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Emotional Triggers and the Learning Crisis Among Veterans

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine how emotional triggers can significantly influence cognitive processes and may serve as a key factor contributing to learning difficulties. Drawing on the research of Ben Haim et al. (2013), Sensen Song (2017), Ashley et al. (2013), and Compton et al. (2003), I argue that emotional stimuli can disrupt attention, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. These effects are particularly pronounced among military veterans, who are frequently exposed to emotionally charged or trauma-related cues that elicit heightened emotional responses.

Despite growing awareness of PTSD and combat-related stress, there remains a significant gap in research specifically addressing how emotional interference impacts learning and adaptation in post-military life. This oversight may hinder the development of effective educational and reintegration strategies. Veterans often face challenges with emotional self-regulation and cognitive control, which can negatively affect academic or vocational training outcomes.

This issue is increasingly relevant in light of the growing number of armed conflicts and war-affected individuals in the 21st century. As the global landscape continues to evolve, it is essential for psychological research and practice to more directly engage with the intersection of emotion, cognition, and learning—particularly in populations vulnerable to the long-term effects of emotional trauma.

Keywords: emotional triggers, cognitive processes, learning difficulties, ptsd, emotional interference, military veterans, trauma-related cues, attention disruption, working memory, cognitive flexibility, emotional self-regulation, cognitive control, educational reintegration, combat-related stress, emotion and learning