MOVE FORWARD

Don't let PTSD hold you back.
The right tools and support
are here for you.

2016 National Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Day

An Event Planning Guide

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2016 National PTSD Awareness Day Welcome Letter

Thank you for your participation in our posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) awareness program!

In 2012, the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) and the National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2) began distributing educational event kits to military sites around the globe, to assist you with your mental health awareness efforts. Our PTSD initiative is intended to help you educate service members and their families about PTSD, assess whether they have symptoms, and help them devise a treatment plan, if needed.

The attached program kit contains educational and promotional items to help you implement a successful PTSD awareness event at your installation. The kit includes the following materials:

- An Event Planning Guide
- Educational pamphlets and brochures, created by experts in the field
- Posters to promote your event
- Fun takeaways for participants, like magnets and wallet cards
- A 2016 Summary Form, to complete and return within two weeks of your event

Many of the promotional items in the kit can be customized for your event; we are happy to provide you with electronic copies that you can modify to your specifications. For more information about using and customizing these materials, feel free to contact our contract support team at **mrmc.dcoe.t2-contactus@mail.mil** or call our office at 703-712-4291. Alternatively, you may contact the program's contracting officer's representative, Mr. Richard Demaree, at **richard.a.demaree.civ@mail.mil** or by phone at 253-302-1509.

Thank you for all you do to support the military health community. We wish you a successful event!

Karl O. Moe, PhD, ABPP
Chief of Staff
Defense Health Agency
National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2)

1. Planning Your Event

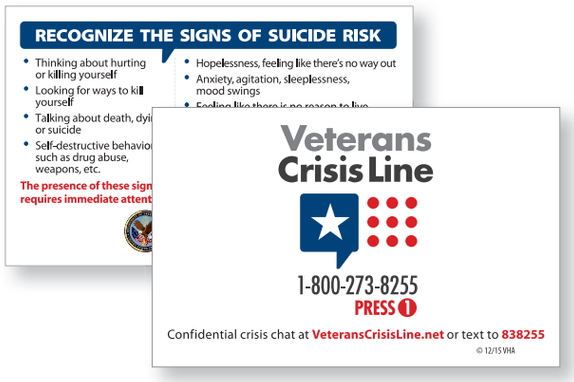
What is Included in the Kit?

The kit contains both educational and promotional materials. You can use the educational materials throughout the year to help answer questions, facilitate conversation, and provide links to helpful resources. The promotional materials can be used to advertise a specific event, and include fun giveaway items such as stress balls and magnets.

Using the Educational Materials

Through collaboration with the National Center for PTSD, T2 developed and provided a number of pamphlets, brochures and other handouts for your use. These items address topics like symptoms of PTSD, various treatment options available for PTSD, substance misuse, anxiety and depression. Each item contains information to direct a participant to resources available online, via telephone or to local military health care providers.

PTSD Clinician Card



Veterans Crisis Line Cards

FOR SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS AND FAMILIES

Understanding PTSD and Substance Use

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after someone goes through combat, physical or sexual assault, terrorist attack, serious accident, natural disaster, or other traumatic event. Symptoms of PTSD can include feeling keyed up, having flashbacks or avoiding reminders of the event, losing interest in things you used to enjoy or avoiding being around other people.

What is substance use disorder?

Some people try to cope with their PTSD by drinking heavily, using drugs or smoking too much. Eventually, the overuse of these substances can develop into substance use disorder (SUD), and treatment should be given for both PTSD and SUD to lead to successful recovery. The good news is that treatment of co-occurring (happening at the same time) PTSD and SUD works.

How common is co-occurring PTSD and substance use disorder?

About 13 percent of service members and more than 25 percent of veterans with PTSD also have a substance use disorder.

What treatments are available for co-occurring PTSD and substance use disorder?

Evidence shows that most people have improved PTSD and SUD symptoms when they are provided treatment that addresses both conditions. This can involve:

- Individual or group cognitive behavioral treatments;
- Specific psychological treatments for PTSD such as Cognitive Processing Therapy or Prolonged Exposure;
- Behavioral Couples Therapy with your spouse or significant other;
- And/or medications that may help you manage the PTSD or SUD symptoms.

Treatment for specific symptoms such as pain, anger or sleep disturbance should also be discussed with your provider.

What else should I know about treatment?

There are many levels and types of treatment options available. The first step is to talk to a health care professional and ask for more information. There are successful treatments for co-occurring PTSD and SUD. Recovery is achievable; you can have a life without your symptoms. Your provider can help you get started.

How can I find out if I need help?

If you continue to be troubled or distracted by your experiences for more than three months or have questions about your drinking or drug use, seek help by contacting a mental health professional. Online resources and anonymous self-assessments are also available at **AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil**.

"I entered treatment in 2009, after maybe two really bad years of PTSD and alcoholism. The VA staff was amazing. It's a whole new day for me."
— **JOE, IRAQ VETERAN**

GETTING HELP

To talk with a health care professional, there are several options:

Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Outreach Center
866-966-1020

Military & Veterans Crisis Line
800-273-8255

Military OneSource
800-342-9647

Military Sexual Assault Safe Helpline
877-995-5247

Contact a TRICARE authorized provider
tricare.mil
North: 877-874-2273
South: 800-444-5445
West: 877-988-9378

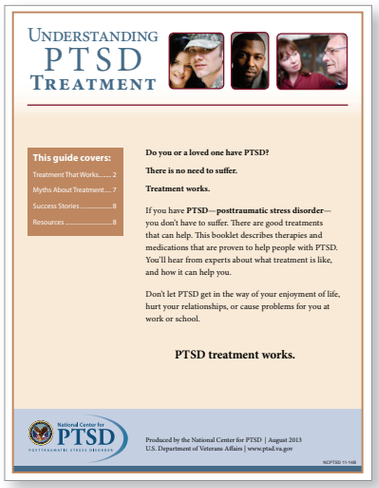
Find a VA medical treatment facility
va.gov
vetcenter.va.gov
800-827-1000

Source: Adapted from the National Center for PTSD, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Understanding PTSD and Substance Use. (2013). Retrieved from **ptsd.va.gov**.

