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Lesson Title	Nurse Jennie Gadde - Shell Shock, PTSD, and the treatment of psychological battle scars during WWI
Grade(s)	11-12 US or World History <i>Sensory Advisory: This lesson plan goes over details of the horrors of war. This lesson is recommended for grades 11-12 due to this reason. If the teacher feels that the maturity level of the student make-up of their classroom is appropriate, then this lesson plan can be used for students in grades 9-10 as well as 11-12.</i>
Time (Minutes/ Days)	1-2 class periods

Lesson Overview

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) are mental health conditions that are triggered by terrifying events either as a participant in the event or as a witness. Most people who experience trauma often temporarily have difficulty coping, but usually get better with self-care. However, if symptoms worsen or last for months or even years, one might have PTSD. Because of the nature of combat, the experiences of Veterans give them a predisposition to PTSD. The US Department of Veterans Affairs states that of the 6 million Veterans served by the VA, 10 in 100 men and 19 in 100 women were diagnosed with PTSD.

One specific PTSD is called Shell Shock and was first coined during World War I. It took officials by surprise and the military needed to quickly address the rapidly growing issue. One way was to utilize the Army Nurse Corps (ANC) for

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treating psychiatric ailments such as Shell Shock. This lesson plan recognizes Nurse Jane “Jennie” Margaret Gadde and her service in treating those who suffered from Shell Shock at Base Hospital No. 117 during the war. This lesson is meant to be included in a larger unit on the topic of World War I.

After learning about the components of PTSD, students will be given hypothetical mental trauma cases and will take the role of an ANC nurse during World War I. Students will practice identifying a soldier’s condition for whether or not they have Shell Shock. They will follow a series of prompts to determine the soldier’s care, just as Gadde and other medical officials did in her time.

One of the goals of this lesson is to provide healthy discourse about mental health through the study of history within the classroom, something of importance and too rare in schools. In addition, students will find a likely new perspective to World War I, and learn some of the impact Shell Shock had on its participants.

Note: It is important to mention throughout the lesson that students should seek professional assistance when making decisions concerning their own or another’s treatment plan for any illness, including Shell Shock and other forms of PTSD.

Essential Questions

- What is PTSD, Shell Shock, and how are they similar/different?
- How did Shell Shock affect participants of the First World War?
- What are some defining factors for having PTSD?
- What methods of treatment for Shell Shock were used during WWI?

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Florida State Standards

Social Studies Standards

History

- SS.912.A.4.8 - Compare the experiences Americans (African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, women, conscientious objectors) had while serving in Europe.
- SS.912.W.7.2 - Describe the changing nature of warfare during World War I.
- SS.912.W.7.3 - Summarize significant effects of World War I.
- SS.912.W.9.1 - Identify major scientific figures and breakthroughs of the 20th century, and assess their impact on contemporary life.

Psychology

- SS.912.P.1.3 - Describe perspectives employed to understand behavior and mental processes.
- SS.912.P.1.4 - Discuss the value of both basic and applied psychological research with human and non-human animals.
- SS.912.P.1.5 - Describe the major subfields of psychology.
- SS.912.P.1.6 - Identify the important role psychology plays in benefiting society and improving people's lives.
- SS.912.P.3.13 - Describe advances made in neuroscience.
- SS.912.P.17.3 - Describe major models of abnormality.
- SS.912.P.17.5 - Discuss the impact of psychological disorders on the individual, family, and society.
- SS.912.P.17.7 - Discuss the challenges associated with diagnosis.
- SS.912.P.17.8 - Describe symptoms and causes of major categories of psychological disorders (including schizophrenic, mood, anxiety, and personality disorders).
- SS.912.P.17.9 - Evaluate how different factors influence an individual's experience of psychological disorders.

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- SS.912.P.18.1 - Explain how psychological treatments have changed over time and among cultures.
- SS.912.P.18.3 - Explain why psychologists use a variety of treatment options.
- SS.912.P.18.5 - Identify psychological treatments.
- SS.912.P.18.7 - Evaluate the efficacy of treatments for particular disorders.
- SS.912.P.18.7 - Identify other factors that improve the efficacy of treatment.
- SS.912.P.19.2 - Identify and explain potential sources of stress.
- SS.912.P.19.4 - Identify and explain physiological, cognitive, and behavioral strategies to deal with stress.
- SS.912.P.19.6 - Describe the characteristics of and factors that promote resilience and optimism.
- SS.912.P.19.7 - Distinguish between effective and ineffective means of dealing with stressors and other health issues.
- SS.912.P.20.1 - Identify careers in psychological science and practice.
- SS.912.P.20.4 - Identify careers related to psychology.
- SS.912.P.20.5 - Discuss ways in which psychological science addresses domestic and global issues.
- SS.912.P.20.6 - Identify careers in psychological science that have evolved as a result of domestic and global issues.

