



HEALTH

Invisible wounds

Everything seemed fine at first. After serving 15 months in Iraq, Carlo was happy to be home. It was great to be back with family, surfing, and working in the family business. But six months after his return, the dreams started.

While Carlo came home uninjured, many of his friends weren't so fortunate. On one patrol, Carlo's unit was ambushed and his best friend was killed. Every night for the past month, Carlo has relieved the experience in his dreams. He wakes in a cold sweat and out of breath, overwhelmed with feelings of fear, sadness, powerlessness, and anger. Lately he has had trouble focusing

at work as he can't stop thinking about the incident. When news of the war comes on television, Carlo will change the channel or walk out of the room. More than once a loud noise has made Carlo jump, and one time he even dove to the ground to take cover. Carlo's wife is beginning to complain that he is "distant" and "aloof." Carlo finds himself becoming increasingly irritable and short-tempered with his children.

Carlo is not alone. According to Lieutenant Commander and Navy psychologist Dr. Erick Bacho, approximately 30% of returning soldiers experience significant mental health concerns. More than half of those, like Carlo, experience symp-

toms of post-traumatic stress. Since the Civil War, health professionals have noted the mental and emotional effects of war on soldiers. Terms such as "shell shock," "combat fatigue," and most recently, "post-traumatic stress," have been used to describe an invisible emotional wound that can be just as debilitating as physical injury. Post-traumatic stress can follow an experience in which a person feels terrified, powerless, or at risk of severe harm or death. Individuals suffering with post-traumatic stress try to avoid thinking or talking their experiences. Despite their efforts, they may be flooded by thoughts, images, and overwhelming feelings triggered by even the slightest reminder of the trauma. They may startle easy, have trouble relaxing, or feel the need to check over their shoulder. Feelings of anxiety, nightmares, or "flashbacks," - in which they feel like they are reliving an experience while fully awake- can begin to take over their lives.

War veterans experiencing post-

You'RE NOT ALONE



DR. BRAD KLONTZ

Clinical psychologist

not want to upset those they love with disturbing details, may feel guilt about what they did or did not do, or may fear being misunderstood or judged by those who can't relate to their experiences.

Research has shown that psychotherapy can help Carlo heal. Providing Carlo with a safe place to confront the details of his traumatic experiences and process the associ-

ated thoughts and unresolved emotions can relieve him of his symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Unfortunately, according to Dr. Bacho, less than half of returning soldiers who experience mental health problems seek mental health services. It is difficult to return to a normal life. It is difficult with their family, friends, or coworkers. They may

traumatic stress often find it difficult to return to a normal life. It is difficult with their family, friends, or coworkers. They may

not want to upset those they love with disturbing details, may feel guilt about what they did or did not do, or may fear being misunderstood or judged by those who can't relate to their experiences. Research has shown that psychotherapy can help Carlo heal. Providing Carlo with a safe place to confront the details of his traumatic experiences and process the associated thoughts and unresolved emotions can relieve him of his symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Unfortunately, according to Dr. Bacho, less than half of returning soldiers who experience mental health problems seek mental health services. It is difficult to return to a normal life. It is difficult with their family, friends, or coworkers. They may

Regardless of one's political views, Carlo, and all other returning soldiers have answered their country's call to service. They have volunteered to put themselves in harm's way to serve their friends, families, and communities. Now as friends, families, and community members, it is our turn to serve them.

Dr. Brad Klontz is the 2007 President-Elect of the Hawaii Psychological Association and coauthor of *The Financial Wisdom of Ebenezer Scrooge*. He can be reached by e-mail at brad@klontzcoaching.com. For free, confidential referrals to a psychologist in your area, contact HPA online at www.hawaiipsych.org or call (808) 521-8995.

\$1.00 off per croc per customer till 9/30/07
Kbrsp-07

Not good with any other discount offer

Sole Mates
Island Style Footwear
Coconut Marketplace

★★★★★

crocs™

\$1.00 off

Check Us Out ✓

solemates808.com 808-822-2180

Mahalo for Voting Us Best Mortgage Company
Kauai's Full Service Mortgage Resource!

 Veronica Lovesy Principal Broker	 Judy Kempf Broker-in Charge	 Liliana Starinieri St. Loan Officer	 Heather Arellanes Processor
--	---	---	---

Service with Aloha 7 days a week! Visit our website to pre-qualify.
We can help you make your dream of owning a home in Paradise...a reality!

Creative Capital Mortgage

Harbor Mall • 3501 Rice St., Suite #202 • Lihue, HI 96766
(808) 246-1787 office • (808) 246-1784 FAX
www.ccm-loans.com

COLDWELL BANKER
Previews
INTERNATIONAL

Kauai's Leading Real Estate Office

826-7244

BALI HAI REALTY

5-5088 Kuhio Hwy., Hanalei, Kauai, HI 96714
Email: info@balihai.com • Website: www.balihai.com
Each office is independently owned and operated.

Bali Hai TV Show: Channel 10