


ST. JOSEPH'S HEALTH SERVICES In the spirit of community ...
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When Soldiers Come Home – What Can Social Workers & Social Service Workers Do?



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- Opening activity

How many of you have treated a veteran in your clinical setting?

What were the challenges you encountered?

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OBJECTIVES

- Define: Operational Stress Injury (OSI)
- The network of OSI clinics in Canada
- Mental Health in the Canadian Forces
- Supports within Dept. National Defence
- Treatment of OSI
- Individual & Psychosocial aspects
- How are Social Workers & Social Service Workers helping

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Overview of presentation:

- Mental health in the Canadian Forces
- Availability of services & access to care
- Evidence based treatment
- Challenges

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**Canadian Army in Afghanistan –
so far away: video**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ac_5gW2qSg

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“ Not all wounds are visible, and the invisible wounds of
mental illness are no less real, challenging, or life
threatening. In fact sometimes they are more so.”

General R. Hillier, April 2008


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What is an Operational Stress Injury?



Any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from operational duties while serving in the Canadian Forces and its reserves.

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Operational Stress Injury is

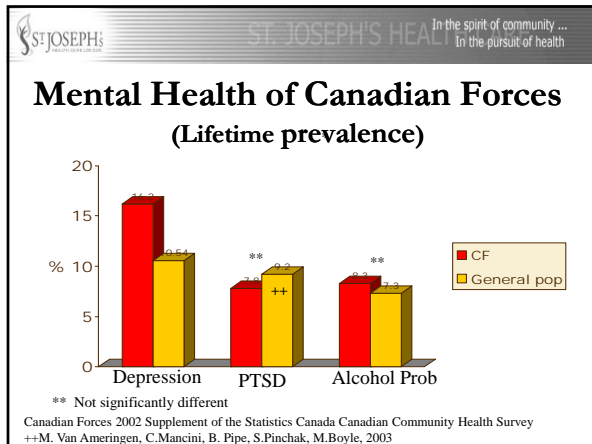
not a psychiatric or medical term

a broad range of problems

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What are the most common mental health concerns in the Canadian Forces today?



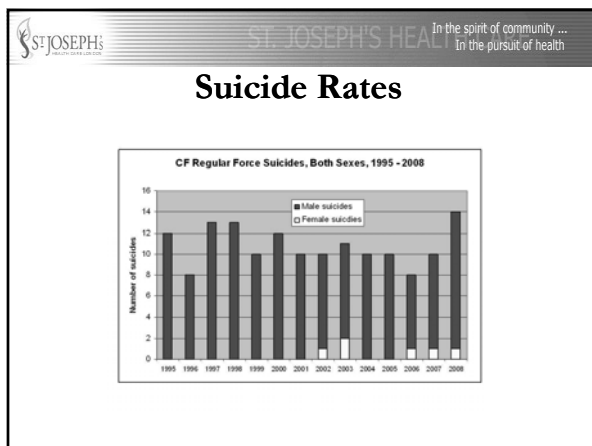


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Long delay before treatment

1. Stigma
2. Low awareness of mental health sym.
3. Professional help not sought (24.5%)*

* The Canadian Forces 2002 Supplement of the Statistics Canada Canadian Community Health Survey




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**Availability of services & access
to care**



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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE




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**The Role of Social Workers and
Social Service Workers in the
Canadian Forces**

- civilian world + issues related to the military
- Main role is to maintain the mental health of the Canadian Forces population
- Support the families of CF members


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- Pre & Post Deployment Screening
- Assess from a Biopsychosocial perspective
- Main function is to ensure the CF members are operationally fit
- Work in an Interdisciplinary Team, Advocacy, Advice Commanding Officer, Referrals



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Joint Speakers Bureau (JSB)

- Deliver formal mental health and OSI education to Canadian Forces members and their families

Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (OSISS)

- Provide assistance to those affected by mental health issues (Peer & Family support)


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Department of National Defence

OTSSC

- Operational Trauma Stress Support Centre

CFMAP


- Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program


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Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC)

Work with Canadian Forces families, predominantly - support

- Common psychosocial issues
- Practice within the bounds or scope of Social Work ethics
- Children programs
- Education & training
- Employment assistance
- Referral information (health & wellness)
- Deployment, Departure, Reunions


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Integrated Personnel Support Centre (IPSC)

- 30 locations in Canada
- Casualty Tracking
- Outreach
- Support for those posted & families
- Advocacy services
- Assistance for those medically released
- SISIP Vocational Rehabilitation


