



Military 101/PTSD 101

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Military 101: What (we think) YOU Should Know

Road Home Program:
The Center for Veterans and their Families
at Rush





Group Exercise (no, not pushups...yet)

- What *does* a veteran look like, talk like, walk like?
- What does the term “active duty military, service member, or vet” mean to you?





A Taste of the Culture

- The military is unlike any other career and the demands of military life create a unique set of pressures on service members and their families.
- For most civilians, your job is what you do; in the military it is who you are.
- It is our community with clearly defined rules and expectations.



Different Branches

**Department of
Defense**

Army

Navy

Air Force

Marines

**Department of
Homeland Security**

Coast Guard



Road Home





Unified Forces but Distinct Missions

- Army: fight and win wars with sustained land dominance across full-range of military ops.
- Navy: power projection, strategic deliverance and tactical delivery of combat power
- Air Force: provide strategic airlift and tactical air combat support
- Marines: rapid deployment force; seizure or defense of advanced naval bases for land operations
- Coast Guard: safeguard maritime interests in the heartland, ports, at sea, and around the globe; protect maritime economy and the environment; defend maritime borders, and save those in peril





Watch Out For Name Calling

- Air Force “Airmen”
- Marines “Marines”
- Navy “Sailors”
- Soldiers are in the Army
- Service Member is a good generic term





Active Vs. Reserve

Active Duty

- Duty 24/7
- Lives on or near military base
- Most medical care through military
- Deploys as a unit
- Family deeply entrenched in military culture

Reserves

- Operational reserve or Activated “Weekend Warriors”
- Operational Deployments part of a planned cycle
- Lives in the civilian world
- Most medical care through the community
- May deploy individually
- Family not necessarily entrenched in military culture

Road Home





Terms of Recent Veterans

- “OEF/OIF/OND Vets” refers to veterans of the current wars
- OEF Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)
- OIF Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Operation New Dawn
- GWOT: Global War on Terror
- Post 9/11 veteran
- Operation United Assistance





Learn the Language

"There's been a SitRep of SIGACT near the LZ. You may need CAS or an ASR. Go with the IA or a PSD because the AIF are everywhere. Check with the LMCC first, and don't use LECs. Don't forget your LRCT and PMR, and touch base with RSO when you get there."

WTFO????????





Learn the Language

"There's been a situation report of significant action near the landing zone. You may need close air support or an alternate supply route. Go with the Iraqi Army or a personal security detail because the anti Iraq forces are everywhere. Check with the logistical movement coordination center first, and don't use locally employed contractors. Don't forget your long range telephone and personal mobile radio, and touch base with the regional security office when you get there."

Road Home





Cultural Humility

A Day in the Life (insert service member's branch here)

Reveille

Drop your ****s and grab your socks

PT

Triple S

UOD

DFAC

Duty station

Maintenance

Taps

Shut eye (or if you stand 24 hour duty Mid Rats)

Salute as needed and Cover/Uncover as needed





Cultural Humility

A Day in the Life

Routines and Decisions

- The average service member makes 3 thousand decisions a day
- The average veteran has to (learn to) make 20 thousand





Is everyone who has ever worn a uniform a “Veteran”?

- We in the community may say ‘yes’ but everyone who served is NOT automatically eligible for veterans services.
- Eligibility can depend on things like:
 - How long was service?
 - Was it during a time of war?
 - What was type of discharge?
- The primary VA definition of a Veteran is someone who had served at least 180 days continuously outside a training environment.

Road Home





Common Myths About Military Veterans

- All Veterans have psychological disorders (PTSD, anger issues, TBI, depression)
- All Veterans are “Brain-washed”
- All Veterans joined military because college was not an option (financially or academically)

DON'T ASK THE QUESTION”

“Did you kill anybody...”

It's just plain inconsiderate and disrespectful





PTSD 101





**What do you think of when you
hear the word “trauma”?**

**How do you think your job might
involve trauma?**





How is trauma defined?

- A. Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways:
 - 1. Directly experiencing the traumatic event
 - 2. Witnessing, in person, the event as it occurred to others.
 - 3. Learning that the traumatic event occurred to a close family member or close friend. For actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event must have been violent or accidental.
 - 4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event (e.g., first responders collecting human remains)

Note: Criterion A4 does not apply to exposure through electronic media unless this exposure is work related.





Types of Traumatic Experiences

- Sexual or Physical Abuse or Assault
- Emotional Abuse or Psychological Maltreatment
- Serious Accident (transportation, fire, other)
- Serious Illness or Medical Procedure
- Natural Disasters
- Human-caused Disasters / Terrorism
 - MASCAL Outbreak





Traumatizing Military Experiences

- Injury to self or others
- Threat of death (IED blast, Firefight)
- Death of others / Traumatic Grief
- Witnessing human suffering
- Seeing mutilated bodies
- Killing others
- Military Sexual Trauma





How are mass traumas different from individual traumas?





