ABOUT PTSD

- PTSD can occur after a traumatic event like combat, assault or disaster. While stress is common after a trauma, for those with PTSD reactions such as reliving an event in their mind and feeling distant or angry do not go away over time, and can even get worse.

- While PTSD can affect people who have experienced a wide range of life-threatening events, in Veterans the condition is commonly associated with combat trauma. It has taken a significant toll on many war Veterans who currently use VA health care, including Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans. Military sexual assault or harassment can also lead to PTSD.

- PTSD also occurs after other types of trauma including terrorist attacks; serious accidents such as car wrecks; and natural disasters, such as fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, or earthquakes.

- The disorder can lead to distressing and persistent symptoms, including re-experiencing the trauma through flashbacks or nightmares; emotional numbness; insomnia; relationship problems; sudden anger; and drug and alcohol abuse.

SELECTED MILESTONES AND MAJOR EVENTS

1989 – Created the National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD) to address the needs of Veterans and other trauma survivors with PTSD

2007 – Confirmed the value of prolonged exposure therapy as a treatment for women Veterans with PTSD

2013 – Funded, along with the Department of Defense (DoD), two consortia to improve treatment for PTSD and mild TBI

2014 – Found that cognitive processing therapy (CPT) delivered via videoteleconferencing is as effective for PTSD as in-person therapy

2014 – Found that Veterans who sought and received care soon after the end of their service had lower rates of PTSD than those who waited to get treatment

RECENT STUDIES: SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

- Four specific RNA molecules were found at lower-than-normal levels in Veterans who had TBIs along with PTSD by researchers at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center in the Bronx and VA’s War-Related Illness and Injury Study Center in East Orange, N.J. RNA, or ribonucleic acid, is a nucleic acid present in all living cells. Its
The wide-ranging nature of current PTSD research includes studies of Veterans at large, subgroups of Veterans, families, and couples. Veterans of all eras are included in these studies.