

WASHINGTON STATE PTSD COUNSELING PROGRAM

Since 1984, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has maintained a unique outpatient counseling program designed to provide confidential counseling services to men and women veterans with war and deployment readjustment and PTSD treatment needs.

The special role of the WDVA PTSD Program is to offer treatment, support and other assistance that would otherwise be denied to Washington residents. Licensed mental health professionals offer a wide range of specialized treatment services, as well as linkages to a variety of other services.

Services are provided by over thirty licensed professionals throughout the state. All providers are veterans or are trained to be military and veteran culturally competent. The WDVA PTSD Program serves military and veteran families, and understands the unique challenges that they have experienced.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PTSD AND POST-DEPLOYMENT STRESS

- Startle reactions to noise or movement
- Problems driving on highways
- Avoidance of crowds
- Hyper alert to threats to self or loved ones
- Sleep problems, troubling dreams, and nightmares
- Guilt, depression, anger
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Not connected to former friends and family
- Problems controlling anger
- Concentration and memory problems
- Substance abuse and self-medication
- Missing the mission and unit members
- Thoughts of self harm or suicide

Call 1-800-562-2308
www.dva.wa.gov
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WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR WDVA'S PTSD COUNSELING PROGRAM?

The PTSD Program is primarily structured to address the special needs of combat and war exposed veterans, Washington National Guard, and Military Reserves. WDVA realizes that all veterans who have served during our nation's wars may have a need to be seen by a counselor. All honorably discharged men and women, wartime veterans, and family members-including veterans of WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, Desert Storm, GWOT, and the various periods of conflict and peacekeeping operations-are eligible for counseling services. If there is a question about eligibility, please contact the program director for more information.

NORMAL REACTIONS, RESILIENCY AND STIGMA

All who have experienced war, frequent deployments, and combat stress, should understand that stress reactions are normal and may need time and professional help to adjust to one's personal *new normal* way of being. Learning to be resilient and living a full life requires the courage to deal with issues. Some veterans make the mistake of letting stigma to counseling control their actions, which can make problems bigger and life much more difficult.

WHAT IS PTSD?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of a traumatic event. A traumatic event is a life-threatening event such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or physical or sexual assault in adult or childhood. Traumatic events and other life-threatening experiences have always been a part of human experience.

We now know that traumatic events may create change in the survivor psychologically, biologically and socially. Multiple traumatic experiences can complicate recovery, and often increase the reluctance to seek help.

It is now apparent that the culture, the times, the nature of the veteran's homecoming, the war's outcome, as well as many other factors influence the way trauma reactions are expressed. Untreated, trauma reactions and PTSD are highly predictive of physical illness, disrupted family life, and reduced academic and career performance.

WILL TIME HEAL PTSD?

We believe that the sooner treatment is initiated, the better the outcome for long term health. Time alone will not make PTSD go away, and those who wait often adapt in ways that may continue long term difficulties. The use of alcohol or drugs, risk taking behaviors and avoidance, may only increase the intensity of symptoms and delay resolution.

HOW DO I FIND A COUNSELOR?

- Call 1-800-562-2308 or 360-725-2220
- Go to www.dva.wa.gov and click on PTSD & War Trauma Counseling.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES:

- Consultation to Mental Health Centers
- Programs and support to educators of school age children of trauma exposed parents
- Military/Veteran culture trainings
- Presentations to community colleges, technical schools, and universities

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WDVA PTSD Counseling Program

**A PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES
COUNSELING SERVICES TO
MILITARY VETERANS, ACTIVE
DUTY WAR VETERANS, AND
THEIR FAMILIES**

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