# The Mental Health Connection

## *Engaging in Mental Health Care During a Pandemic*

### We Are Here for You

Did you know studies have found **telehealth** (therapy over video) to be **equally** effective as face to face appointments in addressing major mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, and PTSD? Mental health services at the Phoenix VA are still being offered to you by phone or video appointments. **To learn more about how to engage in therapy from your own home call (602) 222-2752 to make an appointment.**

### Help is Here: Your Personal COVID Coach
***Spotlight on VA Mental Health Smartphone Apps***

Looking for quick and simple way to manage your mental health during this pandemic? The new VA smartphone app COVID Coach was designed specifically to help you manage your mental health during these trying times. The VA offers this app, and many others, for free for you to download directly from the App Store onto your smartphone or tablet. These resources are an excellent way to learn more and practice self-guided learning from your own home! Our top picks for VA apps to boost your mental health are listed on the right.

For a full list of free VA apps for your mental health visit: **https://www.mobile.va.gov/appstore.**

## *Important Resources*

**To Schedule a Mental Health Appointment Call (602) 222-2752**

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

**Chat online with a counselor**
To Text the Veterans Crisis Line: 838255

**Vets4Warriors Peer Support Hotline:**
1-855-838-8255
www.Vets4Warriors.com

**Maricopa County Warm Line:**
602-347-1100

**VA Mental Health Smartphone Apps:**
https://www.mobile.va.gov/appstore
COVID Coach
Breathe2Relax
Mindfulness Coach
Mood Coach
PTSD Coach
PTSD Family Coach (For family members)
Pain Coach
CBT-I Coach (for sleep issues)
MOVE
Virtual Hope Box (remind good things in life)

**Disaster Distress Helpline**
**Visit**: https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness
Call 1-800-985-5990
or text TalkWithUs to 66746

## Tips for Surviving Stay at Home Orders:

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. It's normal for people to feel an increase in emotions, including anxiety, depression, worry, fear, loneliness, or frustration/anger, during times of change when there are many unknowns. If you are concerned about these symptoms, please reach out to your healthcare provider for assistance. Read on for more ways to practice self-care during these times!

**Ways to support yourself:**

Is watching or reading the news getting you tense, stressed, or irritable? Consider ***"Unplugging"*** for a mini ***tech-cleanse.*** Give yourself a break from the news or see if you can limit the number of times you view it per day.

- Set boundaries – Be willing to let others know if certain topics are ***triggers*** for you right now. Give them options of other topics you are more comfortable talking about.
- Take a "time out" if you're getting irritable with others in your household. Go for a walk, take a bath, or do an activity that takes your mind off things for a little while before revisiting the subject.
- Stay positive, keep your hopes up, and talk to people who help you put things in perspective.

**Using Technology**

- Connect with others – Schedule phone or video "virtual meet-ups" with friends and family
- Reach out to your doctor by sending a secure message on **MyHealtheVet** or call to make a phone or video appointment. To register for MyHealthevet: (https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/user-registration)
- Consider joining virtual groups on social media or other online communities to build new social supports and reconnect with existing ones
- Schedule a "virtual reunion" with friends or family

## Senior Help Line:
## Call 602-264-4357

A 24/7 help line for seniors (65+) unable to access groceries. Helps to match seniors who can't leave their homes with volunteers to get them groceries.

*You're not alone. In the past year, 28,766 Veterans were served by the Phoenix VA in mental health. If you are in need, don't hesitate to reach out. We are here for you*!

**Tech Support for your VA Video Telehealth Appointments:**

National Telehealth Technology Help Desk
866 651-3180 or (703) 234-4483.

My healthevet
My Health, My Care: 24/7 Online Access to VA

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

**Reputable sources of info on COVID-19**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention http://www.cdc.gov

World Health Organization http:/www.who.int/en

## Follow Us on Social Media:

Click each link to join the Phoenix VA page