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Understanding the Invisible Wounds of War

PTSD/PTS

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

TBI

Traumatic Brain Injury

Today we are going to...

- Define PTSD
- Dispel the myths about PTSD
- Identify the symptoms of PTSD
- Learn how to support a Veteran with PTSD
- Introduction into the Veterans Administration

PTSD is not a...

- Psychotic Disorder
 - Hear voices other do not
 - Believe they are being controlled
- Cognitive Disorder
 - Loss of Memory
 - Inability to learn
- Mood Disorder - Severe Depression
- Somatoform Disorder - Symptoms of pain
- Adjustment Disorder - Chronic coping issues

PTSD defined...

- Anxiety Disorder
- Signs & Symptoms cluster around excessive irrational fear and dread.
- It is treatable though the use of medications & behavioral therapies.
- Mental Health Professionals – DSM-5
- Veterans Benefits Administration - 38-CFR

What is PTSD...

- It can occur after the exposure to a TRAUMATIC event.
- It can affect a persons thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- Sever cases gone untreated it can severely effect one's life.

Myths about PTSD

“Only weak people get PTSD.”

- PTSD changes how an individual responds to the environment.
- Military leaders and Medal of Honor recipients have come forward and shared their struggles with PTSD and how they are recovering.

Myths about PTSD

“People who weren’t wounded shouldn’t have PTSD.”

- Traumatic events DO NOT have to be physically damaging.
- Seeing other injured, responding to those injured, or being subjected to a danger can be equally damaging.

Myths about PTSD

“If PTSD were real... everyone would have it”

- Individuals exposed to trauma react differently.
- Genetics, past history, and degree or durations of exposure all are factors.

Myths about PTSD

“Treatment does not work”

- There are many types of treatment and medications that have been proven to reduce the symptoms.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitive Processing Therapy

Prolonged Exposure Therapy

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing

Myths about PTSD

“If I have it they will take my guns”

- Only if one has been deemed mentally incompetent.

Facts about PTSD...

- It is a common disorder... even more common after combat.
- It can affect anyone... From a private to a General
- Nearly 8% of Americans are diagnosed with PTSD.
- PTSD though not “curable” is treatable with many different options of treatment.

Indicators of PTSD...

- “Since they came home he is different...”
- It is more than just having a “bad attitude”...
- Very few of the symptoms are visible to others.
- Support persons need to look beyond the surface.

Google: Vet Center anonymous PTSD screener

Symptoms of PTSD



- Irritable
- Easily Startled
- Hyper –Alert -Triggers
- Avoid Crowds – Triggers
- Anxiety Attacks
- Dissociation
- Nightmares
- Strong Reactions - Triggers
- Fatigue
- Avoidance - Triggers
- Insomnia
- Poor Concentration

PTSD gone untreated can lead to...

- Substance Abuse – Self medication
- Anger Management Issues
- Loneliness – Isolation
- Severe Depression – Ideations of harming one's self

How can you support...

“A Marine needs to want help in order to get help”

- Know your Veteran – Baseline and Anniversaries.
- Give your Veteran the “benefit of the doubt”
- Know the symptoms of PTSD & don’t be afraid to ask.
- Encourage your Veteran to seek help & be available.