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Veterans Affairs Canada




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Veterans Affairs Canada

- Case Management
- Rehabilitation Services
- Health Benefits
- Job Placement Assistance
- Financial Benefits
- Disability Award
- Family Support


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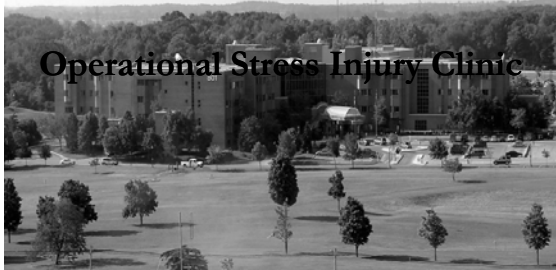
RCMP

- When RCMP member retires – becomes a veteran.....VAC
- Can also access services while still serving (EAP or OSI clinics)


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**St. Joseph's Health Care - Parkwood
Hospital London, Ontario**

Operational Stress Injury Clinic



OSI Clinics

Mandate

- provide mental health services to Veterans, Canadian Forces members, and RCMP
- assessment and diagnosis
- Treatment (individual, couples, family)
- education and research

Community Supports

- Individual and family counselling
- Inpatient treatment centres


Psychological effects on soldiers – video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5USem59tQs>



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Treatment for Operational Stress Injuries



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Operational Stress Injuries (OSI)

Includes: conditions such as:

- Anxiety Disorders:
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Panic Disorder
 - Agoraphobia
 - GAD

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- Mood Disorders:
 - Depression
 - Dysthymia
- Substance-Related Disorders
 - Alcohol
 - Cannabis
 - Cocaine
 - Opioid
- Chronic Pain

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Sometimes:

- Psychotic Disorders
- Personality Disorders
- Somatoform Disorders

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Comorbidity

PTSD

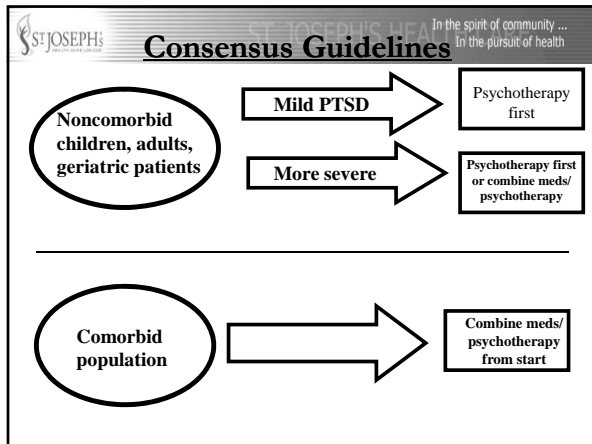
Major depression

- Substance abuse
- Psychotic symptoms
- Other anxiety disorder
- Physical injury
- Chronic pain
- Personality disorder
- Other social dysfunctions

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Treatment Options

<p>Psychotherapy</p> <p>CBT (exposure)</p> <p>Anxiety management</p> <p>Psychoeducation</p> <p>Prolonged Exposure</p> <p>EMDR</p>	<p>Medication</p> <p>SSRIs</p> <p>SNRI</p> <p>Atypical antipsychotics</p> <p>Anticonvulsants</p>
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- ST. JOSEPH'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM In the spirit of community ... In the pursuit of health
- Phases of Treatment:
 - 1. Stabilization
 - 2. Rehabilitation/Reintegration
 - 3. Trauma focused psychotherapy
 - (continue Rehabilitation/Reintegration)


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Phase 1 - STABILIZATION

- **Goal is to improve current functioning and establish a trusting relationship**
- **Psychoeducation:**
 - Message: their condition has a name and effective treatment is available....
 - Educate on stages of treatment:
 - Benefits of Medication is discussed
 - Benefits of Psychotherapy discussed


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Phase 1 - Stabilization

- Anxiety Management Training
- Skills to cope with anger and dissociation
- Assess & treat sleep disorders & chronic pain.
- **Once stable,... then, trauma focused psychotherapy**


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Phase 2 Rehabilitation & Reintegration

- **Reestablishing personal relationships**
 - Use of the therapy to practice and develop interpersonal relationships
 - Participate in Peer support (OSISS)
- **Vocational rehabilitation**
 - Work with insurance/VAC and organizations to get into the workforce or return to school
- **Issues of relapse prevention:**
 - Know the signs and symptoms of relapse and develop a secure plan

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Phase 3 - Trauma focused psychotherapy

