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Erin Hamilton Richter
Posttraumatic stress disorder
and depression in combat
veterans within group based
exposure therapy treatment:
A correlation between grief
and guilt?

ABSTRACT

This study examines the potential multifaceted relationship between Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), grief, guilt and depression. A sample pool of 32 veterans diagnosed with chronic PTSD volunteered as participants for this study by completing the Posttraumatic stress disorder checklist (PCL), the Beck Inventory for Depression (BDI), the Prolonged Grief Diagnostic tool, and the Traumatic Related Guilt Inventory (TRGI), pre- and post- group based exposure therapy treatment (GBET). Participants for this study were all male veterans, who ranged in ages from 47-64 years old. Twenty of the participants were African American/Black; 11 participants were Caucasian/White; and one participant identified as "other." A paired t-test was run and a paired correlation test was run to determine the change in PTSD, depression, grief and guilt symptoms pre- and post- GBET to determine if there was a significant relationship (positive or negative) between, PTSD and guilt, PTSD and grief, grief and guilt, depression and guilt and depression and grief. Findings showed that all symptoms decreased after four months of GBET treatment and a relationship was strong between grief and guilt post treatment. A relationship was moderate between grief and depression post treatment and guilt and depression post treatment.

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND DEPRESSION IN COMBAT
VETERANS WITHIN GROUP BASED EXPOSURE THERAPY TREATMENT: A
CORRELATION BETWEEN GRIEF AND GUILT?

A project based upon an investigation at the Atlanta
Veterans Administration Medical Center, Atlanta
GA, submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Social
Work.

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Lastly I would like to thank and honor all of the veterans who participated in this research study and worked so hard during the four-month exposure therapy treatment. This research is for the health and stability of the veterans.

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