

JUST THE FACTS:

Where to Get Help

Some individuals find it difficult to ask for help; however, it isn't necessary to struggle alone. When a person is experiencing a depression, others are affected, also, in the home and even in the work setting. So taking care of oneself also has the added benefit of taking care of others.

Myths About Getting Help

It is common for Service Members to have the concern that seeking mental health services will hurt their career. Some think that they will be seen as weak or unable to perform their duties. Here are the facts:

- “Getting help will affect my career.”
 - Service Members are more likely to get in trouble if they *don't* seek help, because not getting help makes problems worse. This can result in negative behavior towards co-workers and poor work performance, which can cause other problems between a Service Member and his or her leaders.
- “My leaders will have access to my mental health records.”
 - True. Information between a doctor and a Service Member becomes part of the Service Member's medical record and is available to commanding officers upon their request. But in most cases, confidentiality is maintained between a chaplain or providers at a Military Treatment Facility and the person seeking help. Chaplains and other service providers should explain the limits of confidentiality or privacy to a Service Member. If they don't, just ask.
- “My service records will show my mental health information.”
 - Military service records don't contain mental health information unless the Service Member was found unfit or unsuitable for military duty.
- “My command discourages me from getting help.”
 - There are local community resources available (see below) for Service Members if they feel uncomfortable going through the military. Service Members and their unit will benefit if they seek and receive help for their problems before they get worse and risk lives and military readiness.

Where You Can Get Help:

- ***An installation's support services can provide information and support.*** Support services include a chaplain, a Military Treatment Facility, and family advocacy programs and family centers. Phone numbers can be found in the installation's military directory.
- ***Talk to command.*** Check in with a leader about how to handle a stressful situation before the situation gets out of control. Keeping leadership informed is good practice.

after deployment

- **Make an appointment with a primary care provider (PCP).** Ask the PCP about available treatment options, and a referral to a mental health practitioner if that is indicated.
- **MilitaryOneSource.** MilitaryOneSource provides brief counseling to active duty military personnel and their families, including Reservists and the National Guard. (1-800-342-9647; www.militaryonesource.com)
- **T*A*P*S** (The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) is a nonprofit Veterans Service Organization that has a wide range of free services to all those affected by the death of a loved one in the armed forces. 1-800-959-TAPS (1-800-959-8277) or www.TAPS.org
- **Vet Centers** offer readjustment counseling for veterans and their families. Vet Center staff is available toll free at 1-800-905-4675 (Eastern) and 1-866-496-8838 (Pacific) www.vetcenter.va.gov
- **Veteran Affairs Resources.** VA medical centers and Vet Centers provide veterans with affordable mental health services. Health insurance companies cover costs, or services cost little or nothing, according to a veteran's ability to pay. The VA Medical Center system's specialized PTSD clinics and programs can provide educational information and diagnostic evaluations concerning PTSD to eligible veterans. Following deployment to a combat zone after discharge, veterans who have enrolled for VA services are qualified for two years of care for conditions potentially related to their service. www.va.gov.
- **Local community services** can include crisis centers, mental health centers, or suicide prevention centers.
- **Suicide Hotlines:** The national suicide prevention lifeline is available 24-hours. **1-800-273-TALK** (1-800-273-8255) or **1-800-SUICIDE** (1-800-784-2433). Both suicide hotlines will connect the caller to a certified crisis center nearest to the location from where the call is placed. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- **Find mental health providers locally.** Check out: http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/ppc/prof_search.php

Remember: when in doubt or when the symptoms are ongoing and serious, it is best to seek out in-person professional consultation with a primary care physician or mental health professional.