

JUST THE FACTS: Depression

DISPELLING THE MYTHS



Sometimes it's hard to ask for help, but you don't need to struggle alone. When you're depressed, the people around you are affected, both at home and at work. Taking care of yourself is good for everyone – you and the people you interact with.

It's common for service members to worry that seeking the help they need will hurt their careers or mean that they're weak or unable to perform their duties. **NOT TRUE.** Here are some additional myths that are not based on fact:

Myth: *"My command discourages me from getting help."*

Fact: Top U.S. military commanders have stated publicly that they encourage all military personnel to get the mental health support they need. Your career is more likely to suffer if you don't seek help, because not getting the help you need (and deserve) can make things worse. Untreated depression can lead to poor job performance and relationship difficulties.

Myth: *"My leaders will have access to my mental health records."*

Fact: Mental health records are covered by confidentiality and privacy provisions. Ask your provider to explain the limits of confidentiality and the circumstances under which your leadership may obtain access to your records.

Myth: *"My service records will show my mental health information."*

Fact: Military service records don't contain mental health information unless a service member was found unfit or unsuitable for military duty.

If you're not comfortable seeking mental health treatment through the military, please get the help you need through other resources (including those described on the next page). Remember that you're doing the right thing. Without help, your problems can worsen and endanger not just you, but the lives of everyone around you.

Take an anonymous online screening at AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil/topics-depression
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WHERE TO GET HELP



Where You Can Get Help:

- **Your installation's support services can give you information and support.** Support services include your chaplain, a military treatment facility, and family advocacy programs and family centers. Phone numbers can be found in your installation's military directory.
- **Talk to your command.** Check in with a leader about how to handle a stressful situation before the situation gets out of control. It's always a good idea to keep leadership informed.
- **Make an appointment with a primary care provider.** Ask your primary care provider about available treatment options. Request a referral to a mental health practitioner if needed.
- **DCoE Outreach Center** provides 24/7 consultations for service members, family members and clinicians. Services are available via phone (866-966-1020; overseas: 800-424-4685 (DSN)), email (resources@dcoeutreach.org), or live chat (realwarriors.net/livechat).
- **Military OneSource** provides brief counseling to active-duty military personnel and their families, including reservists and members of the National Guard. [800-342-9647](tel:800-342-9647); militaryonesource.com
- **Vet Centers** offer readjustment counseling for veterans and their families. Get information about your local Vet Center at vetcenter.va.gov.
- **VA Medical Centers** provide veterans with affordable mental health services. Find out more about VA benefits and the resources available at your local VA facility at va.gov.
- **Local community services** can include crisis centers, mental health centers or suicide prevention centers.
- **Military Crisis Line (800-273-TALK)** is a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Calls are routed to the nearest military and veterans crisis center, which can provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals.

Remember

When in doubt or when your symptoms are ongoing or serious, seek in-person professional consultation with a primary care physician or mental health professional.

If you are suicidal (or know someone who is), immediately go to your nearest emergency room or call the **Military Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press 1)**, or **text 838255**. Take those thoughts seriously and know that there is help available. Family members and friends of service members or veterans can also use the Military Crisis Line to reach immediate help.

