

# WHAT IS PTSD?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can occur following the experience or witnessing of a traumatic event. A traumatic event is often life-threatening such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or physical or sexual assault.

Stressful and traumatic events may change the survivor psychologically, biologically, and socially. In addition, the duration of frequency of traumatic experiences can complicate recovery and often increase the reluctance to seek help.

Military culture, the nature of the Veteran's homecoming, the war's outcome, and many other factors influence how trauma reactions are expressed. However, 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. 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?

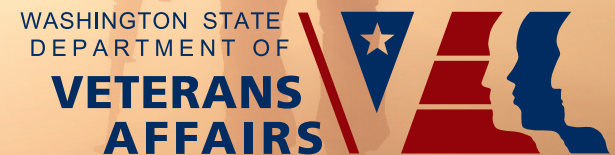
- Call 1-800-562-2308
- Go to [dva.wa.gov](http://dva.wa.gov) and click on Counseling
- Contact the Counselor in your area to schedule an appointment.

## ADDITIONAL SERVICES:

- Consultation to Mental Health Providers and 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.

**VETERANS CRISIS LINE:**  
**DIAL 988 (THEN PRESS 1)**

# WASHINGTON STATE COUNSELING PROGRAM



*"Serving Those Who Served"*

**1-800-562-2308**  
[www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov)

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**WWW.DVA.WA.GOV**

# WA. STATE COUNSELING PROGRAM

Our unique, no cost, clinical outpatient program provides confidential counseling services to people who have served in the United State military and their family members.

Licensed mental health professionals in communities across the state offer a wide range of specialized treatment services and linkages to other services.

Some providers are Veterans and all are trained to be military and Veteran culturally competent. The WDVA Counseling Program serves Veterans and their family members and understands the unique challenges they have experienced.

## ELIGIBILITY

» Someone who has served in the United State military, including the Washington National Guard, Reserve, and Coast Guard.

If there is a question about eligibility, please contact us by email, phone, or in person for more information.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- ☐ 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, nightmares, and night terrors
- ☐ Guilt, shame, depression, and 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

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## NORMAL REACTIONS, RESILIENCY, STIGMA, AND GROWTH

All who have experienced difficulties from serving in the military should understand that their stress reactions are normal and may require time and professional support to adjust to a new way of being.

Being resilient and living a full life requires courage to deal with personal problems. Unfortunately, some Veterans make the mistake of letting the stigma of counseling control their actions, which can cause larger problems and make life more difficult. Some of our contracted counselors are Veterans and have walked in your shoes. They can be a guide on your recovery and possible Post-Traumatic Growth.

**DVACounselingProgram**  
**@dva.wa.gov**

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