. Including dogs!
6. Veterans and the Public Mental Health System
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A Brief History of Psychological Reactions to War

- World War I--“shell shock”, over evacuation led to chronic psychiatric conditions
- World War II--ineffective pre-screening, “battle fatigue”, lessons relearned, 3 hots and a cot
- The Korean War---initial high rates of psychiatric casualties, then dramatic decrease
 - Principles of “PIES” (proximity, immediacy, expectancy, simplicity)*
- Vietnam
 - Drug and alcohol use, misconduct
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder identified later
- Desert Storm/Shield
 - “Persian Gulf illnesses”, medically unexplained physical symptoms
- Operations Other than War (OOTW)
 - Combat and Operational Stress Control, routine front line mental health treatment

9/11 in Washington DC

- Beautiful clear fall day
- New York attack
- Pentagon burning
- Reports of bombs elsewhere
- Are We at War?



Combat Stress Control Principles Applied

- Proximity, Immediacy, Expectancy. Simplicity
- DiLorenzo Clinic at the Pentagon
 - Army, Air Force, Navy personnel operations for medical and mental health services
- -Groups
 - People more open to talk in workplace or at ‘coffee rounds’



Development of A Sustained Response

- Family Assistance Center
- Operation Solace



The Pentagon Family Assistance Center

- Tended to families of all victims
- The Sheraton in Crystal City
 - Extended family, children
 - Most lived there for up to a month
- Services
 - Informational briefings
 - Red Cross
 - Department of Justice, FBI
 - Counseling
 - Childcare
 - recreation
 - Medical care
 - DNA collection





The Pentagon Memorial at the Dedication

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Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn

- Numerous stressors
 - Multiple and extended deployments
 - Battlefield stressors
 - IEDs, ambushes, severe sleep deprivation,
 - Medical
 - Severely wounded Soldiers, injured children, detainees
- Changing sense of mission
- Strong support of American people for Soldiers
- Major Focus of senior Army Staff
- Numerous new programs developed to support Soldiers and Families



The Army since 9/11

- Volunteer Army
 - Know they are going to war
 - Seasoned, fatigued
 - Large Reserve Component
 - Reserve, National Guard
- Elevated suicide rate
- Wounded Soldiers
- Effects on Families
 - Continuous deployments
 - Families of deceased
 - Families of wounded
- Difficult Economy



Range of Deployment-Related Stress Reactions

- Mild to moderate
 - Combat Stress and Operational Stress Reactions (Acute)
 - Post-traumatic stress (PTS) or disorder (PTSD)
 - Symptoms such as irritability, bad dreams, sleeplessness
 - Family / Relationship / Behavioral difficulties
 - Alcohol abuse
 - “Compassion fatigue” or provider fatigue
 - Suicidal behaviors
- Moderate to severe
 - Increased risk taking behavior leading to accidents
 - Depression
 - Alcohol dependence
 - Completed suicides



PTSD DSM IV Diagnostic Concept

- Traumatic experience leads to:
 - Threat of death/serious injury
 - Intense fear, helplessness or horror
- Symptoms (3 main types)
 - Reexperiencing the trauma (flashbacks, intrusive thoughts)
 - Numbing & avoidance (social isolation)
 - Physiologic arousal (“fight or flight”)
- Which may cause impairment in
 - Social or occupational functioning
- Persistence of symptoms



mTBI may be associated with PTSD, especially in the context of Blast or other weapons injury

DSM 5 Definition of PTSD

- Removes Criterion A-2
- Additional criteria
 - Somatic reactions
 - Sleep
 - Depressive symptoms
 - Anger and irritability



Evidence Based Approaches for PTSD

- Psychotherapy
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy
 - Cognitive processing therapy
 - Prolonged exposure
- Pharmacotherapy
 - SSRIs



New and Innovative Approaches

- Pharmacotherapy
 - Second generation anti-psychotics
 - Sleep medications
- Integrative therapies
 - Acupuncture
 - Stellate ganglion block
 - Yoga
 - Canine therapy





Questions/Discussion
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