



Veteran Warns Open Carry Could Trigger PTSD

By Kaci Jones / kjones@kmid.tv / Published 01/06 2016 06:17PM / Updated 01/07 2016 09:41PM

ODESSA, Texas (Local 2 News)

One veteran asking local businesses to rethink open carry in their establishments.

Veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder may be sensitive to certain triggers which remind them of life on the battle field.

For Art Leal, he wants people to know one trigger could be a gun. He explains now that the state passed open carry, some could suffer in silence.

"A lot of times the gun itself will stress the veteran," Leal said.

Experts say one in five veterans experience PTSD after the battlefield.

"They have rapid heart beat, they feel very anxious and can't function," Leal said.

Leal served in the U.S. Army for eight years, now he tells us he suffers from PTSD and explains weapons in plain sight could bring back undesirable memories.

"Many vets go into a restaurant and they're already on hyper alert," Leal said. "They'll sit at the furthest end of the room making sure they have a clear view of the exit."

Leal says combining a gun with their already uncomfortable feelings could negatively impact the vet.

"Adding an open carry individual; coming in the veteran doesn't know who they are or what their intentions are," Leal said.

Dr. Sudip Bose treats many patients with PTSD, the expert tells us the disorder could effect a person's fight or flight response.

"Sometimes that switch flips when it shouldn't be flipped," Bose said.

PTSD cannot be seen but the wounds on the inside are deep.

"The mental scars and the mental recognition people have from that traumatic event the battle field and can go on for years and years," Bose said.

Those scars are the reason why Leal's passes out small cards to businesses allowing open carry. He wants to remind them and gun owners he suffers from PTSD and open carry could be a trigger for him or others with the condition.

"It's everyone's right to bear arms and we're 100 percent for concealed carry," Leal said. "Be considerate of those individuals that may have a stressor or trigger if someone is open carrying."

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