

Helping America's Heroes

By **Eddie Taylor, PhD Psychologist, served as US Army Chaplain and Paratrooper**



Many men and women in our country risk their lives to ensure the safety and security of this nation by serving in the military; however, this commitment can come at a hefty price when it comes to their mental health.

Numerous service men and women who have either been deployed, experienced combat and/or other forms of warfare have suffered different forms of trauma. When these veterans return home, there is something different about them. Whereas, all veterans will not experience trauma the same way and it will not affect them in the same magnitude, a few will have a difficult time adjusting to their home and civilian life.

PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) is a reaction to traumatic experiences and it affects millions of people every year. It is usually linked to veterans; however, anyone can be impacted by PTSD. Whether it's experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event or a physical or sexual assault, the result is the same. The number of military veterans identified with PTSD continues to grow as family members and friends begin to seek answers and treatment for these struggling military personnel and veterans.

One of the biggest challenges that veterans face is that it is very difficult to talk about their experiences with family and friends who may not understand what they endured while serving our country. Family members may notice that the veteran isolates himself, can become easily irritated, is hyper-vigilant or always on edge, expresses feelings of guilt and may engage in excessive drinking and drug use. These are only a few of the noticeable symptoms. The invisible wounds of military service are not as easy to detect as the physical ones.

Loved ones may also experience the trickledown effect of military service. The Monitor on Psychology (December 2013) notes "new research shows spousal disagreement itself may fuel physical health problems in military personnel and veterans with PTSD. Findings suggest that the way someone with PTSD reacts to marital conflict – with intense anger and cardiac symptoms like high blood pressure and heart rate, for example – may lead to poor sleep and greater risk for cardiovascular disease. But the most surprising finding is that this discord may influence the partner of the service person or veteran." In essence, the anxiety and stress level of the veteran can impact those within the family or the person in a relationship with the veteran.

PTSD, or as some refer to it, PTSI (Post-Traumatic Stress Injury), is a treatable mental illness or injury. While many military personnel and veterans can receive treatment for PTSD at the VA Hospital or from military mental health professionals, others choose to receive treatment from civilian healthcare pro-

Symptoms of PTSD

Intrusive Memories:

- Recurrent, unwanted memories
- Flashbacks or reliving the traumatic event
- Upsetting dreams
- Severe emotional distress or physical reaction to a reminder of the event

Negative Changes in Thinking and Mood:

- Negative feelings about yourself or others
- Inability to experience positive emotions
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Lack of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Memory problems
- Hopelessness about future
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships

Changes in Emotional Reactions:

- Irritability, angry outbursts, aggressive behavior
- Always being on guard for danger
- Overwhelming guilt or shame
- Self-destructive behavior (excessive drinking, driving too fast)
- Trouble concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping
- Easily startled or frightened

Source: Mayo Clinic

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Our Mission
New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

A Holly, Jolly Stress-Free Christmas

by Angie Cerniglia, Associate Marriage & Family Therapist

As we come upon Thanksgiving and Christmas we will see article after article talking about how to have a healthy holiday season for our bodies. We'll hear: "Eat healthy, drink lots of water and take time to exercise!" Other than indulging in some Christmas fudge, my husband and I usually do pretty well at not ending up in a food coma; okay, we at least try not to end up in a food coma.

However, having a healthy holiday is not all about our food intake and physical bodies. Many of us struggle with emotional and mental stress of the holiday season. I can recall quite a few times, as Thanksgiving and Christmas came to a close, my husband and I were left feeling like we'd been run over by Santa's reindeer.

I think it's a fair assumption

that, like us, no one wants to be holiday roadkill. We end up looking at one another thinking, how did this happen? The answer is simple. We didn't think ahead and define our personal limits. While it is important to treat our physical bodies well, it is equally important to consider our stress level and number of commitments. So, how can we have a healthy holiday season for our mind and heart? Set boundaries!

Between work, social and family obligations, the calendar can fill up before you have a chance to say, "Jingle Bells." While the holidays can be a wonderful time, they can get overwhelming very quickly if we don't set healthy boundaries for ourselves. This can lead to stress, anxiety and even feelings of depression. So what do these boundaries look like?



Healthy boundaries may be different for each person, but the bottom line is you need to examine what you realistically can and cannot do. Sit down and take a look at the calendar; what events can you make, and what events would be stretching you too thin?

Even though it's the holidays, down time is still important! Don't be afraid to do what's best for you and your family, even if that means choosing something you've wanted to do every year, but have given up in the past in order to accommodate family obligations. The holidays don't have to be synonymous with chaos, so this year cutting back on the fudge and our commitments is a must if we are going to have a shot at holly and jolly!

