

Caring For the Warrior's Spirit

Assisting Veterans and Service Members as they
Engage Spiritual Resources for Healing and Renewal

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PTSD Symptoms Overview

Symptoms of PTSD, present for at least one month, and are divided into three symptom clusters:

- ▶ re-experiencing of the traumatic event,
- ▶ avoidance of trauma-relevant stimuli and numbing of general responsiveness, and
- ▶ heightened physiological arousal.

Must constitute a disruption of functioning in daily life.

Four Causes of Stress Injury

INTENSE OR PROLONGED STRESS

Life
threat

- Events that provoke terror, horror, or helplessness

Wear &
tear

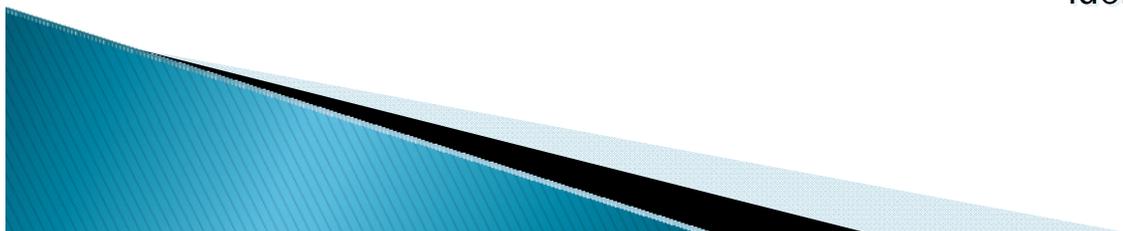
- Accumulation of stress from all sources over time

Loss

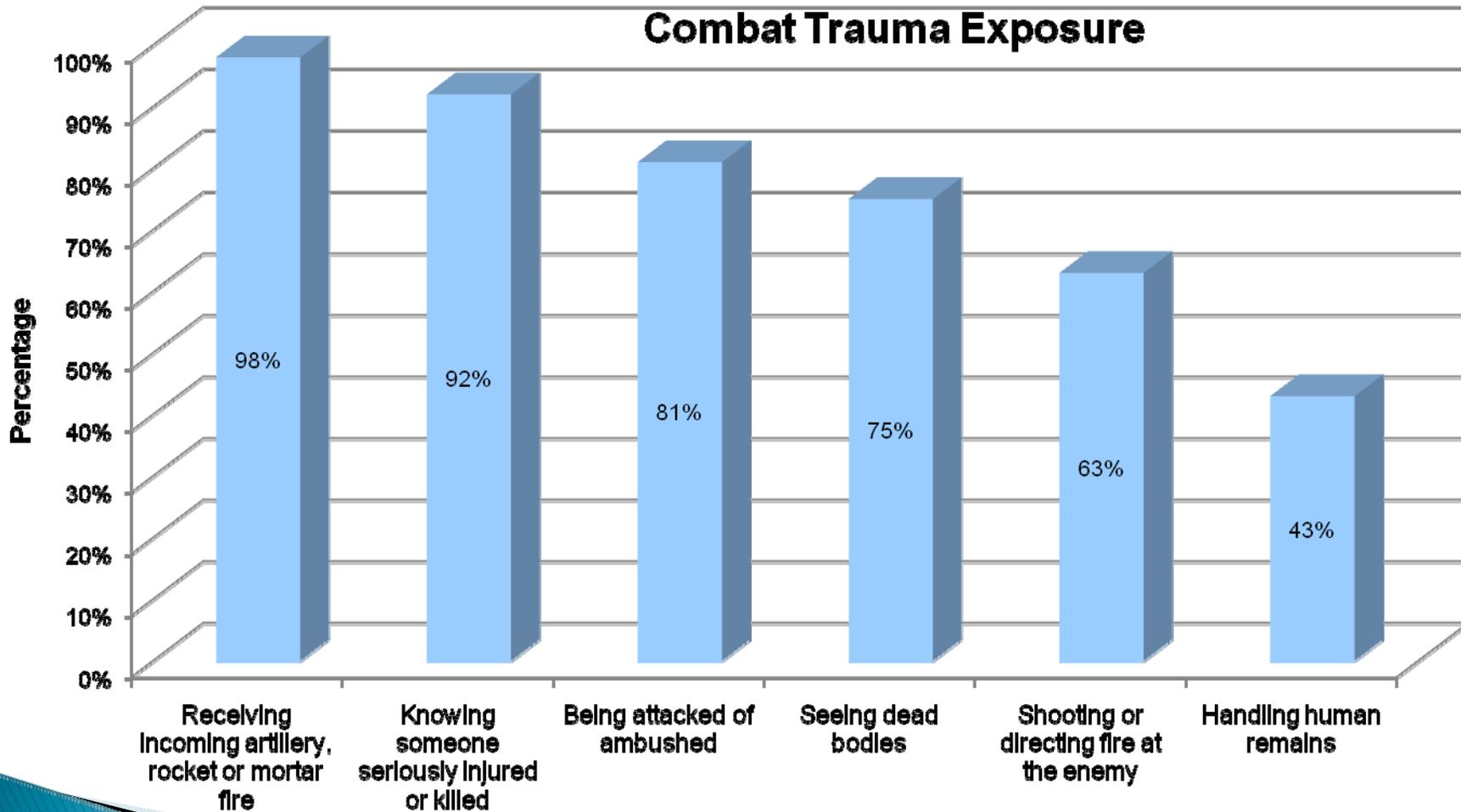
- Death or injury of others who are loved and with whom one identifies

