

# Example of post-traumatic stress disorder in soldiers essay

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According to the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, PTSD is “a debilitating condition that follows a terrifying event.” Habitually, individuals with PTSD have tireless alarming thoughts and memories of their experience for months or years after the event.

There are varying statistics on how many American soldiers who have returned from Iraq have since suffered from PTSD. However, according to the Lizette Alveraz, this number could be as high as one in five. Interestingly, of these, only a little over half have pursued mental health treatment (Alveraz).

There are a variety of treatments available for PTSD. Some of these include cognitive-behavioural therapy, group psychotherapy, and medications (AAETS). In addition, a number of types of exposure therapy have been used with sufferers of PTSD. Exposure treatment consists of repeated recalling of the traumatic experience, under controlled conditions, with the purpose of enabling the handling of the experience.

However, there are recent movements towards alternative treatments for sufferers of PTSD. Charley Keys’ article, *Alternative Treatment Promoted for Soldiers Suffering from PTSD*, describes a new initiative in America.

According to the article, a medical researcher is joining forces with a group of celebrities in encouraging the Defence Department that meditation could help soldiers suffering from the disorder (Keys).

The reason for the celebrity involvement is unclear, and appears to be a way of gaining publicity for the initiative. However, there is a serious note behind the supposed glamour.

In the piece, Keys explains how Dr Normal Rosenthal, a clinical professor, claims to have proof that “ meditation can be a low-cost, low-risk alternative to strong narcotics often prescribed by government doctors” (Keys).

In his book, *Transcendence-healing and Transformation through Transcendental Meditation*, the professor quotes a Marine who spoke about his experience of PTSD after fighting in Iraq. The man reported problems with sleeping and family life when he returned home. However, he claimed that “ TM (transcendental meditation) has helped with organizing, prioritizing and just being calmer overall. I just feel better” (Keys). Rosenthal is quoted in the article as saying: “ What do we have to lose? It is so cheap, and it is safe” (Keys).

Rosenthal’s theory is an interesting one. It is true that such meditation is both inexpensive, and not dangerous. However, one of two things would have to happen. The first option is that the meditation would have to be used alongside the drugs that many sufferers are currently on to control their PTSD, which would not prove that the meditation is a superior treatment to the drugs. The second option is that soldiers would come off their medication, and instead try the new alternative method of treatment. The latter is far more dangerous, as without firm evidence that the meditation will work in relieving them of their disorder, the sufferer’s symptoms could dramatically worsen.

A large number of soldiers return from Iraq with PTSD and other mental health problems. It seems clear that this needs to be both acknowledged and

tackled in the most effective and sensitive way possible. Whether by medication, psychotherapy, or new innovative means, sufferers of PTSD ought to be treated in a way that they find acceptable and helpful to them.

## **Works Cited**

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