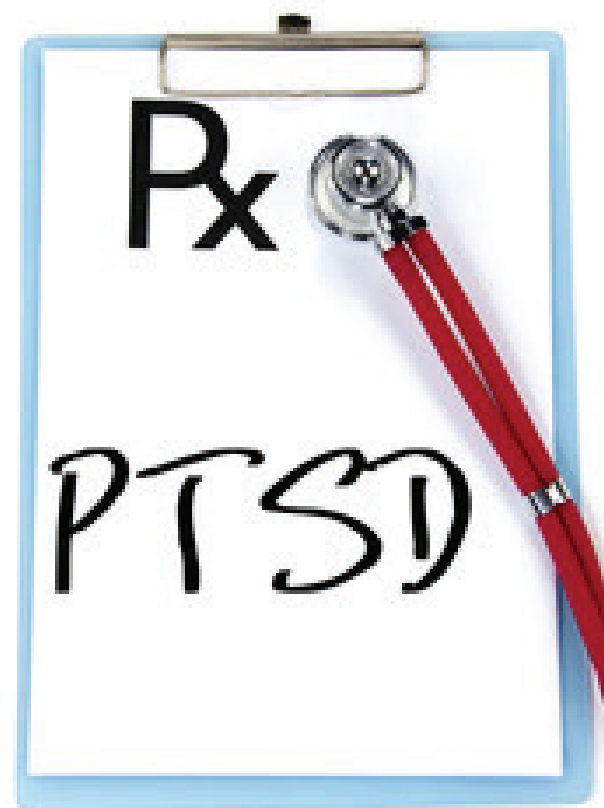


TIP OF THE ICEBERG

VETERAN POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

WHATEVER WE CAN DO, WE SHOULD.
THEY DESERVE AS MUCH.

by Patrick Dodger Paschall, Esq.
DyNAMC Advisory Board Member



According to researchers' and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' estimates, approximately 18-22 veterans commit suicide every single day. Stated differently, approximately 8,000 veterans commit suicide per year. According to a Washington Post-Kaiser Health poll, half of the polling participant veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars say they know a fellow service member who attempted or committed suicide. Many suggest that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is the leading cause of these unfortunate events, triggered by the chaotic brutality of war.

Far too many of our men and women of the armed forces place their lives on the line for our country, only to come home and find a lack of adequate support for the mental toll that war has taken on their wellbeing. The stigma attached to mental illness disincentivizes and/or prevents many veterans from seeking the help they need, leading many to drug abuse and reclusively detaching from society.



“When we think of diversity, we tend to limit the discussion to matters of race, skin color, culture and ideology. I believe we do a disservice to a wide swath of the population by failing to acknowledge and apply the ideals of diversity to our fellow human beings with mental difficulties, especially veterans whose mental faculties have been rewired by the horrors of war. The sacrifices our servicemen and women make should entitle them to the best mental health care possible.” Paschall

How does this issue relate to diversity, you wonder? When we think of diversity, we tend to limit the discussion to matters of race, skin color, culture and ideology. I believe we do a disservice to a wide

swath of the population by failing to acknowledge and apply the ideals of diversity to our fellow human beings with mental difficulties, especially veterans whose mental faculties have been rewired by the horrors of war. The sacrifices our servicemen and women make should entitle them to the best mental health care possible. But time and again, these people are neglected or forgotten in the fog of seemingly perpetual warfare and the other serious issues of the day.

Applying ideals of diversity to mental health issues means disregarding the stigmas attached to mental illness and courageously taking the challenge to minimize it. It means empathizing and



understanding what other human beings are going through, and following through by taking action to alleviate their pain with the overall goal of making the transition back into civilian life as seamless as possible.

It is by no means an easy task to undertake, and that is only more reason why people of all backgrounds should band together to demand more be done for those who sacrificed so much for us. While most individuals lack the

wherewithal to sufficiently confront mental illness among all of our veterans, we all at least have the ability to contact our public representatives and demand that veterans obtain the health care they undeniably deserve. We all have the ability to listen to veterans and offer help in the form of friendship. Some of us can donate funds to the various groups which work to minimize veteran suicide.

Whatever we can do, we should. They deserve as much.



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