

SESSION 1A

T: Camille, now I need to ask you about traumatic experiences you have had inside and outside the military.

C: I've been through all this already—can't you just read it in my chart?!

[At first, C looks very worried, and then she begins to look a bit more relieved.]

T: I'm glad you asked me that. I have reviewed your chart, and I know you told Dr. Jones some things about traumatic military experiences and in your psychosocial assessment there are some references to childhood trauma. I want to make sure I have an accurate understanding of what happened. Please take this as an opportunity to add to anything or correct any information from your evaluation. The purpose of the treatment is to address these events and all of the problems they have been creating for you, including PTSD. So, I am going to ask you some questions, and I don't need you to go into a lot of detail. In fact, if you try to go into too much detail I may even stop you. If I do that, it's not because I don't care, it's because I am going to help you tell me your story in a way that feels safe.

C: Ok.

T: First, let's focus on childhood events. As a child, did you experience any physical abuse?

C: No.

T: I see in your chart you reported that your mother used to spank you with a belt.

C: Yeah, but it was pretty common in those days. Nowadays she might be arrested, but when I was growing up, it was pretty typical.

T: Ok. Did anyone else ever hit, punch, or kick you when you were a child?

C: No.

T: As a child, were you ever sexually abused?

C: Yes, my uncle. He's a rat bastard. And it just kills me how he won't even admit anything is wrong. And my Mom, let me tell you what she...

T: (interrupting) Camille, I'm going to stop you there because we need to stay focused on the assessment right now. We will definitely talk about this event in more detail later. For now, the goal is to make sure the summary of your experiences is correct. Alright? How old were you when your uncle sexually abused you?

C: Started when I was 7 and ended when I was about 9.

T: Ok, thanks. We don't need to go into a lot of details now about what happened, but I need to know approximately how often it happened.

C: Well, once a month my mom would go visit him and take me with her. That's when it happened. So it was once a month for a few years.

T: ok, thanks Camille. That's all I need to know about that.

T: Tell me about any other sexually traumatic things that happened to you as a kid.

C: I never told anyone this. But my neighbor made me touch his penis once.

T: How old were you when that happened?

C: I was 8. I was so relieved that month because my mom canceled her trip to my awful uncle. And I was just having fun, playing at my neighbor's house when he did that to me!

T: Well I'm glad you told me that. Did he do anything else, or did you do anything to him that time or any other time?

C: (crying now). No. I tried to avoid going over there after that.

T: Are there any other sexual traumas in childhood I should know about?

C: no.

[T gives C a box of Kleenex. C blows her nose.]

T: Ok, you are doing just fine. Let's move on. As a child, were you ever emotionally abused?

C: That's called being a parent in my family.

T: What do you mean?

C: My mom used to yell at me and tell me I was no good.

[T is warm and empathic, yet directive.]

T: Did anyone else who took care of you do that too?

C: No, just her.

T: Ok Camille. Take a breath. You are doing a great job.

[T and C take a deep breath together and then proceed.]

T: Now we're going to move on to things that happened in adulthood.

C: Well, I'm sure you can see that I reported military sexual trauma.

T: Yes, I did see that. Please tell me briefly what happened.

C: My life was taken away from me, that's what happened.

[T nods reassuringly, encouraging her to continue.]

T: Camille, I read in your chart that your CO raped you.

C: Yes, that's what happened. I had just gotten to Iraq and everything was crazy. I thought he was being nice to me, and looking out for me. But turns out he had other plans.

T: What exactly did he do?

C: (crying) He forced me to have sex with him. And he told me that if I told anyone, he'd make my life a living hell. As if it weren't already a living hell. But I didn't tell anyone. Not until Dr. Jones.

[T and C take a deep breath together and then proceed.]

T: Camille, I am so glad you came forward with this, and I am going to make sure you get the treatment you deserve. Right now, I want you to take another deep breath, because we just have a few more questions and then we are done.

C: Ok.

[T takes a warm yet directive tone.]

T: I also read in your chart that you were exposed to mortar attacks and witnessed two IED explosions while you were there.

C: Yeah, that's right.

T: Were you physically injured?

C: No, somehow I never was. But I saw soldiers and civilians who were injured and bloody.

T: Ok. Is there anything else that would be important for me to know?

C: No, that's it. Can you believe that the worst part is the betrayal from my CO? We were supposed to support each other. People died.

[T smiles reassuringly at C]

T: I can believe it Camille. And I want you to know that I have worked with other veterans who have dealt with similar things. You are not alone in this. And, I am here to help you learn skills to deal with how all this has affected you. I want you to know that I have experience with veterans with PTSD, and treatment can be successful.

T: We are all done here. You got through it! And before we stop today, we are going to figure out how to take care of yourself for the rest of the day. It's exhausting to talk about traumatic experiences, and you did a great job.