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Re : Trauma First Aide

Dear Doctor,

As a psychiatrist who has been primarily in community general hospital based practice for 40 years, I hav

e seen many approaches to the management of both acute and chronic traumatic stress disorders. Certainly, there is a multiplicity of choices for the treatment of Post Traumatic Stress disorder, but I have seen little in the way of approaches to the management of Acute Stress Disorders. This has become a more critical issue as we have become more aware of war related trauma and trauma resulting from natural and man made disasters.

Recently, I was introduced to a new modality for the management of Acute Traumatic Stress which is called Trauma First Aide. Its name is appropriate since it does not fall into the range of psychotherapy or other longer term modalities, but is focused on an awareness of signs of sympathetic autonomic arousal and methods to help the dysregulated nervous system shift into a parasympathetic mode which, then, enables the person to resume a more normal pattern of neural activation and relaxation. The practitioner not only uses the technique with the patient, but also teaches it, thus giving the patient, himself, the ability to recognize when he is stuck in a hyperarousal state and some tools to begin re-regulating his own autonomic state. This may be extremely useful in the prevention of the "hard wiring" of hyperarousal that is believed to be a key factor in the development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders.

The techniques are quite straight forward and do not stray from being a crisis intervention modality.

I believe that Trauma First Aide would be an invaluable addition to the treatment armamentarium of any healthcare providers working in acute situations, such as Emergency Rooms, community and hospital based Crisis Intervention Units, Critical Care Units, and Psychiatric Units that treat acute psychiatric disorders as well as Rapid Response Teams.

I will be happy to discuss this exciting and very practical training course with you. Feel free to contact me at the above contact points.

Sincerely yours,

Jay Holtzman

Jay H. Holtzman, MD