

# The Warriors Guide to Insanity

## As a Clinical Tool/Reference Text

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*“Sgt. Brandi's book is the only one of its kind and speaks to the unconscious. When used correctly it is both a manual for resilience and in the rehabilitation context a manual for restoration of the whole person. (1) Sgt Brandi emphasizes restoration and that the beast is oneself. (2) This is an essential for restoration. (3) Additionally he focuses on the journey to restoration and clearly points out that it is the soldier's responsibility not the rest of the world. (4) Sgt Brandi's book needs to be translated into manual for clinicians. (5) Sgt Brandi's book needs to be in-formulated into an SOP for NCO's and Officers.”*

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### Mission Objective:

- To open a portal of communications between the patient (Soldier) and clinician.
- To reinforce that the patient is normal for what he or she has been through.
- To allow the patient to understand the Causes of Combat Trauma (PTSD).
- *To bring the patient to an awareness of the conflict between the primordial and civilized sides of human nature.\**
- *To bring the patient to the awareness that War fighting requires the ability to “regress in the service of the ego” and utilize “instinctual” levels of behavior and when completed, appreciate the humanness of the totality of one's self.\**
- *To develop the understanding that the “monster” is the primordial part of our self that has been banished through the process of civilization and yet a necessary requirement in surviving War fighting.\**
- *To bring the patient (Soldier) to the realization that he or she has not only changed but will never return to the past and that in fact to return will only make the situation worse.\**
- *“Truth is the Key to resilience and restoration” \*. For Soldiers to recognize their new self and acknowledge their own strength and abilities (based upon a proven military skill set and the survival of war experiences) will thereby allow them successful reintegration into society.*

*(\*- quotes from Dr. Rossi)*

## Example Procedures Now in Use

### The first approach:

- Depending on the individual and where I determine they are in dealing with their PTSD issues, is to **read the book chapter by chapter**. Then we discuss how they feel they have been impacted by each chapter's topic.
- We then explore the correlation between the chapter's topic and how they feel about the same issue they face, or how they have been affected and how they are dealing with it at this time. The main point, is for the Veteran to develop an understanding that they have been affected and have the resources and the personal power to deal with the negative impact that war has had on them and in their lives.
- It is important the Veteran admits the ways they have been dealing with issues have not been helping them. Some individuals need to go over this repeatedly and others are able to comprehend it rapidly.
- One of the most important things that it is necessary for the Veteran to understand is that they are the catalyst for change and growth in their lives and they have to do the work to make that change occur.
- The Veteran needs to accept that they are capable of change and no one else is going to do it for them. They must be willing to make the efforts to help themselves get healthier, and use the tools and skills they have been introduced to. They must also accept that repetition is one of the most important aspects of success in this process, especially in internalizing the coping skills and tools.

### The Second Approach

- To have the Veteran read the entire book and then come back and discuss the insights gained; what they have learned about how PTSD has affected their lives and if they really want to make changes. I then have the Veteran outline what coping skills and tools they have learned from the book to make changes in their lives and how they are going to use them.
- It is important that they look at how they deal with things now and that these ways of doing things have not been working for them. This approach is used for a Veteran who is more intellectually capable and who has the ability to process things more on their own. It is also necessary to have this individual realize the importance of repetition and self-esteem enhancement for success.
- **The most important aspect of using this tool**, or any other tool, is to first gain and build the **Trust Bond** with the Veteran. Then help them realize they are capable of making change. And that change, although scary, will improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their families.

*(Submitted by a Combat Trauma Clinician (CTR) working with clients in the field with Veterans and Active Military)*

## **Additional Insights:**

An additional approach is by using the Audio Book version of the Warrior's Guide to introduce topics. Depending on the patient, a clinician may decide to provide a hard copy of the book as in the above CTR's approach. The Audio Book is available (free) on line at [www.sgtbrandi.com](http://www.sgtbrandi.com).

## **Defining Book Topics by Section**

### **Section One**

How we lose the innocence of youth through battle entering another world (or dimension) of reality, the Warriors World. How war changes us forever; the duties and responsibilities of a Warrior; how we develop a numbness to human worth; how we reach a point and we burn out; and how we deal with the loss of members from our Sacred Warrior Family.

### **Section Two**

Deals with readjustment to society, being aware of how our war experience will affect our lives and the society around us. How we feel like strangers in our own country, and how to deal with the pain we feel on multiple levels.

### **Section Three**

Explains how our reactions to war are normal for what we've been through. It explains what these reactions are and why we have such a difficult time in civilian society. We also discuss just who the enemy is now, and how to put things in perspective.

### **Section Four**

Focuses on getting help, controlling our feelings (which often end in violence) and discussing suicide, homicide and domestic violence.

