

914th Combat Support Hospital

PREVENTING COMBAT STRESS INJURIES

References: GTA 21-3-4, June 1986 and FM 8-51, Sept 1994

"War is more stressful than any training can be."

Common signs of Combat Stress

Physical signs	Mental/Emotional Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tension-aches, pains, trembling, fidgeting• Jumpiness-startles at sudden sounds or movement• Cold sweat, dry mouth, pounding heart, shortness of breath, upset stomach• Fatigue• Feeling light-headed or dizzy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of concentration• Anxiety-keyed up, worried, expecting the worse• Irritability - swearing, complaining, easily bothered• Trouble Sleeping• Anger• Distant, "haunted," 1000 yard stare

Protecting Yourself from Combat Stress

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be physically fit• Help each other out• Work together to give everyone enough food, water, shelter, hygiene and sanitation• Keep informed - ask your leader questions, ignore rumors• Practice relaxation techniques• Sleep when the mission and safety permit - sleep only in safe places, try to get at least 4 hours of per day and get plenty of rest before starting sustained operations, catch up on sleep after a period of limited sleep• Welcome new members to your team

Taking Care of Combat Stress in Yourself or Your Buddy

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make yourself look calm & in control• Focus on your mission• Expect to continue your duties-focus on your tasks follow SOPs• Think/Visualize yourself succeeding• Keep in touch with the rest of the team• Get the facts - don't jump to conclusions or believe rumors• Keep busy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of fluids (share with your buddy)• Prepare and share food• Dry off, cool off or warm up, if necessary• Clean up - wash, shave, change; clean weapons & equipment• Use quick relaxation techniques to unwind• Arrange to sleep (4 hours if possible) or catnap• Talk about what happened - put things into perspective, clear up misunderstandings• Share your grief
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Remember: Combat Stress is normal and others have it too. It helps to share and joke about it!

If combat stress symptoms don't begin to get better with good rest, tell your leader or medic.