

Psychiatric Issues and Defense Base Act Claims

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The Effects of Changes in DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria
as it pertains to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder on Defense Base Act Claims

Criteria for DSM-IVR Posttraumatic Stress Disorder with changes now in effect with DSM5

- a. **The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:**
1. **The person experienced, (witnessed, or was confronted with) in person or learn of violent or accidental trauma of close family or friend or have had repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details such as a first responder. Watching on TV or in media do not count unless it is part of your job an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the (physical integrity of self or others). Changed to sexual violence**
 2. **(The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.) This requirement was deleted.**

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The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:

- a. Recurrent and intrusive distressing memories. **(B.1.)**
- b. Recurrent distressing dreams of the event. **(B.2.)**
- c. Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (i.e. flashbacks). **(B.3.)**
- d. Intense psychological distress at experiences that symbolize or resemble the traumatic event. **(B.4.)**
- e. **Marked** Physiological reactivity with exposure to events that symbolize or resemble aspects of the traumatic event. **(B.5.)**

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Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of the general responsiveness as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

1. Efforts to avoid thoughts feelings or conversations associated with the trauma. (C.1.)
2. Efforts to avoid activities, places or people that arouse, recollection of the trauma. (C.2.)
3. Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma. (D.1.)
4. Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities. (D.5.)

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Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of the general responsiveness as indicated by three (or more) of the following (cont.):

1. Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others. (D.6.)
2. Restricted range of affect (i.e. unable to have loving feelings). Persistent inability to experience positive emotions. (D.7.)
3. (A sense of foreshortened future.) Changed to persistent and exaggerated negative beliefs about self, others, and world. (D.2.)

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Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of the general responsiveness as indicated by three (or more) of the following (cont.):

- i. Persistent distorted cognitions about the cause or consequences of the traumatic event(s) that lead the individual to blame self or others. (D.3.)**
- ii. Persistent negative emotional state (i.e. fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame.) (D.4.)**

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- 1. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal as indicated by two (or more) of the following:**
 1. Difficulty falling or staying asleep. (or restless sleep) (E.6)
 2. Irritability or outbursts of anger. (E.1.)
 3. Difficulty concentrating. (E.5.)
 4. Hypervigilance. (E.3.)
 5. Exaggerated startle response. (E.4.)
 6. Reckless or self-destructive behaviors (E.2.)

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The duration of disturbances must be for more than one month (F)

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The disturbances must cause clinically significant distress or impairment in life (G)

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**(H) The disturbance is not attributable to the
physiological effects of a substance or medical condition.**

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IN SUMMARY:

**There does not need to be a response of intense fear, helplessness
or horror.**

Re-experiencing criteria are the same.

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IN SUMMARY:

Avoidance criteria have been broadened to include:

- (1) A wider range of negative beliefs,**
- (2) The addition of distorted cognitions about cause and affect of the traumatic event leading to blame of self or others,**
- (3) The addition of negative emotional states.**

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IN SUMMARY:

Increased arousal symptoms have been broadened to include:

- (1) Restless sleep**
- (2) Reckless or self-destructive behaviors**

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IN SUMMARY:

The new criteria for diagnosis are less strict. More individuals will meet DSM5 criteria than met DSM IVR criteria.

1. Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

1. Things to look for in Psychiatric claims

2. The importance of a thorough examination report in a War Hazards Act Application

1. Psychiatric referral problems