

What impact do hostile environments have on soldiers



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Essay: Impact of hostile environment on soldiers
Effect of hostile environment on soldiers
A hostile environment can be defined as an environment whereby hostile forces have the potential and intent to efficiently oppose or respond to various operations in a unit that the companies have to respond to. In such an environment, there are always casualties resulting from an environment that is hostile to both parties. For hundreds of years now, we have witnessed casualties of war; especially soldiers who have seen it all; enduring scars and injuries of a lifetime. Very little was known about the impact of a hostile environment to our soldiers, until the Second World War (Hall, 2015).

Over 1.5 million troops were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq between 2002 to 2007, several of whom, more than just one time. Thus deployments such as those, usually lead to work-related and personal stress due to long working hours, family separation as well as uncertain schedules. Even on their return from these hostile environments several soldiers continue enduring emotional and mental strain as they try to readapt and cope with family and civilian life (Hall, 2015).

In spite of the above numerous pressures, there has been no significant change in the rate of reenlistment. All the same there are numerous psychological disorders related with a hostile environment in war; for instance shell shock (Combat Stress Reaction) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is thus a diagnosis arrived by doctors on a frequent basis for those patients that have undergone key traumas such as soldiers from hostile environment, car accidents and rape (West, 2012).

PTSD was discovered due to the soldiers returning from the Vietnam war, even though the disorder symptoms had been all along been identified with <https://assignbuster.com/what-impact-do-hostile-environments-have-on-soldiers/>

war veterans for centuries. The real emotional effects of hostile environment on soldiers can also be extremely distressing especially to the friends and family members, because it is seen as unfair that after all they have gone through, they keep on suffering (Ausenda, 1992).

The two conditions; shell shock and PTSD are basically manifestations of the attempts by the brain to deal with trauma and unable to do so adequately. Thus with PTSD, a soldier will for instance re-experience and recall the particular trauma of the hostile environment, maybe in their dreams or even while thinking or closing their eyes.

Sleeplessness is another symptom of PTSD and comes along nightmares. Thus the soldier is aware that if s/he happens to fall asleep, they could be having nightmares; hence a vicious cycle results; so as to try and keep awake for long periods of time. Normally, soldiers in war zones and hostile environments may go for 28 hours without sleep. Research has proved that going for 28 hours without sleep raises the possibility of making serious mistakes hence placing soldiers at high risks and could have them killed (West, 2012).

In addition, hallucinations are common feature with soldiers behaving as if they have returned in the traumatic hostile environment while asleep, awake or even while under drugs or when drunk. They will also strongly react to anything that happens to remind them of traumatic hostile environment and thus start avoiding anything that they may relate with it. Frequently this implies a distinctive reluctance to interact socially, because of loud noises that act as a reminder of the explosions and crowded places which remind them of trenches (West, 2012).

There are several factors from research studies that have identified specific <https://assignbuster.com/what-impact-do-hostile-environments-have-on-soldiers/>

factors that may lead to the likelihood of soldiers developing PTSD . They include; long deployment periods, extremely severe combat exposure for instance, being deployed to the “ forward” areas near the enemy and seeing others(colleagues) being wounded or worse still killed, traumatic injury of the brain severe physical injury, low ranking, low schooling level, being unmarried, poor social support and low morale within the unit, family problems as well as prior exposure to trauma(Ausenda, 1992).

Therefore, it is no surprise that the moment one understands the suffering that a soldier goes through in hostile environments; that they find it difficult to return to the same emotional state they were, ever again. There are those who argue that their incapacity to establish close ties with loved ones is because of the hostile experience of near death as well as the constant fear that they may leave someone behind. The traumatic hostile environment also prevents soldiers from future accomplishments too since they find it hard to plan or even imagine (Hall, 2015).

For instance, war veterans who undergo PTSD without enough care and counseling frequently do not marry or get children possibly because they have been near death and have extreme difficulty letting go of the perception that one day they may die. A hostile war environment has been proven to be a profoundly scaring experience for several soldiers. Definitely there is nothing that can get them ready for hostile environment in war and experiencing the death of close friends together with escaping death narrowly is quite a scary thing in itself (Ausenda, 1992).

The other cause of stress in a hostile environment is military sexual trauma (MST)-this basically is sexual assault or frequent, threatening sexual

harassment that happens in the military. Usually, it can take place to both <https://assignbuster.com/what-impact-do-hostile-environments-have-on-soldiers/>

men and women. Since soldiers are extremely stressed while in a hostile environment, they usually experience a lot of pressure and tension. To release some of the tension, they may turn to unnatural acts in addition to harassing their colleagues sexually (Hall, 2015).

However in spite of all this, there is hope for soldiers returning from hostile environments, especially those suffering from PTSD. The procedure for seeking help comprises of reporting at their respective Veterans Hospital (VA) for diagnosis. They should then file papers citing disability. After this, they should look out for treatment from the VA especially in support groups, look for a good life coach with a full understanding of PTSD or rather find a mental health professional capable of treating PTSD.

However, on the ground, things are quite different and several soldiers cannot do so. This is because they think it is a sign of weakness to seek for treatment. All the same the most important thing is finding a professional person or therapist one is comfortable with and develop a working relationship with. This however is not a quick fix and one must exercise patience in addition to finding out what works best for the affected individual(Hall, 2015).

References

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