



New Trends
in Psychology

Perspectives on War Trauma-War Anxiety

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Abstract: War is one of the greatest atrocities, with serious consequences for both the belligerent and non-belligerent sides. The consequences of a war, at least on a mental level, are very shocking and involve actors of all kinds, starting with people, fauna, flora, the environment and the whole ecosystem. In the context of the war scenery on the Ukraine-Russia front, the concept of trauma is directly correlated with various mental illnesses in the field of anxiety disorders, depression and even chronic stress. The lack of positive, definite predictions feeds even more the chaos of anxiety correlated with the depression generated by the contextual situation. New gloomy horizons are expected in the realm of affective disorders, either of an anxious or depressive nature, which will require the attention of mental health specialists, being asked to face a new pandemic “wave”, this time the virus showing “mutations” at geopolitical.level

Keywords: Anxiety; depression; trauma; separation; mental health; women; society; fear

1. Introduction

This article is not intended to be an exhaustive research paper, but aims to present a picture of perspectives on war trauma in the context of the current war scenery on the Ukraine-Russia stage. If before February 24, the geopolitical pulse would be slightly accelerated by the nature of the tensions between the two belligerent partners, after this date the geopolitical situation became quite inflamed, with disastrous effects on all levels, not only locally and world widely. Today, almost

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indirectly, the entire planet becomes involved or affected by the outbreak of this seemingly unforeseen or unbelievable war.

2. The Impact of a War on a Mental Health

The first feeling felt as that of panic, is the one that starts the engine of anxiety, starting with a wave of ruminant thoughts, fueled by the uncertainty of a stable, safe horizon, in normal living conditions. The speed of information spread, especially the negative or false ones, further increased the level of panic, so that soon people became more empathetic, some even anxious, others depressed, each depending on the context and the degree of proximity to the war scenery.

The situation is somewhat similar but much more acute compared to the time of the pandemic and the installation of restrictions, prevention measures, where panic of unknown, lack of a predictable future, restriction of freedom of movement, etc. accelerated even more the level of anxiety in the body. -it is still more than 2 years after the pandemic. Nevertheless, the war is a far more dangerous and destructive “virus” with a strong psycho-emotional impact, where the psychic structures of survival are instantly activated, forcing the body to function in a fast pace of anxiety, depression and stress.

War creates acute and long-lasting health problems for men and women, and children as well, but many aspects of war disproportionately affect women's health, through contextual changes of a mental nature that occur in situations of anxiety. In war, many women face the primary responsibility for family care, the unknown fate of their husbands, and new and unfamiliar duties. If the household is experiencing a disaster, this can overwhelm women's ability to cope, as caring for the needs of the family can lead to a feeling that they are not able to meet their own needs, especially if they become widows.

Women's mental health is often characterized by a variety of problems caused by a combination of past and present traumatic stressors. In addition, women may be challenged and struggled to adapt to new roles, which may exacerbate traumatic stress. The society has an obligation to develop services that provide care adapted to culture and gender, respecting women's rights.

Stressful military experiences involve, among other things, combat experiences, and family separation. Women generally have different abilities to approach and manage

stressors and use a variety of resources and cognitive and behavioral coping processes to manage their stress.

3. Separation from Family - Separation Anxiety

In addition to the acute stress of life threatening, in the context of the state of war and the implementation of martial law by which male citizens are prohibited from leaving the country, except for those with dual citizenship, there is a new mental stressor, namely separation anxiety, in the case of families forced by circumstances to separate for a period, at least on a theoretical level, in reality the predictions being difficult to establish.

Separation anxiety is the fear or suffering that can affect both children and adults when they think about separation from their home or the people they are attached to. The main feature of separation anxiety disorder is when the fear exceeds the expected level during a person's development. If this separation anxiety persists for a longer period of time, it can turn into an anxiety separation disorder. It remains to be seen how things will evolve and how acute the mental disorders will become in an anxious and unpredictable future.

4. Stress or Response to the Contextual Situation

Stress is a physiological mechanism that involves all our efforts to restore balance. When this mechanism stops working, the consequences are bad. In the presence of stressors, the body responds with an adaptation reaction, which involves three phases:

- Alarm phase - which prepares the body for action;
- Resistance phase - during which the body organizes itself under tension;
- Exhaustion phase - characterized by fatigue

Long-term exposure to war stressors can cause serious psychological consequences for civilians, with PTSD being just one of the broad-spectrum disorders of post-traumatic reactions.

A major category of stressors identified at the level of refugees, especially in the case of women, is related to the challenges of reintegration into society, language

challenges, the mother tongue not being an international language, and the support of a translator is urgently needed.. It has been observed that in the absence of translators, many people have turned to technology for machine translation, as evidenced by the fact that in crisis situations, under the pressure of anxiety, people have mobilized and started looking for solutions to the challenges they face..

5. Depression

Against the background of an anxious psychic, without optimistic prospects in the near future, depression seems to be another invisible but observable enemy from the outside.

