

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

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## **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that affects victims that encounter incidences that are traumatizing such as war, terrorist attacks, accidents, and disasters among others. It is natural for individuals exposed to traumatic incidences to develop different reactions in response to the trauma that is caused. However, in some individuals, these reactions and symptoms are prolonged where the diagnosis made is PTSD. Examples of traumatic incidences are the 9/11 attack and hurricane Katrina. The following research paper discusses the impact of Post-traumatic stress disorder on the victims of the 9/11 attack and Hurricane Katrina and how the victims responded to various forms of treatment.

### **Impact of PTSD on the victims of the 9/11 attack and the Hurricane Katrina**

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the pentagon and the world trade centre affected a lot of people that included the survivors, the first responders, and other individuals that witnessed the incidences that occurred. Research that was conducted showed that 4.6% of the relief workers had this disorder. Not less than 10,000 civilians that were exposed to the incidences, police officers, firefighters and other first responders acquired PTSD (Hartocollis, 2011). A huge proportion of these people are yet to recover from this disorder. Some of the individuals who searched the debris in order to search for survivors were greatly affected by the incidences that they witnessed. On the other hand, the rate of this condition was high in the survivors where most individuals have not recovered from the shock that was experienced. Having given a brief overview of the incidences that occurred during the 9/11 attack and how they relate to PTSD, the next part will give a brief overview of the incidences that occurred during the Hurricane Katrina and the disorder.

Research has also shown that there exists a relationship between PSTS and Hurricane Katrina which hit the Gulf Coast in August 2005. A research that was conducted on 386 victims of the incidence by researchers from various universities showed that more than 50% of the victims experienced PTSD. On the other hand, the other research that was conducted in the regions that were affected showed that the prevalence of this condition increased from 15% a few months after the attack to 21% a year later after the attack occurred. The percentage of individuals that experienced suicidal thoughts among the victims also doubled from 2.8% to about 6.4%. The amount of physical damage that was caused by the hurricane was very large. The entire community was affected with many people losing as well as property. Some of the residents had to watch corpses floating on water and lying all over before they were rescued from their homes that were no longer habitable for them. This section examines how Hurricane Katrina incidence relates to PTSD, the part will cover the impact of PTSD on the victims of the two incidences.

Although the 9/11 attack and the Hurricane Katrina incidences were not similar, the effects that were reflected on the victims in relation to PTSD were almost similar. A wide range of consistent body symptoms were observed on the victims. Most individuals experienced arousal and reactivity symptoms. One sign that was associated with this category is that the individuals were easily startled and stayed in fear. This resulted from the shock that the individuals got from the incidences they were exposed to during the attack. Another sign was that most individuals experienced difficulty sleeping which was caused by the recurrence of the incidences that occurred during the attack. Most individuals found themselves in a situation where they kept replaying the incidences that they encountered in their minds which resulted to lack of concentration and stress. For instance, research conducted showed that 12.9% of the police officers showed symptoms of

PTSD 10 years after the 9/11 attack where 72.4% of these individuals experienced stress and depression.

Victims of the 9/11 attack and the Hurricane Katrina that were diagnosed with PTSD also experienced cognition and mood symptoms that have lasted for years in some of the victims. Normally, PTSD is usually accompanied by anxiety, substance abuse, and depression. For instance, when most people were following the incidences that occurred during the hurricane on the media, most individuals actually wondered how the victims would manage to recover from the situation. The victims also had the same feelings but for them, it was more of a disorder since they were directly involved. This led to a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness that was attached to PTSD. This feeling caused the victims to feel as if they were detached from the world. On the other hand, some children developed permanent disorders such as developing speaking problems (Reardon, 2015). Therefore, after discussing the impact of PTSD on the victims of the 9/11 attack and Hurricane Katrina, the next section will examine how the victims have responded to various resources used for treatment.

### **Resources used for treatment and response to the treatment**

Several recovery initiatives were put in place after the 9/11 attack and Hurricane Katrina in order to help the victims to recover from the incidences they experienced. Some of the resources were used aimed at helping the victims attain psychological recovery. In the case of the 9/11 attack, several programs that also aided the victims to recover psychologically were set up such as the project liberty where local personnel were organized to provide counselling and referrals to the victims. The World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) which also offers psychological help to the victims was also set up. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, a lot of agencies provided relief and help that helped in running psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy on

the victims which were aimed at promoting mental recovery (McLaughlin et al., 2014). Having identified some of the resources that were used in the mental recovery of the victims, the next section will examine how the victims responded to the treatment.

Most of the victims that were affected by the 9/11 attack and Hurricane Katrina experienced intense PTSD symptoms six months after the incidence occurred. Although extensive research has not been conducted on the long term effects of the condition, it clear that some people have not yet recovered fully from the condition. Although various resources and initiatives were put in place to help the victims recover, few people were aware of the need to seek treatment for the mental conditions they were facing. On the other hand, for the people that were enrolled, only a few were consistent with the treatment procedures. However, for those that received the necessary care such as psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy practices combined with a close follow up, they recorded an improvement. Therefore, this section tracks the progress of some of the victims that received treatment on PTSD, the next section comprises of the conclusion where all issues raised will be summarized.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research paper has identified the impact of the 9/11 attack and Hurricane Katrina on the victims. It is clear that some of the survivors, the first responders, and the civilians who witnessed the two incidences developed PTSD which was manifested in various psychological symptoms that have been discussed. On the other hand, various resources were also put in place to assist the victims of the incidence. Most victims that were consistent on the treatment actually recorded positive results. However, it is clear that if similar incidences recur in the future, there is a need to come up with initiatives that aim at increasing awareness among the people on the need to seek diagnosis and treatment of PTSD.

## References

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