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Research Week Abstract

**Warrior Health: A Study of Female Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Symptoms Who Engage in Outdoor Adventure Recreation**

The purpose of this study was to show the impact of outdoor adventure recreation on female veterans who have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A thorough review of the literature revealed the absence of research in this area. The study followed a phenomenological approach in order to gain an overall view of what the veterans experienced, using observation and interviews in order to gather information. The sample included three female veterans from three different military backgrounds. Observation took place on a four-day white water rafting trip down the Colorado River, while interview data was collected at the midway point of the trip and within a month following the end of the trip. Results were determined by considering the whole of the trip and comparing interview answers. These results showed female veterans desire female-veteran-only activities; desire relationships with fellow female veterans; and enjoy outdoor adventure recreation that includes teamwork, planned activities, and relaxation. Based on the research, it can be concluded that relationships are vital to female veterans and are greatly encouraged through outdoor adventure recreation. It was also concluded that trips including only female veterans would be the most conducive to experiencing the greatest amount of healing. Those who are unable to gain access to outdoor adventure recreation may experience similar benefits by taking part in therapy that integrates nature. In order to ensure the best possible avenue for PTSD health in female veterans, future research may include a focus on the impact of repeatable trips, more interviews over an extended period of

time, as well as, how outdoor adventure recreation is perceived and accepted by different sample groups of female veterans.