A relevant symptom in identifying depression is the mood characterized by sadness, depression, maladaptation, discouragement, anger, to which can be added complaints of lack of feelings, anxiety, panic attacks, etc. This disposition can be related by the subject or observed from the facial expression or from the conduct. Some individuals complain of somatic pain, rather than feelings of sadness, describe or show increased instability (persistent anger, a tendency to respond angrily, to blame others, to exaggerate frustrations).

Under the current conditions, it is expected that more and more people will face depression, whether they are aware of it or not.

6. Fear or Being Afraid of.....

Fear is the vital, fundamental response of the human being to a physical or emotional danger and, at the same time, a crucial emotion for the evolution of mankind. Fear is one of the fundamental human emotions, which appears in response to an external threat that threatens the life or integrity of the being, in real or perceived as real.

It refers to the biochemical response, but also the emotional response of the human being in the face of danger. Sometimes fear comes from real threats, but it can also come from threats that do not exist in reality. In these cases, fear is a symptom of a mental illness, such as panic disorder, anxiety disorder, phobias or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Albeit fear is a negative emotion and generally unpleasant, it is useful because it plays an important role in our safety and integrity, because it energetically mobilizes our body to react to danger.

Although it is a defense mechanism, as well as stress, the fear felt at an increased level of intensity can easily open the door to serious mental disorders. If in relatively normal situations fear can become a strong enemy, in war situations things are catastrophic. Against the background of fear, people end up behaving irrationally, forgetting about values or societal norms, drastically decreasing the level of empathy or respect / love of their neighbor, people end up thinking only in terms of the level of survival, to make provisions only for him., to think only of themselves, thus explaining irresponsible shopping, with empty shelves in stores and other acts of selfishness through which people end up thinking only of themselves and their families.

7. What can we do?

Let's deal with fear first. Although difficult, fear can be controlled. So is the anxiety caused by war and its traumatic effects? However, here is a pattern of conduct at our fingertips that can help us get through this period better.

7.1. Information from Correct and Objective Sources

Obviously we can't completely isolate ourselves, nor would it be advisable, but we can choose to access information from reliable sources and as much as we need.

- Filtering and targeting those who send balanced, well-verified messages is more than necessary and useful.
- It is recommended to avoid sources that over-dramatize the situation and create panic, which should be avoided by choosing professional presenters / journalists who are able to convey news in a natural and objective way, calmly and without exaggeration.
- Checking the information we receive may help us to better filter the news and not take everything we are told. We have the right to verify or even deny / ignore the information. Especially on social networks.

8. Communication

Communication is one of the most important and useful steps. Interaction with other people with whom we can express our feelings, sincerely and freely is beneficial and works as a safety valve that discharges the excess tension and accumulated emotion. However, it is desirable that this communication be pragmatic and correct.

- We therefore avoid feeding the anxieties and panic of others, we never transmit alarming information that has no basis and may not reflect reality.
- It is necessary and useful to keep in touch with those close to you and to make sure they are safe and well.
- Expressing emotions, what we feel. It is important to learn to analyze the causes of fear. When we ignore our fear, the unpleasant feeling proliferates, and when we identify it, we have the opportunity to face it and overcome it, or at least to control it.

9. Establish a Daily Routine.

It is important to respect our work schedule, meal and sleep hours, to eat healthy, nutrition is essential in strong emotional moments) and, very importantly, not to give up physical activities.

- Documenting from books, far from the avalanche of information on electronic devices, on the political, economic, historical details that led to the current situation is a good opportunity to calm the mind. Being well informed is a way to help manage the fear of the unknown and protect us from information speculation.
- Spending quality time in the family: playing with children, walking, reading, for example fiction and watching documentaries, movies or series.

9.1. Accept Uncertainty

To cope with the worries or stress that war can cause, it is good to focus only on what we can control, which is up to us. This is one of the reasons why it is so necessary to maintain a daily routine. We must accept that some things cannot be controlled or simply do not depend on our will, and it is imperative that we remain optimistic.

9.2. Long-term Thinking

This is not about ignoring the present. On the contrary! Long-term thinking may not solve the current problem, but it gives us the opportunity to manage it objectively and helps us to identify objective solutions to our own problems that these stressful events cause.

9.3. Involvement in Humanitarian, Voluntary Actions

Such an attitude gives us the satisfaction of actually doing something for a cause we believe in, and this generates satisfaction and confidence in the benefits of a positive approach, but also in the strength of the community, the feeling that we are united, safe, and makes us we really feel part of society.

10. Conclusions

Psychological predictions are not positive, given that at some point both stress, anxiety, depression and fear will be activated simultaneously or will be activated reciprocally and consecutively, which makes us anticipate a wave of people who complain of mental disorders. Requiring specialist assistance. But establishing a healthy lifestyle, first of all a rigorous mental hygiene can contribute enormously through a psychic tone that will be our reliable ally in going through these challenging times.

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