

UCF Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials



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Lesson Title	Changes in Psychology due to War Conflicts
Grade(s)	9 -12 High School
Time (Minutes/ Days)	50 - 90 Minutes (1-2 Class periods or 1 Block Period)

Lesson Overview

This lesson plan is designed to help high school students understand the evolution of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and its impact on diagnosing psychological disorders, particularly PTSD. Students will explore how historical events, including armed conflict, have influenced changes in the DSM. The lesson begins with a review of prior knowledge, followed by a Think-Pair-Share activity where students reflect on war experiences and discuss them in groups. They will listen to one or more Veteran's stories to gain a personal perspective on PTSD. A close read of a PTSD article will deepen their understanding, while a timeline activity will help them visualize the evolution of the DSM alongside major US military conflicts. The lesson concludes with a reflection on the physiological and psychological responses to trauma and the evolution of PTSD treatment. Through guided discussions, activities, and reflections, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of how the DSM has changed over time and the incidents that contributed to these changes. There are two additional items at the end if you wish to incorporate a project or homework assignment connecting additional Veteran stories related to abnormal psychology analysis.

Essential Questions

1. How did the DSM change over time?
2. What incidents in the world contributed to those changes?
3. What do we learn about PTSD by listening to the individual stories of US Veterans?

Florida State Standards

1. **SS.912.P.17.5** Discuss the impact of psychological disorders on the individual, family, and society.
2. **SS.912.P.17.6** Describe the classification of psychological disorders.

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3. **SS.912.P.17.8** Describe symptoms and causes of major categories of psychological disorders.
4. **SS.912.P.17.9** Evaluate how different factors influence an individual's experience of psychological disorders.
5. **SS.912.P.18.1** Explain how psychological treatments have changed over time and among cultures.
6. **SS.912.P.3.5** Discuss the mechanisms and the importance of plasticity in the nervous system

Required Materials

1. Laptop with Internet Access
2. Paper
3. Pencil
4. Ruler
5. Highlighters
6. Notebook or area to record reflection
7. Interview with Sidney Deutsch Graphic Organizer (See Below)
8. Article: History of PTSD in Veterans Graphic Organizer (See Below)
9. Optional: [Digital Timeline Template](#)
10. Reflection Questions Graphic Organizer (See Below)
11. Optional: Oral History - Sidney Harry Saper Graphic Organizer (See Below)
12. Optional: "Veterans Honored at Hillsborough County Veteran's Day Service" Graphic Organizer (See Below)

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the evolution of the DSM and its impact on diagnosing psychological disorders.
2. Identify major incidents that influenced changes in the DSM.
3. Describe symptoms and causes of major psychological disorders, focusing on PTSD.
4. Discuss the concept of neuroplasticity and its relevance to psychological health.

Procedure

- **Prior Knowledge:**
 - Introductions of Abnormal Psychology

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- DSM IV Diagnostic tool
- Parts of the Brain
- Sensations & Perception
- Nervous System
 - Parts of the Neurons
 - Central and Peripheral Nervous System
 - Afferent/Efferent Neurons
- Bellwork Recalling Information:
 - Afferent Neurons
 - Efferent Neurons

Introduction - Think Pair Share Activity:

1. **Think-Pair-Share (TPS):**
 - Students will think about their answer, discuss in small groups, then share with the class.
2. **Questions for Reflection:**
 - Social Studies or History classes they are/have taken.
 - Conflicts/wars they have discussed or learned about.
3. **Visualizing War:**
 - Close eyes and picture what war looks like as a soldier. Discuss in groups and share responses.

Veteran's Story: Here is one of many oral histories of Veterans who grapple with PTSD. It is with Sidney Deutch, a WWII Veteran, and provides a model. His interview allows for a detailed account of working in a US Army psychiatric ward and the type of patients and their behaviors and effects on the caregivers. Mr. Deutsch has an interesting account and students may enjoy hearing his experiences. Below you will find several Oral Histories that allow students to hear from Veterans who have suffered from PTSD.

