



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Phoenix VA Health Care System

June 2020

The Mental Health Connection

Keeping you in the know about all things

Mental Health at the Phoenix VA

Did you know?

The VA offers readjustment services for Veterans!



The Transition and Care Management Program addresses the transition and readjustment needs of Service Members and Veterans as they return from deployment and/or transition from DoD health care system to the VA health care system. This may include formal case management, combat related TBI evaluation, and mental health services, with a focus on transition concerns, comprised of medication management and therapy services. Veterans interested in learning more about the TCM program can contact the Amethyst Clinic at 602-277-5551 ext 6750 or attend one of the orientation groups at either the Main Campus (First Thursday of each month at 1400 in the Amethyst Clinic) or the Southeast CBOC (First Tuesday of each month at 1400 in the Audiology Clinic).

Diversity

The impacts of race-based trauma and stress have been linked to mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and substance use disorders, as well as increased risk of developing certain medical conditions. Repeated or on-going experiences of discrimination can begin to impact an individual's overall quality of life, concentration, sleep, and/or relationships. Sometimes witnessing others you identify with undergoing mistreatment or injustice can trigger similar feelings. Discrimination can take many forms. It may be expressed in obvious outward ways, or even more subtle or implied ways, such as microaggressions, that leave a person feeling confused and unsure how to understand what happened. If the impact of race-based trauma, stress, or discrimination have been negatively impacting your mental health, reach out to us to make a video appointment today. The Phoenix VA has several evidence-based treatments to help you build on the resilience and strength you already have that has helped you overcome what you have faced while expanding your toolbox of resources, skills, and support. Contact your mental health provider if you are interested in participating in our Race-Based Stress and Resiliency Group (RSR Group).

Suicide Prevention Takes Everyone

Veterans Crisis Line:

1-800-273-8255 and Press 1

Online chat at:

<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

Text: 838255

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!

Important Resources

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



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

Caregiver Support Group

The Phoenix VA offers a program called iHI-FIVES Caregiver Support. We invite caregivers of Veterans with cognitive impairment, as well as and Veterans who are caregivers for a loved one, to attend. The 4-week program is designed to help caregivers learn new skills, practice positive self-care, connect with other caregivers, and navigate VA and other community resources. Please note that if the care recipient is a Veteran, they may accompany their caregiver for engagement in a recreation therapy activity during group time. For further information or to sign up, ask your Primary Care team or contact Dr. Lindsay Tracy at ext. 6794

Ask Your Mental Health Provider:

FAQ's: Why take medications for my mental health

Dr. Claudine Egol, M.D. Writes...

Depression, Anxiety and PTSD are medical problems, just like hypertension, diabetes and reflux disease. Symptoms of these conditions can have a tremendous impact on an individual's daily life and overall functioning. Antidepressants and other psychotropic medications can help people achieve their goals and manage symptoms. The medications typically prescribed in psychiatry have been well-studied and found to be effective for various mood and anxiety disorders. As with all medications, there are potential side effects, but most will resolve with continued use. Talk with your psychiatrist regarding possible risks and benefits before starting any new medication.

Research Corner

Did you know that at least 50% of U.S. military veterans have chronic pain? Pain can reduce function and increase depression and other distress. A 2019 analysis of 21 research studies confirmed that two ways to help people better manage daily pain are cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). The researchers found that both can help reduce pain intensity and depression and increase physical function. The Phoenix VA offers CBT for chronic pain as well as several versions of MBSR, in addition to other research-supported therapy for chronic pain. Ask your Phoenix VA medical or mental health provider for more information or a referral.

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

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.

Tech Support for your VA Video Telehealth Appointments:

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



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What's New in Psychiatry

Phoenix VA in collaboration with Barrow's Neurological Institute is doing a neuroimaging study looking at male Veterans between the age of 22-39 who are not on any psychiatric medications and are not using any substances except minimal use of Alcohol or Cannabis. We are looking for Combat-Experienced Veterans diagnosed with AND without Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. If you are interested, we would love to speak with you and give you more information. For more information please call the study investigator, Dr. Thompson, 602-277-5551 extension 7768.

Mood Boost

Mounting scientific research indicates a link between positive thinking and health. Positive attitudes such as optimism have been tied to increased life span, improved mood, and greater overall mental and physical well-being. Since none of us have a crystal ball that can predict the future with 100% certainty, why not practice letting go of negative expectations and giving the future a chance, especially if it means you may live longer? To learn more about how to improve your mood with positive thinking, talk to your mental health provider about options for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy offered at the VA.

Mental Health Challenge: See if you can challenge yourself to approach one situation each day with an attitude of optimism, expecting things to turn out well.

To learn more about positive psychology, you may explore these resources:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/positive-psychology>

<https://www.happierhuman.com/positive-psychology-resources/>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/learned-optimism-4174101>

Myth busters

Myth: "Getting mental health treatment is a sign of weakness."

Myth buster: It takes strength and courage to ask for help. People sometimes think that they have to be in therapy for years to get better. We need other people and we need to ask for help. Seeking help is a healthy problem-solving skill, just as you used in the military to get the job done.

Top Providers

Several providers who are top in their field choose Phoenix VAHCS as their professional home. We care for you! Congratulations to Dr. Julie Alberty for being selected as the recipient of the 2019 ABPP Early Career Psychology Diversity Award! This is the first time that a neuropsychologist has received this award!

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