

CHARITY OF THE MONTH – PTSD RESOLUTION

PTSD Resolution: helping Veterans, Reservists and Families

There are many tens of thousands of forces' veterans suffering from the effects of trauma: flashbacks, nightmares, anger and depression. Sometimes this leads to violence, alcohol and substance abuse, job loss, family breakdown and even suicide.

PTSD Resolution is a charity (no. 1133118) that helps Veterans, Reservists and Families who are struggling to reintegrate into a normal work and family life because of trauma suffered during service in the armed forces.

The programme is community-based, with treatment and support provided locally through a nationwide network of 200 therapists, accredited by the Professional Standards Authority.

The charity has no salaried staff or assets; donations received are used to fund the cost of treatment by local therapists. There is no Government funding.

The programme is complementary to the work of other services' charities, in that it can help resolve the mental health issues that are barriers to successful reintegration and settlement.

Treatment

Treatment involves a series of therapy sessions of an hour or more on a one-to-one, outpatient basis, to relieve veterans of disabling symptoms. A single course of treatment is generally all that's required, involving an average of five sessions.

For those clients who engage with the therapeutic process and meet their appointments the outcomes from PTSD Resolution are good, even when the trauma is long-standing and severe.

PTSD Resolution treatment meets a special need of veterans and reservists in that it can be carried out without the therapist or anyone else ever knowing about the events that caused the trauma. This ensures confidentiality, protects the patient from further distress, and avoids

therapists hearing about large numbers of often extremely disturbing incidents. These are important safeguards. The charity is also carrying out new research and raising awareness of the causes and treatment of posttraumatic stress. PTSD is little understood by veterans and reservists - or their families, friends or employers, the people who are often very much affected by the destructive behaviour associated with the condition.

The Impact of Trauma

Trauma can affect anyone. It might result from a terrible experience resulting in an injury, or simply be something you have seen. It is important for everyone to recognise symptoms, which interfere with normal functioning. Symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, poor sleep, anger outbursts, physical violence, excessive anxiety, feelings of depression, avoidance of any reminders, denial of effects - all interfere with the lives of the person traumatised and the people around them.

PTSD Resolution's treatment teaches Veterans, Reservists and Families how to recognise, reduce and manage symptoms so that life can return to normality. If you are affected by trauma and things are 'not right' with you, get professional help, the charity advises. There is no point in delaying, as symptoms generally get worse because of the repeated emotional arousal. Prince Harry's publicity about seeking help is relevant to all members of society; and for Veterans, Reservists and Family members it directly relates to the PTSD Resolution programme for Veterans.

Should you always get help after a traumatic event?

Probably not, the charity advises. Immediate social and human support is necessary for a period of time to allow natural recovery to occur. Humans have a remarkable capacity to adapt. It is part of our process of personal growth and survival. But be aware of the symptoms in yourself and others, when life is being adversely affected and when help may be needed. For Forces' Veterans, a call to PTSD Resolution will determine whether, and when help is advised.

Can you 'inoculate' yourself against future trauma?

No, because reactions to trauma are unpredictable. We can condition ourselves to cope with danger, and survive threats to ourselves, but reaction and symptoms often do not occur until long after the events.

But you can take simple precautions: to ensure that you recognise any changes and tell-tale signs; that you have someone you can talk to in confidence. If you have a problem with trauma symptoms, you are best seeking professional help. It is a myth that you have to re-live or re-tell your traumatic experiences as part of any treatment. In fact every time an emotional experience is re-told or re-lived it adds to the overall amount of emotional memory lodged in the survival part of the brain, resulting in ever-increasing emotional reactions and symptoms.

PTSD Resolution's treatment does not require reliving or retelling, and instead conducts the therapeutic process in a very calm and humane way.

For more information visit www.ptsdresolution.org or call 0300 302 0551

