

# PTSD: The War Within Women

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FRESNO, Calif. -- Mothers, wives, daughters, and soldiers. Women who served in combat zones continue to struggle with their war-time experiences when they're home. Research shows women are twice as likely to suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than men.

She's home from Iraq, but for Army Sergeant Megan Krause, the battlefield is still fresh on her mind.

"You're driving down the road, something looks like trash, and it turns out to be a bomb, and it blows up one of your Humvees," Megan told Ivanhoe.

Megan served as a combat medic and struggles with the violence and trauma she experienced.

"Should I have been able to save them? Or should they have died, and I saved them?" Megan said. Those were questions that haunted her once she came home.

"If I went into a restaurant with a group of people, I always had to make sure I was sitting in the corner with my back against a wall so that no one could get behind me, and typically, so I could see the door," Megan said.

She had posttraumatic stress disorder. She turned to alcohol to cope.

"I ended up thinking somehow that there were terrorists chasing me," Megan said.

In recent years, nearly 20,000 female veterans were diagnosed with PTSD and other war-related mental disorders. Research shows women are four-times more likely than men to have long-lasting PTSD.

In one study, it took women five years to recover compared to two years for men. Another study found female vets with PTSD were more likely to suffer from arthritis, lower back pain, obesity and hypertension than women without the disorder. Therapists say the key is to acknowledge the symptoms.

"Never forgetting what's happened to them but accepting what's happened, feeling they've learned how to cope with the issue and be able to move on," Sheila Jowsey, M.D., assistant professor of psychiatry at the Mayo Clinic, told Ivanhoe.

Megan is now a college grad and helps other vets. She says a lot of counseling saved her.

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