







Slide 10

### Effects of Combat Stress

- Increased arousal is a normal and adaptive response to being in a combat zone
- Adrenaline and cortisol help with the fight or flight response
- Coming home, it may be difficult to "turn off" the combat mode state of mind
- Soldiers may stay at home to avoid things that trigger memories of combat

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Slide 11

### Mental Health Effects of Combat Stress-Intrusive Memories

- Threat to your life and self integrity, accompanied by intense fear, horror or helplessness, associated with
- Recurrent intrusive memories
- Nightmares
- Feeling as if the combat event were recurring
- Feeling a lot worse with reminders of combat
- Having increased physiological reactivity with reminders of combat

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Slide 12

### Mental Health Effects of Combat Stress-Intrusive Memories



- A drive to the grocery store made difficult by seeing a bag of garbage along the side of the road

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Slide 13

**Mental Health Effects of OIF-Avoidance**

- Avoiding things that would remind you of combat
- Trying to avoid thinking about combat and Iraq/Afghanistan
- Having trouble remembering an important aspect of a combat event

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Slide 14

**Mental Health Effects of OIF-Avoidance**

- Decreased interest in things you used to like to do (e.g. don't like to play sports, don't want to go out to the movies, etc.)
- Feeling detached or out of touch with others
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Sense of foreboding future.

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Slide 15

**Mental Health Effects of OIF-Avoidance**



*Returning soldiers often feel uncomfortable in crowds*

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