

# Dealing with PTSD In *All* of Us

- ROA Trauma Symposium
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# PTSD

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



# New name for an old story

- Egyptians as early as 2000 BC described psychological issues after war with their soldiers
- Swiss Military Physicians in 1678 named a constellation of behaviors that make up acute combat reactions: **Nostalgia**
- German Physicians diagnosed this as **Homesickness**
- French Physicians called it "*estar roto*" which means to **Be Broken**
- During the Civil War it was called **Soldiers Heart**.
- After WWII it was called **Shell Shock/ Battle Fatigue**
- In 1980 the APA coined the term PTSD and defined it as a distinct diagnosis in the DSM III Manual.

# DSM IV Diagnosis

- DESNOS: Disorders of Extreme Stress Not otherwise Specified. New term under consideration.
- 17 symptoms in 3 symptom clusters
- 1. Establish exposure to extreme stressor
- 2. Determine presence of symptoms verses normal reaction
- 3. Quantify symptom severity
- 4. Clarify chronology: > 3 months - chronic

# Treatment Goal

- Symptom reduction
- Functional improvement
- We need to go through to get out.

# How we help ourselves and each other- Recharging

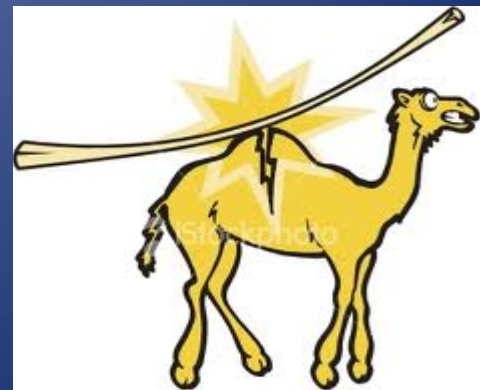
- Basic needs: All too often we "biologically deprive" ourselves.
- Disconnect: Take a break. Respite. Fresh air- get outside and deep breathe- even if it is only for 2 minutes.
- Institutions have a responsibility to create healthy work environments.
- Encourage, encourage, encourage

# Balance



# Burn out from operational stress/ overload

- Charles Dickens: *Dombey and Son*
- There is a limit to everyone's endurance and everyone has a breaking point.
- A seemingly inconsequential addition (a single straw/ task) gives rise to a cataclysmic failure/ explosion,
- (broken back)





# Identifying Stress in Healthcare Providers

- Irritability- short fuse
- Increased absenteeism
- Altered performance (can be a form of self care)
- Lack of interest/ lethargy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in appearance- unkempt
- Withdrawn

# Patterns/ Trends

- Bad day verses chronic pattern
- Open communication or dialogue is key
- We are not clairvoyant - we need to communicate what is happening.
- The illusion of perfection
- The need for everyone to do their share

# It's all about choice

- Choose to take care of yourself and then others
- Self care
- Owning our feelings and mistakes
- Give yourself permission and time to feel bad.
- Realizing we can always "start over" tomorrow is another day. Debrief.

# Wisdom

- The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it.

- Steve Jobs -



# Be the change

- Death is an important ally for appreciating life [...] an honest recognition of the short time we have to love and to learn on this earth."



If you're going through hell,  
keep going.... don't stay there.  
Sir Winston Churchill



Plato

*"Be kind for everyone is fighting  
a hard battle"*