Required Materials

- Access to internet
- [Nurse Jane Margaret Gadde's biography](#)
- [YouTube video on PTSD](#)
- [YouTube video on Shell Shock](#)
- [Army Nurse Corps document on Psychiatric Nursing during World War I](#)

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- Optional: Students can fill out the Note Taker during the lesson (see below)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Gain an understanding of PTSD and Shell Shock
- Practice diagnosing PTSD and Shell Shock
- Practice making treatment plans for those who suffer from PTSD and Shell Shock without the use of medication
- Gain an understanding of mental illness in the First World War as well as the process and staff involved with treatment

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic with the Military Service section to Nurse Gadde's biography.
2. Watch videos on PTSD and Shell Shock.
3. Go over how the ANC treated mental ailments in World War I.
4. Discuss what PTSD and Shell Shock are, as well as their differences.
5. Complete activity in which students act as medical officials by diagnosing and creating treatment plans for hypothetical mentally wounded soldiers.

1. The teacher has students break into groups of 4 (or similar, up to teacher discretion). Students are to popcorn read the Military Service section to Nurse Gadde's biography.
2. Once a group has finished reading, students will answer the question as

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a group: If you were a medical official encountering Shell Shock for the first time, how would you approach helping a patient? The goal here is to get students to attempt to construct their own answer to the dilemma before they receive the answer as to what the ANC did in the war. The teacher should only answer questions as to what the assignment is.

3. Once groups have come up with their own answers, the teacher tells the students that “in order to come up with a treatment plan, medical officials during World War I first tried to learn exactly what condition these soldiers were suffering from.” Healthline states the following: “Shell shock’ is a term used to describe a type of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that is related to combat situations. It’s a collection of symptoms, such as fear, anxiety, and panic, that can result from constant exposure to explosions and other intense threats over a long period.”
4. The teacher asks the class if anyone knows what PTSD is, or if they know someone who has been medically diagnosed with PTSD. The teacher asks follow-up questions as to what symptoms one with PTSD might have.
5. The teacher asks the class if anyone knows what Shell Shock is, or if they know someone who has been medically diagnosed with Shell Shock. The teacher asks follow-up questions as to what symptoms one with Shell Shock might have.
6. The teacher explains to the students that in order to gain a better understanding of the mental disorder existing in World War I soldiers, we need to learn more about PTSD and, more specifically, Shell Shock.
7. The teacher plays the YouTube video on PTSD.
8. The teacher specifies as stated in the video something along the lines of the following:
 - a. “As the video mentioned, trauma causes anxiety and depressive behaviors. What makes symptoms after trauma classified as a

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is that the symptoms continue for more than a month. Anxiety, depression, and any mental stress is normal after a traumatic event, but these symptoms should not be permanent. Soldiers in the first world war gained a specific kind of PTSD known as Shell Shock."

9. The teacher plays the YouTube video on Shell Shock.
 - a. *Note: It is important that the video is paused when the screen displays any text as the video does not leave ample time for a viewer to read and comprehend all the information on the page. Monitor student comprehension to ensure they have had enough time to read the screen.*
10. The teacher asks students: How is Shell Shock a more specific kind of PTSD and not just any kind of PTSD?"
 - a. Through guided questioning, the goal is that students construct answers that reflect the source of Shell Shock as well as the addition of physical ailments in addition to mental ailments. The teacher can also ask "do all PTSDs come the same way Shell Shock does?" or "do all PTSDs have the same symptoms as Shell Shock?"
11. After discussion, the students are to return to their groups and diagnose a hypothetical soldier struggling with mental ailments for whether or not they have Shell Shock. Use Example A from the materials below.
12. Once groups are complete, they share their answers with the class and their reasons for selecting their answer. The teacher then leads a discussion as to why the answer was yes, Soldier A does have Shell Shock.
 - a. The answer was yes because his mental symptoms were a result of trauma and have lasted for more than a month, the qualifying factors for PTSD. The soldier has tremors in addition to their other symptoms, a common symptom of Shell Shock, and not necessarily

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PTSD. The original trauma is also caused by a combat related situation, a necessary factor in diagnosing Shell Shock.

