

DRAFT RESOLUTION 20-09

SUBJECT: Post-Traumatic Growth

SOURCE: OH, AK, IN, IL, MO, ND, CT, DC, PA, NC, WA, MA, MI

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), the veteran suicide rate has increased steadily every year since 2001 and is especially high among 18-24 year old OEF/OIF/OND combat veterans; and

WHEREAS, the current approach to mental health care is limited and flawed by focusing on pharmacotherapy and symptomatic treatment, resulting in countless veterans reporting frustration with overmedication, addiction, overdoses, side-effects and ineffectiveness of medications; and

WHEREAS, AMVETS supports complementary and alternative treatments that are not considered to be standard in the current practice of western medicine; and

WHEREAS, many veterans have had their personal or professional lives directly or indirectly impacted by the misconceptions and perceived issues of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, this problem is clearly linked to stigma as it is a compounded assumption that every combat veteran with PTSD is a ‘damaged hero’; and

WHEREAS, post-traumatic growth (PTG) is a theory that explains the phenomenon of positive personal change that emerges in the aftermath of a traumatic experience; and

WHEREAS, PTG can be reflected by positive adjustment, closer relationships, greater appreciation of life and improved self-efficacy; and

WHEREAS, non-profit organizations across the country have designed non-clinical programs designed to cultivate and facilitate post-traumatic growth amongst veterans struggling with PTSD and/or combat stress; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted on participants of these program have shown dramatic improvements in PTSD, depression, anxiety and insomnia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that AMVETS seek to promote and instill ‘post-traumatic growth’ rather than the narrative which is heavily embedded in American society that veterans return from war as ‘broken heroes’; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, that AMVETS urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to collaborate with non-profit mental health organizations that implement programs designed to cultivate and facilitate post-traumatic growth amongst those struggling with posttraumatic stress disorder and/or combat stress to prevent suicide among veterans.

Committee Recommendations:

Veterans Suicide Awareness Committee: Did not review

VAVS & VA Hospital and Medical Services, Rehabilitation Benefits Committee: Adopt

Floor Action: ADOPTED