- **When is the patient ready?**
- **Clinical guidelines:**
 - Co morbidities have been treated and are stable
 - Major Depression is mild to low moderate in severity
 - Addictions/drug abuse in remission
 - PTSD symptoms are in the mild to moderate range
 - **Both the patient and the therapists have agreement**
 - Be mindful not to collude with the patient's avoidance

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Phase 3 Trauma focused psychotherapy

- **Talk about the trauma including its meaning**
- **Goals include:**
 - Accepting the trauma as part of their life experience
 - Moving away from being haunted by the past and become fully engaged in the present

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Psychotherapy

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Group work:
 - Engagement Group (Concurrent Disorders)
 - Depression Group
 - Pain Group

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Family Services

- **Couples therapy:** Emotion Focused Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Couple's treatment for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Narrative Couple Therapy
- **Family therapy:** Solution-Focused Therapy, and various Family Therapy models
- **Children (assessment & treatment)**

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Rationale for Systemic Intervention

Research on couples with a veteran member with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- > Spouses have higher rates of depression
- > More intimate relationship discord
- > Increased parenting problems & less satisfaction
- > Lower self-esteem
- > Poorer family adaptability and cohesion

(Beckham, Lytle, Feldman, 1996)

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The damage to relational life is not a secondary effect of trauma, as originally thought. Traumatic events have primary effects not only on the psychological structures of the self but also on the systems of attachment and meaning that link individual and community. (Herman, 1992)

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Models depicted for illustrative purposes only.


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Alcohol and drug problems are family problems.

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Violence and Aggression



At least 50% of distressed couples presenting for couple therapy report a history of physical aggression in their relationship.

(Furman, Sautter, Jackson, Lyons & Xiaotong 2006)

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Impact on relationships

- "I am angry about the trauma and its effect on our lives"
- "I don't talk about it – I have to protect them - civilians don't understand"
- Guilt & shame: "I let her down and myself down"
- Medication side effects: ED, loss of libido
- When realize the source of the problem "I wish I had been more supportive"

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Impact on Families

- What happens to one happens to all
- Loss: “he’s home, but he really isn’t here”
- Symptoms spread – vicarious trauma
- Loss: “we are not as safe as we thought”
- Don’t go out as a family / can’t be in crowds
- Fear & worry – get a guard dog – security lights
- Aggressive – automatic - military training
- Social rules: inappropriate to talk about trauma

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Benefits of including families in treatment:

- Both can benefit from social support.
- Family inclusion allows for a more comprehensive evaluation.
- Family can encourage treatment seeking.
- Family can assist in treatment adherence and mediate treatment outcomes.
- Family can help detect relapse and maintain gains.
- Together, achieve «Three for one » results.

Monson, 2010

To assist veterans and their families for military service-related conditions is Veterans Affairs Canada’s mandate

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A Few Resources

An End to Panic by Elke Zuercher – White, Ph.D., 1998 New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Chronic Pain by Beverly E. Thorn, 2004 The Guilford Press

Mind Over Mood by D. Greenberg & C. A. Pedesky, 1995 The Guilford Press.

Reclaiming Your Life from a Traumatic Experience by B. O. Rothbaum, E. B. Foa & E. A. Hembree, 2007 Oxford University Press.

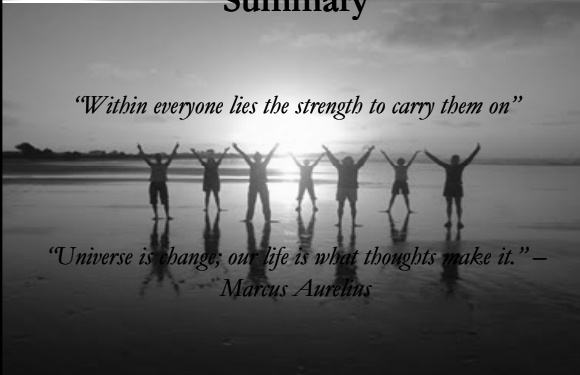
Seeking Safety: A Treatment Manual for PTSD & Substance Abuse by Lisa M. Najavits, 2002 The Guilford Press.

Combat Stress Injury: Theory, Research, & Management, Edited by Charles R. Figley & William P. Nash, 2007 Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

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Summary

"Within everyone lies the strength to carry them on"



*"Universe is change; our life is what thoughts make it." –
Marcus Aurelius*

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Physical and emotional injuries from war can take time to "grow roots" and the human toll will be calculated over the decades that follow this campaign.

Lt.-Col. Stephane Grenier, who works with the Mental Health Commission of Canada's peer project team; on speaking about the War in Afghanistan.

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