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Military Mental Health

WTKR-TV3

The Department of Defense launched a new program Thursday to help troops who carry the mental scars of war years after they come home from battle. Many say those who suffer from post war stress are not getting the proper they need.

But, the military says something else is preventing them from getting treatment.

Amanda Gerber, a military wife, knows all too well about post war stress. Her husband is in the Navy, and both have friends who are dealing with post traumatic stress disorder. But she says the military doctors aren't doing enough to help them.



"With a lot of the Naval doctors and the base hospitals you tend to be just to be a file... They put you back in the cabinet and don't even remember your name," said Amanda Gerber.

But dealing with the stress of war is a serious illness.

At Fort Eustis just a few months ago, a soldier tried to kill one of his comrades. He then had a shoot out with police while dressed as the joker before killing himself. Then, just over a week ago a soldier killed five soldiers at a military counseling center in Iraq.

Both were reportedly dealing with stress after serving tours in Iraq.

The Department of Defense is aware of this violence, but insists the problem lies with the warriors themselves not wanting to get medical attention they need.

"This issue of stigma is real it's a great concern. You know close to half of our warriors who know that they need to get some help don't even though they are experiencing the normal reactions to combat," said Brigadier General Loree Sutton, M.D., Director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

General Sutton is the director of a new program created by the DOD called Real Warriors. A program specifically designed to combat post war stress.

Sutton tells NewsChannel three that the program has nothing to do with the recent violence. Instead it comes from studies that show more people need help.

It's help that Gerber hopes her Navy friends will get now that the DOD is more focused on this invisible wound of war.

"I think that they should care more. You know these men are the guys leaving to go fight for our country and keep all the war away from us so we don't have to deal with it and then they are coming home and having problems because of it," Gerber said.

You can find more information about Real Warriors at www.realwarriors.net.

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