

Academic research paper

Final Draft

Student N

Professor Glenn Lester

EN106

Transition can be Hard for Some

Veterans are among us, they form part of the student body, and many students don't know of them. Truth is most veterans are reserved about what they have done in the past, and some have had it worse than others, but no matter how you look at it, people who have served in the armed forces have been changed permanently. The issue which this particular group of people struggle with is very basic and yet not all of the veterans can handle it properly. For the most part veterans have a hard time adapting back into the civilian life, whether is adapting their sleep schedule, controlling their foul language, or dealing with Posttraumatic stress disorder, veterans will always face obstacles when it comes to adapting back into the civilian way of life.

According to the Mayo Clinic "Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event." While many people go through traumatic experiences every year, some happen to trigger this specific disorder which can manifest itself in many different ways.

According to Veteran Affairs "About 6 of every 10 (or 60%) of men and 5 of every 10 (or 50%) of women experience at least one trauma in their lives. Women are more likely to experience sexual assault and child sexual abuse. Men are more likely to experience accidents, physical assault, combat, disaster, or to witness death or injury." However these numbers are only affecting the United States, if this is the percentage regarding the U.S. population people should ask themselves how bad could it be in different countries, countries where the government does not interfere, countries that are in constant conflict.

There are several studies which link posttraumatic stress disorder to specific genetic markers, as well as immunity to this disorder. However many of these studies are mostly theories and scientists are yet to prove any of them. This is a problem faced by every armed forces member around the world, and there are countries which are doing more than others to assist their veterans in transitioning correctly.

Although there is no clear way to determine if a person is vulnerable to PTSD or not, some scientists agree that being exposed to violence from an early age could in fact harden the mentality of the person and therefore not be easily affected by traumatic experiences in their adult life. Americans have a very comfortable life, within the continental United States there does not seem to be any major conflict taking place, which may be why many of their troops

return home with posttraumatic stress disorder, given that they have never before been exposed to such violence, and many of them cannot be trained to withstand it.

There are countries in which this type of violence takes place on a daily basis; while in the service I met a sergeant who had both of his brothers killed in front of him at age seven, and then the guerrillas proceeded to throw their mutilated bodies into the river, after which my sergeant went on his way, and at age seventeen he joined the army. This is but only one story of the violence that takes place on a daily basis in a war torn third world country, and the situations which the armed forces face are no better than that story.

Another country in the continent who is concerned about the transition of their military personnel is Canada, according to Black T.R. "A survey of 200 Canadian veterans found that almost 53% described the transition to civilian life as 'difficult or fairly difficult'. Over 21% found the transition 'very difficult'. Over 32% of veterans reported struggling with friendships as one of the tougher issues they faced – a condition that persisted for months and years after they left the military." Although these statistics are found among Canadian veterans, the numbers between other countries do not vary by much. According to Rossignol, S.L. "In Canada, the Department of National Defense (DND) is responsible for monitoring the health of personnel for 6 months after their release from service" and in the United States the department of Veteran Affairs assists any veteran struggling with posttraumatic stress disorder as well as assisting them if their living situation becomes unstable, however they are criticized because reality is that they should in fact do more for their veterans.

According to Ahren, et al. "Veterans frequently talked about civilian life as "normal" while it was clear that many aspects of civilian life no longer felt normal to them upon return from military service." I am a witness to this for I lived it while in the Colombian National Army, while in the service you can only dream with the luxuries and commodities offered in the civilian life, and while in the service you await the day when you can once again join the civilian population, however what we don't realize while in the service is that many of the activities that we used to enjoy before entering the service, have now become a shallow and pedantic way of life, and once we realize this it is too late.

For the most part, the armed forces and service within, will change the person, sometimes a little, other times more extreme, but no matter the change, it feels as if the armed forces washed our brains. Once you are out of the service you feel like nothing will give you the gratification that serving gave you, even if you did not feel it while you were in the service, once you are out, you feel like you have lost a part of yourself and you are never getting it back.

Anderson, et al. said "The military culture has been described as a fortress or a warrior society, which not only sets this as a world apart, but also influences mental and psychological self-perceptions." In reality the military service becomes a brotherhood which can never and will never be replaced in the civilian life, and veterans know this, which is why they usually seek veterans like them, people who they can relate with and share war stories with, and talk about subjects that only service members would ever understand.

There is no solution set in stone for veterans to transition easily into the civilian world, however people must not treat them any differently, and should not feel threatened by them, after all veterans are people like everyone else, the only difference is that they were once part of a brotherhood which has since most likely been disbanded, a brotherhood where they would speak in a certain way with certain words, and everyone would know everything about their peers, and adjusting to dealing with regular people on a daily basis is not easy on anyone.

Works Cited

Ray, S. L., and K. Heaslip. "Canadian Military Transitioning To Civilian Life: A Discussion Paper." *Journal Of Psychiatric & Mental Health Nursing* 18.3 (2011): 198-204 7p. *CINAHL Plus with Full Text*. Web. 27 Mar. 2016.

Rossignol M. (2007) Afghanistan: Military Personnel and Operational Stress Injuries. Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Ottawa.

Black T.R. (2007) Canada's vets face tough transition to civilian life. Available at: [http://communications.uvic.ca/releases/ release.php?display=release&id=865](http://communications.uvic.ca/releases/release.php?display=release&id=865) (accessed 15 March 2009).

Ahern, Jennifer, et al. "The Challenges Of Afghanistan And Iraq Veterans' Transition From Military To Civilian Life And Approaches To Reconnection." *Plos ONE* 10.7 (2015): 1-13. Academic Search Premier. Web. 27 Mar. 2016.

Mayo Clinic. "Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)" <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/basics/definition/con-20022540>. Web. 25 Mar. 2016.

Department of Veteran Affairs PTSD: National Center for PTSD <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/how-common-is-ptsd.asp>. Web. 26 Mar. 2016.

Anderson, Mary L., and Jane Goodman. "FROM MILITARY To CIVILIAN LIFE: Applications Of Schlossberg's Model For Veterans In Transition." *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal* 30.3 (2014): 40-51. *Education Research Complete*. Web. 3 Apr. 2016.