

PTSD: Survival Mechanism Gone Awry

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

In many ways, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a normal response that has gone haywire.

The initial trigger situation might be: the explosion of a bomb alongside an Afghanistan road; severe farm financial pressures, such as loan foreclosure; getting hit on a highway by a drunk driver whose vehicle swerved into your lane; or any severe traumatic event.

Traumatic events are dangerous to our physical or emotional well-being and elicit distress.

In 1915, Dr. Walter Cannon, a Harvard University physiology professor, demonstrated how we deal with threatening situations by avoiding the threat or confronting it. He called this the "Flight or Fight Response."

Later, Dr. Martin Seligman, a University of Pennsylvania psychologist, added a third response - "Freeze." Also called learned helplessness, to freeze is to become emotionally paralyzed and unable to do anything.

Stimuli that remind us of the threatening event (e.g., loud noises that remind the soldier of a roadside bomb exploding, a friendly chance encounter with a bank official that reinstates foreclosure fears or becoming upset when you are driving down the same highway where the drunk driver wrecked your vehicle and injured you) trigger alarm reactions.

Becoming alarmed is meant to protect us. But, when we over-react and become alarmed unnecessarily by non-threatening events only because they remind us of the initial stressor, we have developed PTSD.

Even bad dreams can trigger distress.

Our physiological and psychological reactions to stress comprise what is called the Arousal-Depletion Cycle. Also called the General Adaptation Syndrome, the phases of the cycle include:

We appraise a situation as threatening because it can harm us in some way.

Our nervous system becomes aroused by a flood of neurotransmitter chemicals (chiefly adrenaline), which prepare us to take flight from the threat, fight the threat or to freeze.

Our muscles tense, our heart speeds up, blood pressure increases and our senses sharpen, such as our pupils dilate to take in visual information. In short, we are alert and alarmed.

After the threat dissipates or because we appraise the situation as no longer threatening or because we have taken flight, fought the threat or became emotionally helpless and froze, afterwards our nervous system tries to resume a state of normalcy.

Our adrenal gland secretes cortisol. This helps us recuperate and prepare for the next threat.

It allows muscles and pupils to relax, our heart to slow down and makes us feel tired. It encourages the accumulation of fat reserves for future emergencies.

If no additional threats occur, our nervous system is able to produce serotonin and norepinephrine. These are essential transmitter chemicals that give us a sense of well-being, increase our

tolerance of pain and help us to relax.

Each time another threat triggers our alarm, the connection between the stimulus events and our reaction of flight, fight or freeze strengthens.

Sometimes the threats are real, such as repeated deployments to war zones and further exposures to intermittent explosive devices. We might endure further legal actions stemming from bankruptcy or we might encounter another erratic driver.

But, when we can't stop ourselves from reacting unnecessarily to triggers that aren't really dangerous, we have acquired a learned bad habit. Essentially, PTSD is habitual but unnecessary repetition of the arousal-depletion cycle.

Just like multiple stressors wear down our ability to cope physiologically and psychologically, repeated exposures to triggers—whether real or learned bad habits—result in fatigue and chronic depletion of serotonin and norepinephrine. We become exhausted and depressed.

Even our immune system can become compromised in its ability to ward off disease. PTSD, with its accompanying depression, contributes to an increased risk of suicide.

We can grow so weary of the repeated cycles that we want only to escape what seems like endless torment.

WHAT CAN WE DO WHEN WE HAVE DEVELOPED PTSD?

PTSD seldom goes away on its own. The most effective treatments include relearning how to manage ourselves, usually with the assistance of a trained and experienced professional caregiver, so we don't incorrectly interpret every reminder of the initial threat as dangerous.

Anti-anxiety medications often are needed to gain control over our physiological reactions. Relearning works best when we feel safe, understood by those who are assisting us and have others to coach us through rough times.

Next week, I will follow up with more information about resources for farm people dealing with PTSD, including returning soldiers, who originated from farm and rural backgrounds.

As you may know, soldiers who trace their origins to farm and rural life are disproportionately represented among our militia.

Dr. Rosmann is a clinical psychologist and farmer; he lives near Harlan, Iowa. For previously published columns and his recent book, "Excellent Joy: Fishing, Farming, Hunting and Psychology," see the website: www.agbehavioralhealth.com..

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Visiting Hours

BY TERENCE PEDERSEN, DPM, FACFAS

Avera Foot and Ankle Clinic

The barrier to a perfect golf swing could lie in your big toe, your heel or on the ball of your foot. These are the three areas of your feet most likely to cause pain that can ruin your golf swing.