Inner
conflict

- Events that contradict deeply held moral values and beliefs



Scope of Exposure to Combat



(Hoge et al., 2004)

Normal Processing of Information

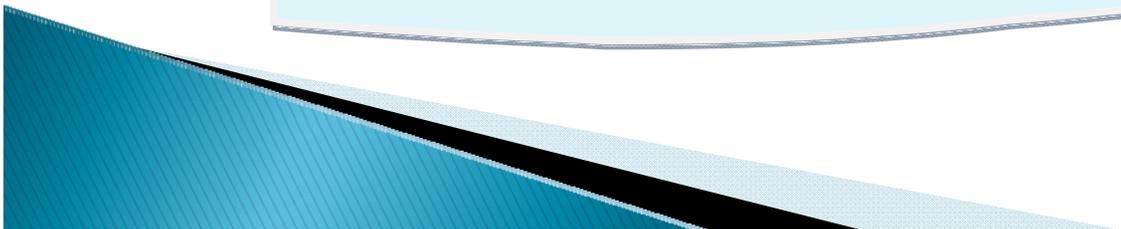
Event Occurs



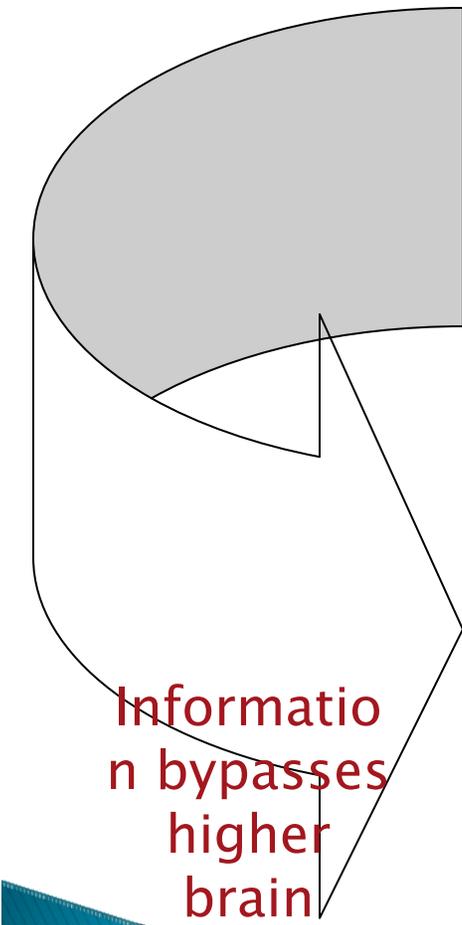
Brain registers information first to cerebral cortex. (Rational brain)



Brain then registers information in limbic system. (Lower brain)



Processing of Traumatic Experiences



Event Occurs

Brain **does not register** information to cerebral cortex (rational brain)

Brain registers information directly to amygdala.

Information bypasses higher brain

Reactions to Traumatic Events

Psychological

Physical

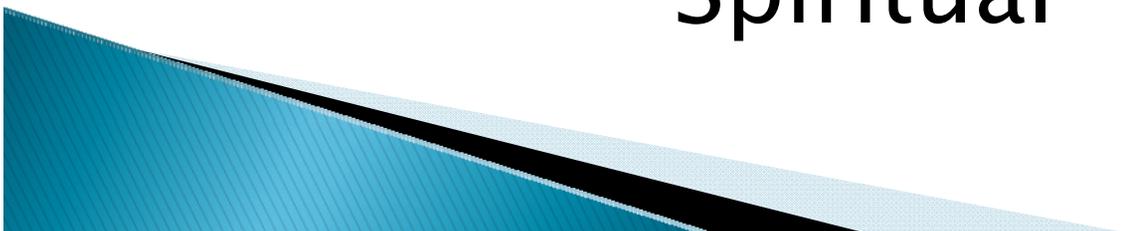
Cognitive

Emotional

Behavioral

Interpersonal

Spiritual



Spiritual Reactions to Trauma

1. Confusion about God
2. Loss of community
3. Altered sense of meaning in/of life
4. Loss of previously sustained & sustaining beliefs
5. Confusion about core ethical beliefs & morality
6. Grief/loss of relationship with God and others
7. Questions of Theodicy
8. Feeling dirty, unworthy & permanently damaged
9. Feeling angry at self – blaming self
10. Feelings of guilt.

Pastoral Care Approaches

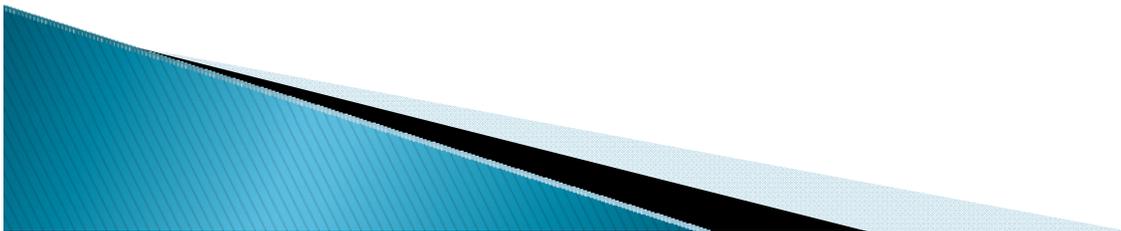
Providing a Safe Haven

Listening

Grounding

Accepting

Referring



Theological Constructs & Trauma

- ▶ God's presence
- ▶ Suffering & grief
- ▶ Theodicy
- ▶ Morality
- ▶ Forgiveness & or reconciliation
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Narrative