How You Can Bring to Hope, Help & Healing

Imagine what you would feel like if you unexpectedly lost your job. Or your spouse told you that he or she wanted a divorce. Or you were so paralyzed by anxiety that you couldn't even leave your home.

Maybe you don't have to imagine because you are suffering similar losses or struggling with family, emotional or mental health issues yourself. Or maybe some-

one you love is hurting. Every year, hundreds of clients come through our doors searching for answers, healing and health. They are grieving deep losses, experiencing debilitating depression, battling addictions and working to save their marriages.

Fortunately, with counseling, clients are able to gain the skills and knowledge to help them get through their pain.

Hope replaces hurt. God's grace brings healing.

But healing would not be possible without the **Marty Doot Client Assistance Program** which provides financial aid to those who are unable to pay for their care. One in every three clients receives some level of assistance. Last year, more than \$150,000 was given to those in need!

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Learning to Understand How God Values Us

A client recently shared how her experience at New Leaf Resources has given her hope, help and healing:

"My husband was emotionally abusive. With children, I knew we would have to continue to communicate. I wanted help in learning how to do that and protect myself. For several years, my husband came to counseling with me. We faced some pretty dark places and moved toward healing. But then after not

going for a while, my husband slipped into old patterns and eventually moved out.

My counselor has been helpful at reminding me that God has not abandoned me and that I am not shameful. He reminds me of the gifts God is giving me during this difficult transition of divorce (my husband filed). And he reminds me to have fun.

I don't feel hopeless. I have more clarity about my value as a child of God. I have

more strength to live. I remind myself to stand up straight and hold my head up. I can be more honest with myself and not rely on another's false lies about me. Instead, I look at how God views and values me.

My counselor took the time to get to know the real me and reminded me of my strengths when fears tried to run me down."

**- Female client, 56
in therapy for troubled
marriage and divorce**



**"I don't feel
hopeless. I
have more
clarity about
my value as a
child of God."**

- a client, 56

What's "New" at New Leaf

We are excited to welcome Licensed Mental Health Counselor **Judy Farwell** to our therapy staff. With more than 30 years of experience, Judy brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to our ministry.

One area of specialization that Judy enjoys is play therapy. This type of therapy encourages a child to act out their fantasies and express themselves through play and creative techniques which helps decrease the behavioral and emotional problems that are interfering with normal functioning.

Judy, who will be seeing clients in the Crown Point and Wheatfield offices, also specializes in conflicts within relationships, life transitions, grief/loss, coping with chronic illness among others.

Originally from Iowa, Judy is relocating to Northwest Indiana with her husband, **Steve**. They have one daughter who is in college. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family, reading, gardening and visiting museums.

Congratulations to Therapist **LaSaundra Gordon** who recently wed **Tyrone Cotton**. Wishing you both many years of good health and happiness.

Helping America's Heroes...

(Continued from page 1)

Therapists on staff at New Leaf have experience working with PTSD and can provide resources for both veterans and their families.

Sometimes, veterans who struggle with this injury believe that no one can understand what they are experiencing or what they have been through. The

military life is very demanding and sometimes veterans are ashamed to talk about the things experienced in combat or find it too painful to express. That's why it is important that they receive the support and professional care they deserve. They are heroes who need to receive both a hero's welcome and a supportive network. Echo these words the next time you see a veteran: *Thank you for your service!*

Bring Hope...

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Would you please consider making a gift to New Leaf Resources, so that clients won't miss God's healing grace due to financial constraints? One hundred percent of your gift goes directly to help clients.

You can make a secure donation online at:
www.newleafresources.org
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Thank you to those who have already joined us in providing hope, help and healing. You are changing lives every day with your generous support.

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**"Life doesn't
need to be
perfect to be
wonderful."**

-Unknown



Kass' Quotes

A compilation of Therapist
Kass Cooper's favorite quips & quotes,
humorous & inspirational.

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Winter 2016

 **new leaf resources**
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Save the Date!

Annual Celebration Banquet
Thursday, April 28, 2016
The Center for Visual & Performing
Arts, in Munster, Indiana

Featuring
the comedy of
Kenn Kington

Enjoy dinner,
fellowship & fun!

RSVP (708) 895-7310 or
banquet@newleafresources.org

**Interested in hosting a table? Supporting the event with
a sponsorship? Please call Terri for more information.**

New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling and consultation services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.



Celebrating 
35 years of
hope, help & healing