

Qualitative Interview Guide for SOF Personnel

Introduction

Posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is a relatively common disorder that involves exposure to death, destruction, or sexual assault followed by four clusters of symptoms. The symptom clusters include intrusive thoughts and memories of the trauma, trying to avoid things that remind you of the trauma, changes in your thoughts and emotions after the trauma, and then being too alert and vigilant. PTSD interferes with your ability to think and react in controlled ways. Fortunately there are multiple PTSD treatments that are helpful, time limited, and have been shown to increase one's ability to think and problem solve. However, many SOF personnel are not getting PTSD treatment when they need it or at all. We would like your opinions about how to overcome barriers and increase facilitators of engaging in PTSD care. With your feedback we will provide suggestions on how to improve the culture and increase treatment seeking to SOCOM headquarters. Our goal is to optimize SOF performance by increasing access to PTSD treatment. Please remember that we will not identify you in any way when we present the results to headquarters or the scientific community.

Solutions to Barriers Identified in Survey

We conducted a survey with the current SOF community (current active duty personnel/enablers, contractors, and GS employees serving the SOF community) about how to optimize brain health by treating PTSD. The top 5 identified things that got in the way, or barriers, to getting PTSD treatment are ____, ____, ____, ____, ____.

1. Please think about how SOF personnel, team mates, providers, and leadership can help reduce these barriers. What are some things that can help overcome these barriers _____? (Aim 1 survey results will determine exact question).

Support for Facilitators Identified in Survey

The people who responded to the survey also identified things that helped with getting PTSD treatment.

We call these facilitators to accessing PTSD care. The top 5 identified facilitators to getting PTSD treatment were ____, ____, ____, ____, ____.

2. What would you suggest to support these facilitators? (Aim 1 survey results will determine exact question).

Past and Current Treatment Experiences

Let's talk about your experiences with mental health care,

3. What kind of mental health care treatment have you participated in? (e.g. medications, talked with Chaplain, saw a mental health provider, like a psychologist)? If none, skip to question 4.

3a. What made you think you needed help with mental health symptoms?

3b. How do you find out about treatments that were / are available?

<p>4. If you have not engaged in mental health care, what are some reasons you haven't?</p> <p>4a. What would have been needed for you to seek out care?</p> <p>4b. If you could recommend one change to the SOF community to increase the likelihood that you or a teammate would seek PTSD care, what would it be?</p>
<p>Cultural Fit</p> <p>To encourage SOF who would benefit from PTSD treatment to seek it,</p> <p>5. How would you "sell" PTSD treatment to SOF personnel?</p> <p>5a. Would you call it mental health treatment, performance optimization, routine maintenance, or something else?</p>
<p>6. Treatment can come in many forms. For example, you can do group or individual therapy. Some people prefer medications, where other people want to talk with someone. What type of PTSD treatments do you think fits the SOF culture?</p>
<p>7. There are many types of people who could provide PTSD treatment. For example, psychologists or other professionals, peers, spiritual leaders, or senior SOF personnel. Who might be best positioned to provide PTSD services?</p>
<p>8. Where you would like services provided? (<i>Interviewer can provide examples such as virtual care, VA, DoD, unit level providers?</i>)</p>
<p>9. Who would you like involved in PTSD care, if anyone? (<i>Interviewer can provide examples such as family, friends, teammates, spiritual leaders?</i>)</p>
<p>Educational Material</p> <p>Based on the information we learn from you and others in this study, we would like to create educational materials to help inform SOF personnel about PTSD treatment options and combat any myths about what seeking treatment may do to one's career.</p> <p>11. What types of educational materials would be helpful to you and other SOF personnel to learn about mental health treatment? (<i>Interviewer can provide examples such as factsheets, newsletters, briefs, social media blurbs</i>).</p> <p>12. What are some ways to channels to give SOF personnel accurate information about PTSD and treatment? (<i>Interviewer can provide examples of outlets for dissemination including, Care Coalition, POTFF, teams, medical clinics, mass emails</i>).</p>
<p>Conclusion</p> <p>13. To sum up your thoughts about SOF participation in PTSD treatment, what is one thing you want me to take away from our conversation today?</p>

Thank you for participating in this interview.