Acute Stress Reaction/Disorder

- Presence of dissociative symptoms
- Persistent re-experiencing of the trauma
- Marked avoidance of stimuli that are reminders
- Marked symptoms of anxiety/arousal
 - Difficulty Concentrating
 - Sleep Difficulties
 - Irritability
 - Anger
 - Guilt
 - Depression
 - Insomnia
 - Erratic outbursts
 - Exhaustion/fatigue
- Clinical impairment in functioning
- Symptoms develop minutes to days after event
- 1 day to 1 month after the trauma





PTSD has gone by many names and is as old as war itself

- Railroad spine (Civil War)
- Soldier's Heart and Shell shock (WWI)
- Combat Exhaustion (WWII)
- Combat Stress Reaction (Vietnam)
- PTSD (current)





Symptoms of PTSD

- Re-experiencing
- Avoidance
- Negative alterations in cognition /mood
- Hyperarousal
- Duration at least 1 month
- Causes clinically significant impairment / distress





Symptoms of PTSD

- Re-experiencing symptoms
 - Recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the trauma
 - Recurrent distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream are related to the trauma
 - Dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) in which the individual feels or acts as if the trauma were recurring
 - Intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to trauma-related cues
 - Marked physiological reactions to trauma-related cues





Symptoms of PTSD

Avoidance symptoms

- Avoidance of distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about the trauma
- Avoidance of external reminders (people, places, conversations, activities, objects, situations) of the trauma





Symptoms of PTSD

- Negative alterations in cognition / mood
 - Inability to remember important aspect of the trauma
 - Exaggerated negative beliefs about self, others, world
 - Persistent, distorted cognitions about cause or consequences of the trauma to blame of self or others
 - Persistent negative emotional state (e.g., fear, anger, guilt)
 - Diminished interest or participation in significant activities
 - Feelings of detachment or estrangement from others
 - Persistent inability to experience positive emotions





Symptoms of PTSD

Hyperarousal

- Irritable behavior and angry outbursts (with little or no provocation)
- Reckless or self-destructive behavior
- Hypervigilance
- Exaggerated startle
- Problems with concentration
- Sleep disturbance



PTSD Prevalance

- PTSD Prevalence: **10-15%** of law enforcement personnel
- PTSD Prevalence: **10-30%** of those in fire suppression
- Up 45% of those exposed to workplace violence may develop significant psychological distress
- As many as **35%** of those directly exposed to mass disasters may develop PTSD
- Found to be as high as **30%** among returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan





Consequences of PTSD are serious...

