

READ MORE ABOUT POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

What is it?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been around for a very long time. Military medicine had recognized this condition with a variety of labels. During the Civil War the condition was called "Soldier's Heart." By WWI, it was re-named "Shell Shock," and during WWII, "Battle Fatigue." Korean War veterans were diagnosed with "War Neurosis," and "Vietnam Syndrome" was the label for that generation of veterans. VA was service connecting former combatants with a "Nervous Condition" or some other type of disorder prior to the advent of PTSD.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a condition recognized by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Criteria for diagnosing PTSD are published in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (commonly referred to as the DSM-IV). PTSD first appeared in this manual, published by the APA, in 1980 after significant research studies with Vietnam combat veterans.

PTSD may occur after a person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which the person experienced or witnessed an event that involved death, serious injury, or mass destruction. This could include events that occur in war, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism, crime or abuse. For veterans, in particular, stressful traumatic events include combat zones, peacekeeping missions, training accidents, disasters, medical emergencies, and assaults. These events cause the survivor to react with intense fear, helplessness, hopelessness and horror.

Symptoms of PTSD include, but are not limited to:

- Recurrent, intrusive, and distressing thoughts about the event
- Recurrent dreams, nightmares (sometimes called "night-terrors") about the event