

## UK Military Trauma Highlighted in Mental Health Awareness Week

PTSD Resolution (registered charity No. 1133188) is highlighting the plight of veterans suffering from military trauma. Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares and depression. Without appropriate help the result can be family breakdown, criminality and even suicide. Some 240,000 veterans suffer from PTSD, according to the NHS. More Falklands veterans have committed suicide since 1982 than died in combat.

The [PTSD Resolution](#) national outreach programme has over 200 therapists. Treatment is on an outpatient basis, to support family and work routines. It is free, confidential, local, on a one-to-one basis, with no waiting lists and no referral is needed. Therapy is brief and effective – generally within three to five one-hour sessions treatment is ended by mutual agreement. It is unusual for further support to be needed subsequently.

Resolution offers employers Trauma Awareness Training to support the successful integration of veterans and TA in the workplace. The half-day modular courses enable line managers and HR staff to recognise potential symptoms of trauma and identify a clear route to resolving any workplace difficulties.

Resolution therapists are trained in Human Givens Therapy (HGT). Used in psychological trauma as a form of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), this treatment for PTSD is consistent with the guidelines of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Patients are not required to talk about the events that may have caused the traumatic memory. The programme policy is that re-exposure is better done in the client's visual imagination and while in a relaxed state, protecting confidentiality and reducing distress. This is a relatively new development of trauma-focused CBT, similar to Imagery Re-scripting and Reprocessing Therapy (IRRRT).

The Resolution network was launched in February 2010. This followed a three-year pilot programme, which included a project with the Falklands Veterans Foundation ([www.fv.org.uk](http://www.fv.org.uk)) that helped ex-services personnel recover successfully after experiencing the symptoms of PTSD for 25 years in some cases.

Overall the programme has had a better than 83 per cent success rate in resolving the condition for the 150 UK veterans of the armed services treated to date. This is similar to the recovery rate in the recent study of 599 stress-related cases from the general population who were treated using HGT: over 70 per cent reached a significant and sustained improvement after an average of 3.6 treatment sessions.

Treatment is complementary to the work of other armed forces charities, because it can resolve the immediate mental health issues that may be barriers to successful help under reintegration and resettlement programmes.

Therapists work in prisons, and there is an active programme of engagement with the prison service nationally. The patron of the charity is Lord Ramsbotham, former Inspector of Prisons. There are an estimated 8,500 veterans in prison with 3,000 on parole. NAPO estimates that half this number suffer from PTSD and related disorders.

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