- **Sidney Deutsch (World War II)**
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/veteransoralhistories/121/>
 - Removed from medical position due to PTSD, reacts to loud noises.
 - **Key Timings:** 22:00-23:31 and 44:01-45:00.
 - Listen to the first 23 minutes to understand his story, role in the military, and experiences in working in an ARMY psychiatric ward and skip to 44:01 to learn about his own struggles with PTSD
 - **Guided Notes Questions:**
 - Why did Sidney want to join the military?
 - Why couldn't Sidney be drafted?

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- What role did he volunteer for?
- What caused him to leave his role at the psychiatric hospital?

Here are general questions to use with the other oral histories, asking each student to listen to one other oral history and reflect on the Veteran's trauma. Please feel free to adapt them as needed.

- What are some of the symptoms of PTSD that Veterans describe in their oral histories?
- What are some of the long-term effects of PTSD that Veterans suffer, which they talk about in their oral histories?
- What are some of the treatments described in the oral histories?

Close Read Activity: This activity allows learning about PTSD and making a connection from the prior lessons of how the Nervous system is affected and triggers responses from within as well as how PTSD is formed. Begin with the VA's page on the history of PTSD.

- **VA's PTSD: National Center for PTSD:**
 - PTSD History:
https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/what/history_ptsd.asp
 - Read together, then silently annotate.
 - Mark each paragraph with notations (underline, highlight, question mark, stars).
 - Alternatively, students can use the graphic organizer (below) and answer the accompanying questions.

Timeline Graphic Organizer (see below): This activity gives the students the opportunity to visualize war and its effects. Students can come up with correlations between war and DSM changes.

- **Students will need to create a timeline**
 - Paper, pencil, ruler, highlighter for color coding
 - Use the ruler to draw a straight horizontal line across the center of the paper
 - Label The Timeline (which automatically allows students to put in dates and information above and below the arrow)
 - Top section of the paper will be the years for the 6 different wars
 - Bottom section of the paper will be the years for the 5 different DSMs

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- Using Internet Search/Webquest:
 - War Timeline: WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam, Cold War, Gulf War, Iraq War
 - DSM Published Timeline: DSM I, DSM II, DSM III, DSM IV, DSM V
- Alternatively, students can use the [digital timeline template](#) and make their timeline on the computer.

Reflection: Using what you know about the nervous system in prior lessons, and today's Veteran interview, close read, and timeline, answer the following questions using evidence from today's activities. (Can be done in a notebook or in the graphic organizer below.)

1. **Physiological and Psychological Responses to Trauma:**
 - How do these responses contribute to PTSD?
 - Reflect on the fight-or-flight response and its alignment with the current understanding of PTSD.
2. **Evolution of Understanding and Treatment of PTSD:**
 - What changes in medical theories, diagnostic criteria, and treatment approaches occurred from 1952 to the present?
 - What are some key incidents that triggered changes in the DSMs?

Conclusion: By the end of this lesson, students should be able to articulate the historical context and evolution of the DSM, recognize the impact of global events on psychological diagnosis and treatment, and connect physiological responses to trauma with the development of psychological disorders like PTSD.

Homework/Project Options:

Optional 1) Veteran Story: Sidney Harry Saper

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/veteransoralhistories/18/>

(NB you may use this model for any of the Veterans in the list of oral histories below.)

Oral History Synopsis: Sidney Harry Saper, born on April 17, 1921, in New York, served as a Technical Sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was drafted in December 1941 and saw action in significant battles across North Africa and Italy, including the Battle of Anzio and the capture of Rome. Saper defused between 300-400 bombs during his service and survived numerous life-threatening situations, which left him with a few nightmares but feeling fortunate overall. Despite his wartime experiences, he expressed a sense of

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responsibility and resilience, returning to civilian life with a complex mix of anger and relief. Sidney Harry Saper is buried in Jacksonville National Cemetery, honoring his service and sacrifice.