### **Section Five**

Talks about our Medical Heroes, defines Combat Stress (PTSD) and discusses "why" it occurs. It defines the symptoms and suggests getting help. Here we also discuss the Gifts of War; this builds self-esteem, self worth.

### **Section Six**

Encourages the Troops on setting goals, where they go from here, and inspires them to succeed in life as productive citizens of society. This is important in developing a Vision for the Future; in military terms, a Mission Objective.

## Evaluating Effectiveness

This of course will vary between clinicians and facilities. The following is a composite of questions that have been used to evaluate and adjust approaches for therapy, trust building and communications:

- Requesting a written testimonial from the patient has been used for evaluation of how the patient related to the topics covered.
- A questionnaire has been used for evaluation. Questions are tailored to each clinician but examples are as follows:
  1. How did the stories in the book relate to your own experiences?
  2. Which topics did you identify most with?
    1. Killing the enemy
    2. Killing children
    3. Loss of friends
    4. Rage/Uncontrolled anger
    5. Need for that Adrenaline Rush of Combat
    6. Wanting to continue killing/looking for a victim
    7. Feeling abandoned when back stateside
    8. Need to cut the pain with alcohol and or drugs
    9. Feeling numb inside to all emotions
    10. Not trusting anyone
    11. Can't tell who the enemy is now
    12. No one understands me anymore
    13. Everyone is afraid of me now
    14. I'm in physical and mental pain
    15. Having flash backs and nightmares all the time
    16. Can't get close to my wife, kids or family anymore
    17. Am hyper-vigilant, waiting for a mortar round to go off any second.
    18. Can't drive my car, afraid of IEDs/Ambushes

## Additional Considerations for Discussions with Our Afghanistan and Iraq Troops

- **Primal Side of Human Nature:** Brain physiology and discussion of what emotions are involved. How the Primal Side is nurtured in boot camp, unleashed in battle in order to survive and then must be brought under control. Discuss Techniques/Tools for control in order to Re-Map the brain, bring the Primal Side under control.
- **The Warrior World and the Civilian World:** Understanding the conflict of these two worlds and how to cope with it. Discussions of the effects of conflict such as depression.
- **Killing:** The emotional impact of killing another human being. The issues of killing women and children. The moral dissonance (conflict) that occurs. The desire to continue killing. The Guilt over not ever killing enough of the enemy and why. Developing a sense of “It’s OK to feel bad about killing; that’s normal”. “You must in fact continue doing it, but it’s good to understand the emotions involved”.
- **Guilt:** The guilt over making a decision that ended in the death or injury of a fellow Warrior. Things you could have done but didn’t do. The guilt over feeling you didn’t have the ability to stop something that resulted tragically.
- **Survivor Guilt:** How it’s normal to feel guilty for being stateside while your unit is deployed. How it’s normal to feel guilty to be alive when your friends are dead. Why you didn’t get “Hit” when your friends did.
- **Loss:** How it’s normal to feel loss over the death of the best friends you’ve ever had. Stages of grieving need to be covered and explained in detail.
- **Death and Suicide:** Explain the obvious, how death is an accepted part of a Warrior’s Creed. How you feel cheated not to die when your fellow Soldier is killed. Understanding the normalcy of these feelings. Understanding the uniqueness of Suicide to a Warrior. Death before Dishonor. How it is not what your Brothers and Sisters want for you to end your life, and yet discuss the severe physical and emotional pain that goes along with war experiences. For some the pain is too great.
- **Trust:** The degrees and/or levels of Trust. How trust is earned and yet a high level of tolerance is needed in civilian life. Discuss methods of evaluating trust and establishing boundaries for self-protection.
- **Friendship:** Goes hand in hand with Trust, but this topic would discuss civilian friendship and especially address the family and/or relationships with others. Again discussing false expectations and self-defeating standards.
- **War Itself:** Discussing the atrocities of war. Participating in the atrocities of war. Mutilation and viciousness in battle. The effects of being in a foreign country, living in a life-threatening environment, watching death and destruction and never expecting to make it back alive.

- **The Anti-Climatic Return Home:** How to adapt to disappointment with family and previous friends. The feelings of not belonging to anything but the Military and Military Family Unit. Feelings of abandonment and how to cope with that.
- **Becoming a New Individual:** Using your Warrior Skills to adapt to civilian society and relying on your strength as a Warrior to overcome any problem without violence. Developing a Vision for the future and not expecting only to die in battle.
- **Substance Abuse:** Building upon the physiology discussions, an explanation of chemical abuse and dependency to escape from and kill pain brought on by Combat; self-medication. Note: This is tailored to the client/patient.

*Note: Additional references and testimonial are available upon request.*

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