

## First 30 Years of PTSD

*brief History review*

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The First 30 Years

### **A brief unofficial review of PTSD recognition since 1965.**

Until 1980, no one had a clue what PTSD was, or wasn't. Not even a formal name existed for it. The VA, U.S. government, searching for a name and plan for Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) that insurance and health plans would agree to, and pay for was a challenge. And after debate, all agreed PTS wasn't going to be covered under health plans—*We don't cover stress*. 'How will they pay' was a real and valid question, and a real issue for veterans. If the VA could Label it acceptable to insurance plans, they still needed a recognized treatment plan for whatever it was.

The VA huddled and struggled and juggled PTS definitions until someone described what PTS had been labeled before over history:

- Biblically, 'Touched by the Sword,'
- American Revolutionary War, 'Nostalgia,'
- American Civil War, "Soldier's Heart,"
- First World War, "Shell Shock", or "Irritable Heart,"
- Second World War, "War Neurosis," or "Combat Fatigue", and the
- Vietnam War, became known as a "Combat Stress Reaction."

Debaters agreed, Stress and Depression played a common role in what had been regarding as Traumatic Stress—but 'stress' would not be paid for by insurance plans. However, if it were a 'Disorder,' or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) it would be acceptable and paid for. So, *Disorder* was appended to PTS, and PTSD became the official name and what it is labeled today—and there already were treatment plans for Disorders.

Bureaucracy was happy, and they could stamp PTSD in large red letters across the file for anyone who had a health plan that would pay. They could also use the VA's well-worn DENIED stamp for all PTSD Veterans Claims, and for the last five years of the first thirty years, the VA spent its time denying virtually every PTSD claim and encouraging those veterans never to set foot in their building again with *that* word. And VA employees worked very hard at doing nothing for veterans.

From 1980 to 2000, or the next 21 years, the VA did its best to belittle, harangue, delay and deny veterans' PTSD, and Agent Orange Claims in the Vietnam War theatre; air, land, and sea—they were very good at it. Public awareness grew, as did their outrage over the VA's infamous regimented appointments waiting lists for veterans, and those who died on the list—literally waiting months.

In 2017, a new President was elected, and Donald Trump had VA rules slashed. PTSD was fully recognized and treated. Appointments were streamlined, employee training was on-going, and hundreds were fired. Everything changed, and the VA ratings by veterans soared to and exceeded 90% approval by veterans.

It remains to be seen what impact the Biden Administration may have for the VA and PTSD, but so far, so good.