13. The teacher tells students the following: “according to modern descriptions of PTSD, and more specifically, Shell Shock, those who suffer from a PTSD maintain symptoms for more than a month at a time.”
14. The teacher follows with: “Can we say that soldiers who returned to the front lines after receiving psychiatric treatment were cured of Shell Shock?”
 - a. The desired answer is: no OR possibly. We don’t know that the soldiers who left Base Hospital No. 117 were completely cured of their ailments. However, we can say that soldiers who went to Base Hospital No. 117 saw marked improvements in their psychological health, implying that some treatments did improve symptoms.
15. Remaining in their groups, students popcorn read the ANC article on how the US Army diagnosed and treated soldiers suffering from mental stress.
16. The teacher asks: “What methods and practices did patients receive or benefit from at Base Hospital No. 117?”
 - a. Sample desired answers:
 - i. Hydrotherapy *Note: The teacher should mention that this practice is comparable to physical therapy in a pool, and is used to promote muscle stimulation in order for patients to regain their motor skills after losing them to Shell Shock.*
 - ii. Faradic (electroshock) therapy *Note: The teacher should mention that this practice was used with a very low voltage to trigger muscle stimulation in order for patients to regain their motor skills after losing them to Shell Shock.*
 - iii. A closer proximity to soldier’s units

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- iv. An atmosphere of cure
 - 1. Encouraging patients to take responsibility for their own actions and develop confidence for recovery
 - 2. Keeping patients busy
 - 3. Exercise
 - 4. Training
 - 5. Work details (road work, yard manicuring, cleaning kitchens, etc.)
 - 6. Taking courses (bench woodwork, carpentry, painting, etc.)
 - 7. Confronting the reality of the situation and trauma
- v. A close monitoring of patient activity and development.
- 17. Groups are given Example B in their groups and are tasked with developing a treatment plan for their patient.
- 18. Groups share their treatment plans with the class.

Example Soldiers

- A. Soldier A was buried in a battlefield for 6 hours during combat. After retrieval, they were unable to speak and gained tremors in their legs. They have maintained these symptoms for 9 months.
- B. Soldier B has uncontrollable face spasms and avoids talking about anything war-related. They also seem to have a large amount of shame for their situation and are easily surprised or scared.

Bibliography for Further Reading/Teacher/Student Use

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Nurse Jennie Gadde - Shell Shock, PTSD, and the Treatment of Psychological Battle Scars during WWI- Note Taker

Read [Nurse Jane Margaret Gadde's biography](#) with your group.

1. In your own words, summarize her military service in relation to Shell Shock.

2. What did you find most interesting about Gadde's life?



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3. If you were a medical official encountering Shell Shock for the first time, how would you approach helping a patient?

Watch the video about PTSD with the class.

1. Say-it-in-6: In exactly 6 words (no more, no less), define PTSD.

Watch the video about Shell Shock with the class.

1. Say-it-in-6: In exactly 6 words (no more, no less), define Shell Shock.



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Discussion Question: How is Shell Shock a more specific PTSD and not just any kind of PTSD?

Sample Solder Shell Shock Diagnosis

Soldier A was buried in a battlefield for 6 hours during combat. After retrieval, they were unable to speak and gained tremors in their legs. They have maintained these symptoms for 9 months.

1. Does Soldier A have Shell Shock?

2. Explain your diagnosis.



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Article: Psychiatric Nursing at Base Hospital No. 117 during World War One

[Read this article](#) with your group, then answer the questions below.

1. What methods were used to “quiet” and “comfort” the patients at Base Hospital No. 116?

2. Why was Base Hospital No. 117 located so close to the front?



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3. Why were nurses so important to the recovery of patients diagnosed with Shell Shock?

4. Describe the ward routines of the patients.



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Sample Solder Shell Shock Diagnosis

Soldier B has uncontrollable face spasms and avoids talking about anything war-related. They also seem to have a large amount of shame for their situation and are easily surprised or scared.

3. Does Soldier B have Shell Shock?

4. Explain your diagnosis.

5. Create a Treatment Plan for Soldier B with your group.



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