- Directions: From today's lesson, evaluate the Veteran's story and answer the questions below.

Impact of Combat Experiences on Mental Health

- Sidney Saper mentions extreme fear, especially regarding grenades, and recalls specific traumatic events, such as a medic being shot and falling on a grenade. Considering his experiences, how might repeated exposure to life-threatening situations during combat contribute to the development of PTSD in soldiers?

Coping Mechanisms and Emotional Suppression

- Saper discusses how emotions were kept private between soldiers and suggests that fear was necessary for survival. In the context of PTSD, what are the potential long-term psychological effects of suppressing emotions and relying on fear as a coping mechanism during and after combat?

Effects of War on Personal Relationships

- After returning from the war, Saper was concerned about making a living and experienced anger for a while, although he felt he was not significantly changed by the war. How might PTSD affect a Veteran's personal relationships and their reintegration into civilian life, particularly in terms of emotional expression and behavior?

Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth

- Despite experiencing nightmares and extreme fear, Saper mentions feeling fortunate overall and not wanting to compare his experience with other Veterans. Discuss the concept of resilience in the context of PTSD. How might factors like personal outlook, social support, and pre-war personality traits influence a Veteran's ability to cope with and recover from traumatic experiences?

Optional 2) Close Read Article with Reflection Veteran: Gerard Francis Abbett

"Veterans honored at Hillsborough County Veteran's Day service"

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<https://www.wfla.com/news/hillsborough-county/veterans-honored-at-hillsborough-county-veterans-day-service/>

Article Synopsis: The article discusses a Veteran's Day service at Veteran's Memorial Park in Hillsborough County, where Veterans from various wars gathered to honor those who served. Among the Veterans was Gerard Francis Abbett, a Vietnam War Veteran who was wounded twice and earned two Purple Hearts. Abbett, now dedicated to helping other Veterans, played a significant role in creating a Purple Heart monument to honor those who sacrificed their lives for the country. (Veteran is buried in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL.)

Combat Trauma and PTSD Development

- Gerard Abbett describes being wounded twice during the Vietnam War, once when his unit came under heavy fire and again during the Tet Offensive. How might these traumatic combat experiences contribute to the development of PTSD in Veterans? Discuss the potential long-term psychological effects of such intense and life-threatening situations.

War-Related Psychological Impact

- Abbett mentions the loss of a friend during the battle along the Mekong River and another incident where he was hit in the head by a bullet that ricocheted. How do such experiences of witnessing death and sustaining injuries affect a soldier's mental health? Explore how these events could lead to symptoms of PTSD such as flashbacks, anxiety, and emotional numbness.

Support and Community Involvement as Coping Mechanisms

- After returning to Tampa, Abbett began helping other Veterans and worked on a Purple Heart monument to honor his fallen comrades. How might engaging in supportive community activities and memorial projects aid in the coping process for Veterans with PTSD? Discuss the importance of social support and community involvement in the mental health recovery of Veterans.

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Timeline and War Identification

- Based on the timeline created during the lesson, identify the primary war Gerard Francis Abbett was most involved in. Explain how understanding the specific war and its context can provide insights into the particular challenges and traumas faced by Veterans from that conflict.

Oral Histories in the UCF VHP Collection For Use in this Lesson

All of these Oral Histories are part of the UCF Community Veterans History Collection.

For more information about UCF VHP, visit the Website

here: <https://vetstories.coh.ucf.edu/> . Since 2009 UCF VHP has conducted about 1000 oral histories with Veterans with connections to Central Florida.

To search the entire archive, part of the UCF Library's STARS Collection, begin here: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/veteranshistoryproject/>.

