

A Resource for Public Defenders Representing U.S. Veteran Clients

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Substance Abuse Services

To help make sure that veterans can attend VA treatment services, programs offer evening and weekend hours. Residential (live-in) options are available for veterans who live far away from a VA clinic or have unstable housing. Special programs are often offered for patients with special concerns, such as women, OEF/OIF veterans, and homeless patients.

A patient coming to VA can expect to find the following types of care:

- first-time screening for alcohol or tobacco use in all care locations
- short outpatient counseling including focus on motivation
- intensive outpatient treatment
- residential (live-in) care
- medically managed detoxification (stopping substance use safely) and services to get stable
- continuing care and relapse prevention
- marriage and family counseling
- self-help groups
- drug substitution therapies and newer medicines to reduce craving

Decisions as to which services are provided and how intense they are will be based on the patient's needs and desires.

PTSD Treatment

What services are offered?

Each PTSD program offers education, evaluation, and treatment. Program services include:

- One-to-one mental health assessment and testing
- Medicines
- One-to-one psychotherapy and also family therapy
- Group therapy (covers topics such as anger and stress, combat support, partners, or groups for Veterans of specific conflicts)

PTSD specialists

Every VA Medical Center has providers that have been trained to offer PTSD treatment. Please be aware that even if your VA Medical Center does not have one of the special PTSD programs described below, you can still get effective PTSD treatment. Ask your doctor to refer you to a mental health provider who is a PTSD specialist. Below you will also find information about other options for getting PTSD treatment within VA.

Specialized Outpatient PTSD Programs (SOPPs)

SOPPs include three basic types of clinics. At these outpatient (not live-in) clinics, you can meet with a provider on a regular basis.

- **PTSD Clinical Teams (PCTs)** provide group and one-to-one treatment.
- **Substance Use PTSD Teams (SUPTs)** treat the combined problems of PTSD and substance abuse.
- **Women's Stress Disorder Treatment Teams (WSDTTs)** provide women Veterans both one-to-one and group treatment.

Specialized Intensive PTSD Programs (SIPPs)

SIPPs provide PTSD treatment services within a "therapeutic community." Many programs are residential (live-in). Activities offered are social, recreational (relax), and vocational (work), as well as counseling.

- **PTSD Day Hospitals (DH)** are outpatient. They provide one-to-one and group treatment for 4-8 hours each visit. Patients come in daily or several times a week.
- **Evaluation and Brief Treatment of PTSD Units (EBTPUs)** provide PTSD treatment for a brief time ranging from 14 to 28 days.
- **PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Programs (PRRPs)** provide PTSD treatment and case management. The goal is to help the trauma survivor return to healthy living in the community. Stays at a PRRP tend to be 28 to 90 days long.
- **Specialized Inpatient PTSD Units (SIPUs)** provide trauma-focused treatment. Hospital stays last from 28 to 90 days.
- **PTSD Domiciliary (PTSD Dom)** provides live-in treatment for a set period of time. The goal is to help the Veteran get better and move to outpatient mental health care.
- **Women's Trauma Recovery Program (WTRP)** was opened by the VA in Palo Alto, CA, in 1992. This live-in program focuses on war zone-related stress as well as Military Sexual Trauma (MST). In the program Veterans can work on skills needed to deal comfortably with other people. The program is 60 days long.

VA Recovery Services in Mental Health

In addition to providing comprehensive, evidence based psychiatric care, there are a number of unique psychosocial services and resources available to eligible Veterans who have schizophrenia or another serious mental illness (SMI) through the mental health programs at VA Medical Centers (VAMC). A list of VAMCs can be found at <http://www.va.gov> <<http://www.va.gov>> . When calling for more information, please ask to be connected to the chief of the mental health service, the local mental health recovery coordinator, or the Patient Advocate.

§ Family Involvement. The VA is committed to provide appropriate services to family members of Veterans with SMI. This may include a variety of options such as family consultation, family education, and family psycho-education. Some services involve Veterans and family members together, and others can involve family members without requiring the direct participation of the Veteran.