Behind these pain-prone spots can lie stiff joints, stretched-out tissues and even nerve damage. But pain relief is possible and frequently does not require surgery.

The three most common painful foot conditions that can ruin your golf swing are heel pain, arthritis and pinched nerves.

• Arthritis can cause pain in the joint of your big toe that makes it difficult to follow-through on your golf swing.

• Heel pain typically results from an inflammation of the band of tissue that extends from

your heel to the ball of your foot. People with this condition compare the pain to someone jabbing a knife in their heel. Heel pain can make it uncomfortable for golfers to maintain a solid stance during crucial portions of their golf swing.

• Neuromas are nerves that become thickened, enlarged and painful because they've been compressed or irritated. A neuroma in the ball of your foot can cause significant pain as your body transfers its weight from one foot to the other in a golf swing.

Several other painful conditions can also cause instability during your swing. Some athletes and former athletes develop chronic ankle instability from previous ankle sprains that failed to heal properly. Motion-limiting arthritis and achilles tendonitis can also affect your balance. Ill-fitting golf shoes may cause corns and calluses that make standing uncomfortable.

For the majority of golfers and other patients, I recommend simple treatments such as custom orthotic devices (shoe inserts), stretching exercises, changes to your shoes, medications, braces or steroid injections and physical therapy. However, if these conservative measures fail to provide adequate relief, surgery may be required.

Foot pain is not normal. With the treatment options available to you, a pain-free golf swing is clearly in view. When your feet aren't in top condition, your golf swing won't be either.

Dr. Pedersen, Avera Foot and Ankle Clinic, is board certified by the American Board of Podiatric Surgery and is a Fellow of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

SCHOLASTICS

YANKTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Perfect Attendance

4th Quarter 2011-12

8th Grade — Grace Adam, Austin Ament, Hope Bentley, Ashley Bilbery, Garner Brandt, Savannah Busskohl, Kourtney Christensen*, Renee Cross, Micah Davenport, Amy Doering, Sophie Drotzmann, Christopher Eilers, Javier Flores, Donovan Foster, Laurel Friedenbach, Colin Garvey-Muth, Jeryka Goble, Tyler Guthmiller, Christopher Haas, Miranda Headley, Thomas Hill*, Hannah Johnson, Keeley Kleinsasser, Jeffrey Kollers, Ciara Kulhavy*, Ciara LaCroix, Lanae Lane, Cody List, Kevin Magana, Dustin McClean, Adriana McManus, Ben Mooney, Kaisee Murphy, Denver O'Donnell, Abby Oien, Andrew Peitz, Alexis Petersen, Austin Pippin, Jared Rafferty*, Blake Savey, Kierra Schaeffer, Ethan Schantz, Allen Schild, Haley Smith, Alexis Sejnoha, Jacob Smith, Bradey Sorenson, Samantha Straatmeyer, Mikayla Trenhaile, Hannah Williams, Casey Zweber

7th GRADE — Jacey Anderberg, Britney Bradwisch, Jeremiah Braxton, David Brown, Ian Bruder, Haleigh Diede, AJ Fernandez, Shanna Hill*, Alex Ketter, Chris Kinsley, Kyle Kleinschmidt*, Anna Kokesh, Alex Kotalik, Luke Lammers*, Dylan Lynde, Sophie McKee, Devon Mines-Alver, Travis Munyer, Lauryn Perk, Shaun Pinkelman*, Shelby Radack, Dylan Rausch, Abbigale Rehurek, Hunter Sanders*, Cameron Schindler, Cole Schlaefli, Isaac Schulz*, Samantha Simonsen, Madison Styles*, Dilyn Tramp, Hailey Vailancourt

6th Grade — Brenna Becker, Eli Bos, Kayla Brown*, Josh Carr, Alex Cutler, Jaxson Erickson, Ethel Florez, Tessa Folkers, Taten Gale, Josh Galvin-Hofer, Jazmyne Gunderson, Bradley Hento, Taylor Kotschegarow, McKenzie Kruger, Cooper Kuchta, Victoria Lammers*, Nicole Langdon, Adam Lange, Haley Larson, Brooklyn Maldonado, Calvin Marsh, Madison McClure*, Ryan Moderegger*, Jacob Nelson, Tyler Odens, Tyler O'Donnell*, Tate O'Hara, Karley Olson*, Sara Ordaz, Aurora Papstein, Carter Peterson, Darin Pinkelman, Eleanor Rhoades, Devin Roberts, Anna Savey, Lauren Schild, Corissa Schwartz, Katrina