[Autery, Eric](#) (Global War on Terror) - reflects on drug abuse while suffering from PTSD and how he couldn't take advantage of opportunities offered to him by the Air Force because of it
45:47-47:17

[Richardson, Michael](#) (Enduring Freedom) - discusses PTSD and its effects on employment, later discusses suicide attempt and the difference between depression and PTSD, and how comic books helped him (may be too dark for students)
1:01:10-1:09:04

[Belen, Jose](#) (Iraqi Freedom) - describes PTSD as an internal fight in contrast to the external fight of service, and emphasizes that it's also a fight for the family of the person suffering from it
42:55-45:38

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[Hasan, Monica Michele](#) (Iraqi Freedom) - describes PTSD from sexual harassment during service in Iraq, treatment, and medical retirement from active duty
38:50-41:14

[Duffy, Karen Gill](#) (Vietnam) - describes having an episode of PTSD after hearing a song that reminded her of service, mentions "we didn't have a name for it back then"
1:10:44-1:12:52

[Hughes, James L.](#) (Vietnam) - discusses the suicide of friends after service and his own divorce alongside the experience of PTSD
25:30-26:40

[Grissom, Christine Ann](#) (Iraqi Freedom) - psychiatrist that discusses treating PTSD while working with Wounded Warrior programs
12:57-15:40

[Mula, Sam J.](#) (World War II) - briefly mentions suffering from "tremors" after his service
53:42-55:04

[Merced, Carlos F.](#) (Iraqi Freedom) - discusses diagnosis and treatment of PTSD, having a service dog
50:10-52:19

Bibliography for Further Reading/Teacher/Student Use

August, Lynn R., and Barbara A. Gianola. "Symptoms of War Trauma Induced Psychiatric Disorders: Southeast Asian Refugees and Vietnam Veterans." *The International Migration Review* 21, no. 3 (1987): 820-832.
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<https://youtu.be/IWHbF5jGJY0?si=lNBxnC3Rd-v0zXfA/>

British Pathé. "World War 1 Shell Shock Victim Recovery (1910s) | War Archives." War Archives. September 22, 2011. Video, 1:02,
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McDonald, MaryCatherine, Robyn Bluhm, and Marisa Brandt. "From shell-shock to PTSD, a century of invisible war trauma." PBS News. November 11, 2018.
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/from-shell-shock-to-ptsd-a-century-of-invisible-war-trauma>.

"Shell Shock." *The British Medical Journal* 2, no. 3216 (1922): 322-323.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20420866>.

Stein, Murray B. and Barbara O. Rothbaum. "175 Years of Progress in PTSD Therapeutics: Learning From the Past." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 175, no. 6 (2018): 508-516. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2017.17080955>.

Changes in Psychology Due to War Conflicts

Interview with Sidney Deutsch

Watch the [interview with Sidney Deutsch](#), a World War II Veteran who worked in a US Army Psychiatric Ward, and answer the questions below. Listen to the first 23 minutes of his story, then skip to 44:01 to learn about his own struggles with PTSD.

1. Why did Sidney want to join the military?

2. Why couldn't Sidney be drafted?

3. What role did Sidney volunteer for?



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4. What caused him to leave his role at the psychiatric hospital?

5. What are some of the symptoms of PTSD described in his oral history?

6. What are some of the long-term effects of PTSD that are discussed?

7. What are some of the treatments for PTSD?



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Article: History of PTSD in Veterans- Civil War to *DSM-5*

[Read this article](#) from the VA about PTSD and answer the questions below.

1. Which types of social movements influenced the initial diagnosis of PTSD?

2. Explain “nostalgia” and its connection to PTSD.

3. Explain “Soldier’s Heart” and its connection to PTSD.

4. Explain “Railway Spine” and its connection to PTSD.



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5. Describe shell shock and the treatments used for those who exhibited the symptoms of shell shock.

6. Describe "battle fatigue" and its treatment in World War II.

7. Explain the original diagnosis for PTSD in the *DSM-1*.

8. Explain the changes over time to the diagnosis of PTSD as the *DSM* evolved.



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Reflection

1. Physiological and Psychological Responses to Trauma
 - a. How do these responses contribute to PTSD?

- b. Reflect on the fight-or-flight response and its alignment with the current understanding of PTSD.