§ Local Mental Health Recovery Coordinator (LRC). There is a mental health

provider at each VAMC to help Veterans with serious mental illness (SMI) access recovery oriented services. The LRC provides education and support to Veterans, family members, and VA staff members about mental illness and recovery. The LRC promotes activities that remove barriers and stigma that may be associated with mental illness and ensures that veterans with SMI have access to the rehabilitation and recovery services needed to attain their goals.

§ Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM). This is an intensive interdisciplinary team approach to the management and treatment of Veterans with SMI in the community and coordinated with a range of VA and community services. The hallmarks of the program include very frequent contacts between the staff and Veteran, a flexible approach with most contacts occurring in the community, a focus on rehabilitation, and a clear pathway of responsibility with a minimum of one year of continuous involvement.

§ Peer Counseling. All VAMCs and very large VA clinics must provide counseling from peer support technicians for veterans treated for SMI when this service is clinically indicated and included in the treatment plan.

§ Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC). A PRRC is a transitional educational center that inspires and assists Veterans to reclaim their lives by instilling hope, validating strengths, teaching skills, and facilitating community integration so Veterans can attain meaningful self-determined roles in the community. A PRRC offers an array of services five days a week for veterans with SMI.

§ Social Skills Training. This is an evidence based psychosocial intervention that must be available to all veterans who have a serious mental illness and who would benefit from it. It may be provided on site at a VAMC or VA clinic or by referral if necessary.

§ Transitional Work Experience (TWE) and Supported Employment (SE). Each VAMC must offer TWE and SE services for veterans who have occupational dysfunction resulting from a mental health condition including SMI and who would benefit from this program.

Depression Treatment

A number of depression treatments are available. Medication and psychological counseling (psychotherapy) are very effective for most people. There are also many types of professionals who treat depression. A good place to start is with your primary care physician. In some cases, a primary care physician can prescribe medication to relieve depression symptoms. However, if treatment by your physician does not help you, the next step is to see a mental health professional.

- Health professionals who can diagnose depression and prescribe medicine include: Family Physicians, Internists, Psychiatrists, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, and Obstetricians or Gynecologists.
- Treatment such as professional counseling or therapy can be provided by: Psychiatrists (who can also prescribe medicine) or Psychologists.
- Other health professionals who also may be trained in treating depression include: Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, and Psychiatric Nurses.
- The **VA provides two evidence based treatments** for depression: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).
 - CBT is an effective psychotherapy based on decades of research that has shown the strong relationship between thoughts, emotions and behaviors, and how these lead to depression. CBT helps patients learn new patterns of thinking and to develop new positive behaviors.
 - ACT, also supported by clinical research, is also based on the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviors. ACT helps patients overcome their struggle with emotional pain and worry and take active steps to move forward and achieve what matters most to them.

VA Facilities in Louisiana

VA Medical Center

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?dnum=ALL&STATE=LA#skip VA Medical Center>

New Orleans: Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System

<http://www.neworleans.va.gov/>

Pineville: Alexandria VA Medical Center

<http://www.va.gov/502alexandria/>

Shreveport: Overton Brooks VA Medical Center

<http://www.shreveport.va.gov/>

Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?dnum=ALL&STATE=LA#skip Outpatient Clinic>

Baton Rouge: Baton Rouge Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=636&dnum=All>

Bogalusa: Bogalusa BA Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5984&dnum=All>

Franklin: Franklin V Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5985&dnum=All>

Hammond: Hammond VA Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5363&dnum=All>

Jennings: Jennings Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=637&dnum=All>

Lafayette: Lafayette Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5077&dnum=All>

Reserve: St. John VA Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5364&dnum=All>

Slidell: Slidell VA Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5365&dnum=All>

Community Based Outpatient Clinic

http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?dnum=ALL&STATE=LA#skip_Community_Based_Outpatient_Clinic

Houma: Houma CBOC

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5560&dnum=All>

Monroe: Monroe CBOC

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5519&dnum=All>

New Orleans: New Orleans VA Outpatient Clinic

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5986&dnum=All>

Vet Center

http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?dnum=ALL&STATE=LA#skip_Vet_Center

Alexandria: Rapides Parish Vet Center

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=6009&dnum=All>

Baton Rouge: Baton Rouge Vet Center

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5620&dnum=All>

Kenner: New Orleans Veterans Resource Center

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5456&dnum=All>

Shreveport: Shreveport Vet Center

<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=639&dnum=All>

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