Thomas, Dalton Van Buren, Abigail Van Osdel, Lauren Vik, Benjamin Wold, Isiah Woods, Gavin Yasat
(* — Indicates student with Perfect Attendance for Entire Year)

FREEMAN ACADEMY

3rd TRIMESTER HONOR ROLL
GOLD HONOR ROLL (3.60 - 4.00)

Seventh Grade
None
Eighth Grade
*Polly Carlson
*Ryan Haggerty
Emma Littel-Jensen
*Sarah Miller
Jorge Sanchez
Bethany Wollman
*Hannah Yoder
Freshmen
Olivia Boese
Emily Epp
Anran "Astera" He
Clara Koerner
*Brooklyn Ries
Austin VanDiepen
Sophomores
*Gabriel Eisenbeis
Meghan Hofer
Juniors
Ben Carlson
*Lizzie Davis
Chris Kinsley
Matthew Graber
Calvin Janssen
*Christopher Miller
Elizabeth Sanchez
*Michael VanDiepen

*Chelsea Wentz
Seniors
Makayla Epp
Caleb Glader
*Christina Hofer
Natalie Miller
*Brittney Ries
*Jaime Tschetter
*Denotes 4.0 Grade Point Average

MAROON HONOR ROLL (3.20 - 3.59)

Seventh Grade
Jesse Balzer
Derian Voigt
Eighth Grade
Ian Hofer
Freshmen
Yunxi "Cicy" Li
Brennan Waltner
Sophomores
Tristan Ashwell
Juniors
Amber Dissing
Selina Kunzi
Yi Zhi "Ariel" Lin
XiuMin Sun
Noah Yoder
Seniors
Adam Unruh

DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

MADISON — The following local students were named to the President's Academic Honors list for the spring semester at Dakota State University (DSU) in Madison:

• Michael Hunhoff from Yankton, with highest honors
• Andrea McManus from Volin
• Emily Robinson from

Yankton, with highest honors

• Brian Van De Rostyne from Yankton

A total of 353 students qualified for the honors list. Highest honors were earned by 121 students who achieved a 4.0 grade point average; the remaining students earned a 3.5 to 3.99 average to qualify for the honors list.

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MOORHEAD

MOORHEAD, Minn. — The following student has been named to the Minnesota State University Moorhead Dean's List in recognition of academic achievement for the 2012 spring semester. Students must maintain a 3.25 or higher grade point average and carry 12 graded credits to qualify for the honor.

• Joseph Benda, Yankton, Computer Science

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Kirkwood Community College has released its Dean's List for the spring semester. This student has achieved a 3.3 grade point average or higher after completing 12 or more credit hours with the college.

The Kirkwood student from the area earning this distinction is listed below:

• Derek Jacobson, Jefferson.



Put
FAITH
In Your *Family*

Tuesday, June 19, 2012

7:00 PM

FREE ADMISSION!

Marian Auditorium, MMC Campus

DO YOU HAVE *Faith* IN YOUR FAMILY?

I'M LES NORMAN, speaker, father, husband, and former Kansas City Royal.

Join me as I share with you ways to strengthen your family relationships.

Learn how to better connect with your kids, be GREAT parents, and how

to love your spouse with selfless living. If you are committed to using your

faith in God to create a stronger family relationship, I encourage you to attend.

SPONSORS

Admission to this event is FREE to the public, thanks to these sponsors.

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YANKTON AREA RELAY FOR LIFE

JUNE 29-30, 2012 • RIVERSIDE PARK
SURVIVORS' LAP • 6:00 PM

4:30-5:30 PM Survivor Registration
5:00-5:30 PM Survivor Celebration/Meal
5:45 PM Group Survivors Picture

SURVIVOR REGISTRATION | PLEASE RETURN REGISTRATION BY JUNE 15TH

Name: _____ Gender: M / F

Address/City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Date of Birth (optional): _____

Month and Year of Diagnosis: _____ Type of Cancer: _____

T-Shirt Size (circle): YM, YL, S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL

* I am interested in hearing more about patient-related programs/services of the American Cancer Society. Yes/No
* Please contact me about volunteer opportunities with the American Cancer Society. Yes/No
* Please send me information about donating to the American Cancer Society. Yes/No

This registration form can be returned to:
Avera Sacred Heart Cancer Center – Attn. Darla Gullikson
1115 W 9th St., Yankton, SD 57078

Survivor Registration forms can also be completed on the Yankton Relay For Life website at www.relayforlife.org/yanktonSD (click on Survivors & Caregivers) **by June 15th** to ensure t-shirt size.

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