2. Evolution of Understanding and Treatment of PTSD
 - a. What changes in medical theories, diagnostic criteria, and treatment approaches occurred from 1952 to the present?

- b. What are some key incidents that triggered changes in the DSMs?



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Oral History: Sidney Harry Saper

Watch [Sidney Harry Saper's oral history interview](#), then answer the questions below.

Overview: Sidney Harry Saper, born on April 17, 1921, in New York, served as a Technical Sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was drafted in December 1941 and saw action in significant battles across North Africa and Italy, including the Battle of Anzio and the capture of Rome. Saper defused between 300-400 bombs during his service and survived numerous life-threatening situations, which left him with a few nightmares but feeling fortunate overall. Despite his wartime experiences, he expressed a sense of responsibility and resilience, returning to civilian life with a complex mix of anger and relief. Sidney Harry Saper is buried in Jacksonville National Cemetery, honoring his service and sacrifice.

Impact of Combat Experiences on Mental Health

Sidney Saper mentions extreme fear, especially regarding grenades, and recalls specific traumatic events, such as a medic being shot and falling on a grenade. Considering his experiences, how might repeated exposure to life-threatening situations during combat contribute to the development of PTSD in soldiers?



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Coping Mechanisms and Emotional Suppression

Saper discusses how emotions were kept private between soldiers and suggests that fear was necessary for survival. In the context of PTSD, what are the potential long-term psychological effects of suppressing emotions and relying on fear as a coping mechanism during and after combat?

Effects of War on Personal Relationships

After returning from the war, Saper was concerned about making a living and experienced anger for a while, although he felt he was not significantly changed by the war. How might PTSD affect a Veteran's personal relationships and their reintegration into civilian life, particularly in terms of emotional expression and behavior?



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Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth

Despite experiencing nightmares and extreme fear, Saper mentions feeling fortunate overall and not wanting to compare his experience with other Veterans. Discuss the concept of resilience in the context of PTSD. How might factors like personal outlook, social support, and pre-war personality traits influence a Veteran's ability to cope with and recover from traumatic experiences?



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Close Read: “Veterans Honored at Hillsborough County Veteran’s Day Service”

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

Article Synopsis: The article discusses a Veteran's Day service at Veteran's Memorial Park in Hillsborough County, where Veterans from various wars gathered to honor those who served. Among the Veterans was Gerard Francis Abbett, a Vietnam War Veteran who was wounded twice and earned two Purple Hearts. Abbett, now dedicated to helping other Veterans, played a significant role in creating a Purple Heart monument to honor those who sacrificed their lives for the country. (Veteran is buried in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL.)

Combat Trauma and PTSD Development

Gerard Abbett describes being wounded twice during the Vietnam War, once when his unit came under heavy fire and again during the Tet Offensive. How might these traumatic combat experiences contribute to the development of PTSD in Veterans? Discuss the potential long-term psychological effects of such intense and life-threatening situations.



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War-Related Psychological Impact

Abbett mentions the loss of a friend during the battle along the Mekong River and another incident where he was hit in the head by a bullet that ricocheted. How do such experiences of witnessing death and sustaining injuries affect a soldier's mental health? Explore how these events could lead to symptoms of PTSD such as flashbacks, anxiety, and emotional numbness.

Support and Community Involvement as Coping Mechanisms

After returning to Tampa, Abbett began helping other Veterans and worked on a Purple Heart monument to honor his fallen comrades. How might engaging in supportive community activities and memorial projects aid in the coping process for Veterans with PTSD? Discuss the importance of social support and community involvement in the mental health recovery of Veterans.



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Timeline and War Identification

Based on the timeline created during the lesson, identify the primary war Gerard Francis Abbett was most involved in. Explain how understanding the specific war and its context can provide insights into the particular challenges and traumas faced by Veterans from that conflict.



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