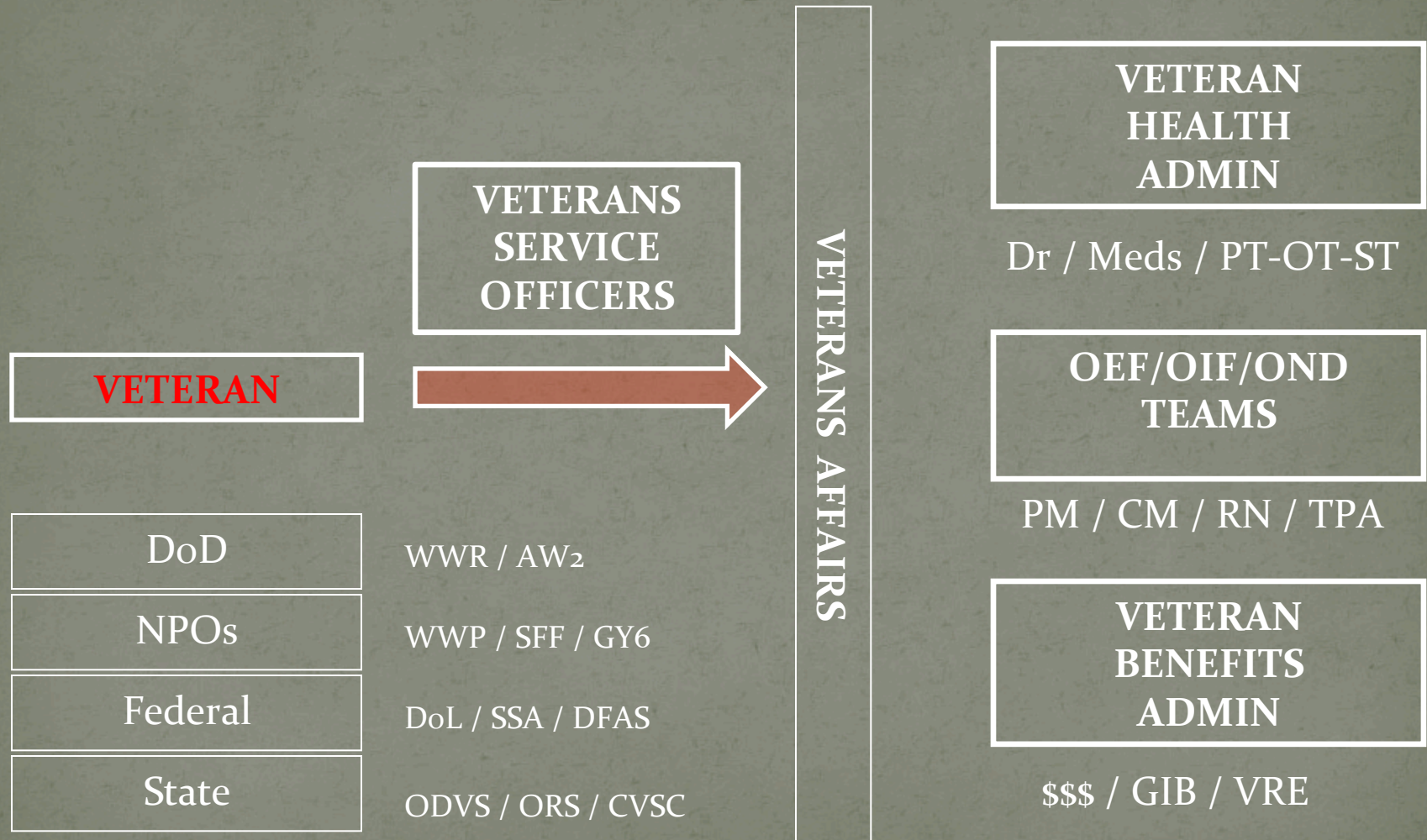
Things to avoid...

“Working harder than the Veteran you are supporting”

- Acting as a counselor or therapist.
- Ignoring a problem – Hold them accountable
- Leaving a Veteran alone who is suicidal
- “discussing” your Veterans issues



Navigating the VA



Questions?

guy.zierk@usmc.mil - (614) 975-7079

www.woundedwarriorregiment.org

Wounded Warrior Call Center -(877) 487-6299

How to talk to a Veteran

- Thank them for their service
- Listen non-judgmentally
- Ask open-ended questions about their service and symptoms/disabilities, issues
- Be aware of the veterans feelings about shame, survivor's guilt, problems dealing with stress and civilian life, etc.
- Must follow through with offers of help
- Ensure their families are involved and know of services available to them also

How NOT to talk to a Veteran

- Don't act like you know how he/she is feeling
- Do not get into a discussion on your political analysis of the war
- Do not rush the veteran into anything (unless suicidal)
- Don't press for detailed accounts of traumatic events
- Don't tell them that they were lucky
- Don't make decisions for them

Veterans Outreach

- County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs)
- Educational Institutions
- Veteran Service Organization (VSOs) such as American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), American Veterans (AMVETS)
- Active Duty or National Guard installations
- Job Fairs, especially those focusing on veterans
- Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC)
- Warrior Transition Units

Veteran's Outreach (cont)

- Veterans Health Administration (VHA) – Disabled Veterans Outreach coordinators (DVOPs)
- Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers
- Farmer Veteran Coalition
- Senior Centers or Homeless Shelters
- Vocational Rehab (state and/or VA)
- Posters/newsletters
- Yellow Ribbon events
- Blue Star or Gold Star Mothers
- Other veterans
- Social Networking