Substance use

Unemployment / Underemployment

Poor physical health

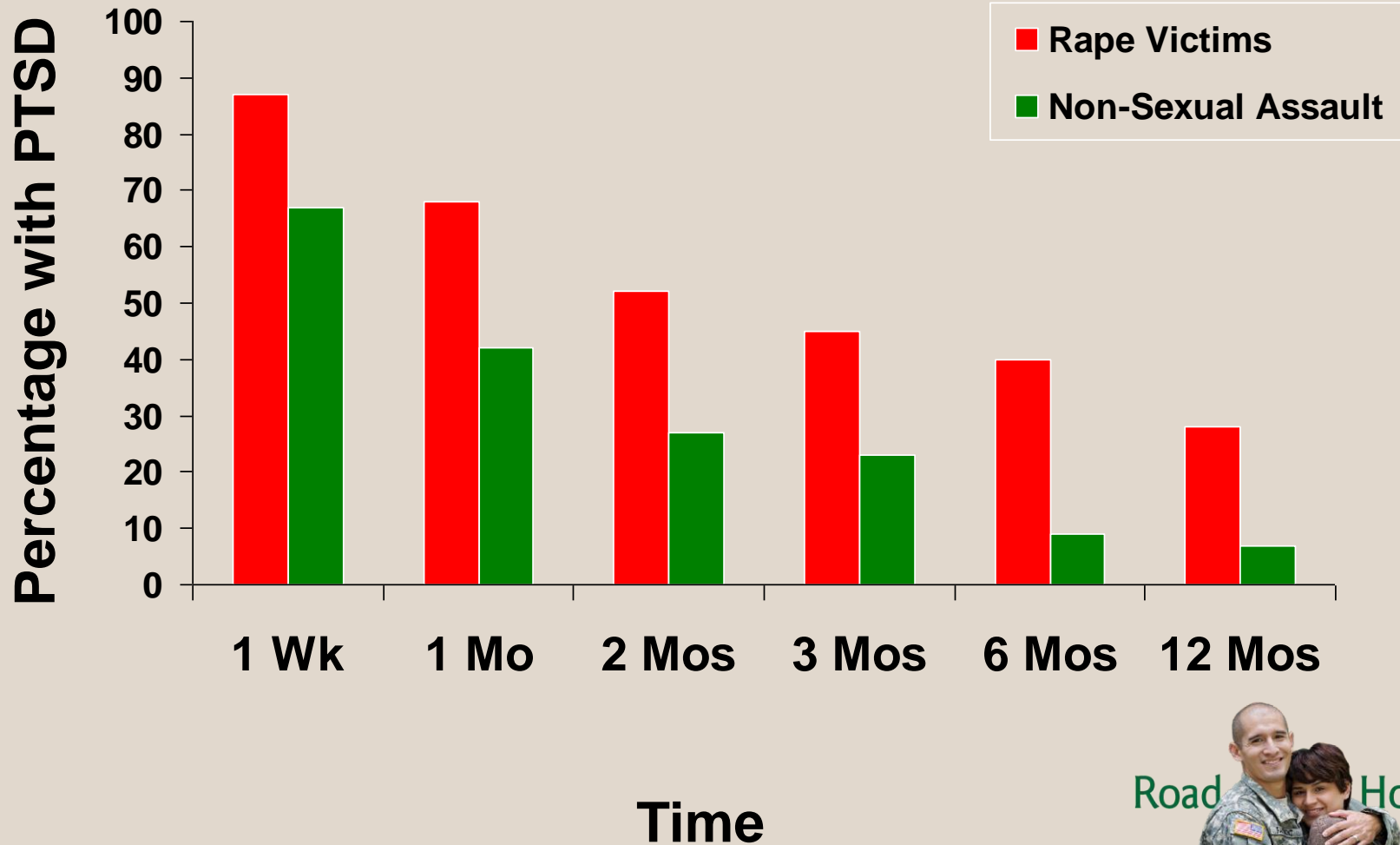
Divorce / Marital discord

Suicidality

Intergenerational transmission



PTSD: A Disorder of Non-Recovery





Acute stress = normal response to trauma

Why do you think this is?

This means our goal is to help people on the road to recovery

What you do in the aftermath of trauma matters for long-term health!





Risk Factors for ASR/PTSD

Individual factors

- Sex
- Family history of psychopathology
- Prior psychological problems
- Prior trauma (important with multiple deployments)

Trauma factors

- Nature of trauma
- Severity of trauma
- Dissociation during the trauma
- Perceived life threat
- Injury

Post-trauma factors

- Perceived social support: In Unit and Command



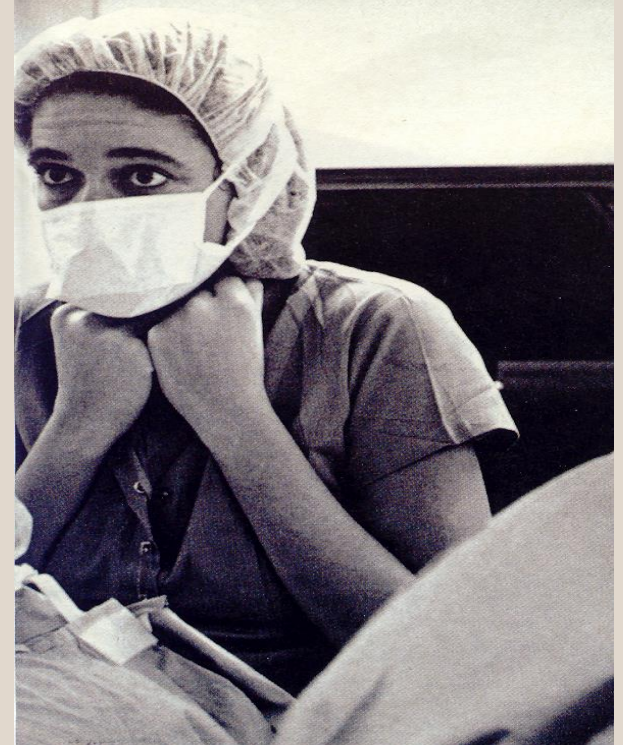


PTSD not only affects those who experience a mass trauma...





....but also first responders / medical personnel who are repeatedly exposed to injury illness, death, and often grotesque images.



Road Home



How does PTSD look different in military service members?

- Delayed onset much more common
 - Why do you think this is?
- Stigma
 - What is your experience with this?
 - What sorts of problems does this cause?





What do you do if...

Make sure to do:

- EMPATHY!!!!!!
- Acknowledge and Validate
- Healthy Distraction.... (I.e. From? Cubs? Bears? Anything...)
- Emphasize skills they learn in treatment
- Use another vet/staff member
- Walk around block / breathing
- Encourage different perspective
- Problem solve solutions... What will help you?

Avoid:

- Provoking / confrontational
- Asking too much information
- Therapy / You are not there therapist!
- “One-upping” = Not a competition





Questions?

