

# **The History of PTSD**

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## **Introduction:**

Today there seems to be an acronym to describe just about everyone. These include ADD...ADHD...OCD for example and many others. It seems as if there is a new one "every day." The response of many is an understandable skepticism.

## **Is PTSD a new phenomenon?**

??Is PTSD a "bandwagon"...that many are jumping on...in order to excuse their behavior??

??If not, why has there been a seeming explosion in the numbers of those suffering from PTSD??

## **What is Trauma?**

Trauma is when an unexpected...abnormal crisis or event...takes place...all of a sudden...or...the cumulative effects of an abnormal crisis or event...and for which a person's normal coping mechanisms are not sufficient to handle.

## **The First Traumatized People**

??Who were the first people to experience trauma??

Trauma has been part of the human experience since the fall in the garden.

**Gen. 3:7, 16, 19, 23; 4:8c, 16**

## **Trauma and Women**

For a large portion of human history, the abuse of women and children was the norm. This included physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. It was accepted by many and talked about by few. It was considered "part of life". No doubt, that is true in places today.

In the late 1800's common symptoms a diagnosis was developed to describe some physical, emotional, and mental health issues found in many women. It was called "Hysteria." The diagnosis of hysteria was rejected by most health care professionals.

This was the general thought. "Something is wrong with a lot of women. Who can understand woman anyway. Many women are just not normal." There was more to hysteria than abuse. However, this was the message to the abused, "Life is tough. That's life. If you are not tough enough, something is wrong with you."

## **World War I**

During WWI soldiers began to be diagnosed with "shell shock." It was considered to be a problem for front line soldiers (those who experienced "shells"). They were considered weak and inferior, whether stated or whispered about. They were often considered not tough enough. Think "hysteria."

## **World War II**

The **same** was true during WW II.

## **War in Vietnam**

During, after, and since the Vietnam War there has been an explosion of those suffering from "Shell Shock" and it became known as PTSD.

## **Why the explosion?**

1. In Vietnam the US military found out that it was not invincible.
2. The disdain shown by many toward those who returned from Vietnam.
3. A desensitization toward killing.
  - a. Violence in society
  - b. Pent up anger
  - c. Video games
  - d. The realisticity of training
  - e. Abortion

## **Conclusion:**

It became clear that the effects of trauma, don't just "go away." There is a debate among professionals about the acronym PTSD. Some use the acronym PTSI. D is Disorder. It has a stigma attached. It may communicate that there is no healing available. I is injury. There is no stigma attached to being injured. A person usually recovers from an injury.