Developed by National Center for Telehealth & Technology, a Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury center.
Released: May 2016

NCPTSD 16 MP

Understanding PTSD and Substance Use



Understanding PTSD Treatment

This guide covers:

Treatment That Works..... 2
Myths About Treatment..... 7
Success Stories 8
Resources 8

Do you or a loved one have PTSD?

There is no need to suffer.

Treatment works.

If you have **PTSD—posttraumatic stress disorder**—you don't have to suffer. There are good treatments that can help. This booklet describes therapies and medications that are proven to help people with PTSD. You'll hear from experts about what treatment is like, and how it can help you.

Don't let PTSD get in the way of your enjoyment of life, hurt your relationships, or cause problems for you at work or school.

PTSD treatment works.

National Center for PTSD — Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Produced by the National Center for PTSD | August 2013
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs | www.ptsd.va.gov

NCPTSD 11-146

Understanding PTSD Treatment

JUST THE FACTS: Anxiety

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

Many different words are used to describe the feeling of anxiety. Anxiety is often described as motivation, excitement, tension, stress, worry, nerves and phobias. Anxiety can be a normal reaction to new and positive challenges or stressful events. Anxiety can also be the result of faulty thinking and other controllable causes that become problematic and interfere with life and health. ***Everyone has felt anxious at some time in life. Anxiety is experienced in a number of ways including:***

- Butterflies in your stomach before a big date
- Knots in your stomach when your supervisor is upset
- Pounding heart when you hear a strange noise outside your home

In some situations, anxiety is very useful. Anxiety is a sign that tells the body that it should be on alert. Anxiety helps to prepare a person for action. Anxiety can motivate you to study for an exam and work hard to keep a supervisor happy. Anxiety can signal you to act, which may help you cope with a difficult situation.

Are you a worrier?

Worrying is a form of anxiety. Worry can be a natural response to life conditions. Everyone worries about something at some time. However, worry becomes problematic when its associated behaviors interfere with the ability to live a happy, healthy life.

Signs that worry might be problematic in your life:

- You are chronically on alert and thinking about potential future dangers or threats
- You are consistently making negative predictions about the future
- You tend to overestimate the likelihood that something bad will happen
- You repeat worried thoughts over and over again in your head

When is anxiety a problem?

Some amount of anxiety is normal. However, an anxiety disorder can keep a person from coping with the ups and downs of life. An anxiety disorder can make a person feel anxious most of the time without any particular cause. In some cases, the anxious feelings may be so uncontrollable that an individual will do anything necessary to avoid those feelings including stopping or changing everyday activities. Anxiety can become so severe that it prevents a person from leaving his or her home. Severe anxiety can prevent a person from going to work or engaging in meaningful activities with friends and family.

The focus of healthy worry is problem-solving, while the focus of unhealthy worry is catastrophic thinking.

Take an anonymous online screening at AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil/topics-anxiety
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AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil

FS&W-02-16

Just the Facts: Understanding Anxiety

JUST THE FACTS: PTSD

UNDERSTANDING POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a condition that can occur after exposure to a traumatic event. A traumatic event is something horrible and scary that you see or that happens to you. During this type of event, you think that your life or others' lives are in danger.

Anyone who experienced a life-threatening event themselves, witnessed one happen to someone else, or learned about a traumatic event occurring to a close family member or friend, can develop PTSD. These events can include:

- Combat exposure
- Child sexual or physical abuse
- Terrorist attacks
- Sexual or physical assault
- Serious accidents, such as a car wreck
- Natural disasters, such as a fire, tornado, hurricane, flood or earthquake

Following exposure to these kinds of events, you may experience some of the symptoms described in this resource. If these symptoms don't go away or they get worse, you may have PTSD. These symptoms may disrupt your life, making it hard to continue with your daily activities.

How does PTSD develop?

Experiencing a traumatic event can cause strong emotional reactions and thoughts that can result in changes in the brain. Most people who go through a traumatic event have some post-traumatic stress symptoms, yet not everyone will develop PTSD. It isn't clear why some people develop PTSD and others don't. How likely you are to get PTSD depends on many things. These include:

- How intense the trauma was or how long it lasted
- If you lost someone you were close to
- If you or a loved one were physically injured
- How close you were to the event
- How strongly the event affected your emotional reaction and thoughts
- If you felt the event and circumstances were in your control or beyond your control
- How much help and support you had following the event

Most people who develop PTSD eventually get better. However, one out of three people with PTSD continue to experience some symptoms. Even if you continue to have symptoms, treatment can help you cope. Your symptoms don't have to interfere with your everyday activities, work and relationships.

Your symptoms don't have to interfere with your everyday activities, work and relationships.

Take an anonymous online screening at AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil/topics-post-traumatic-stress
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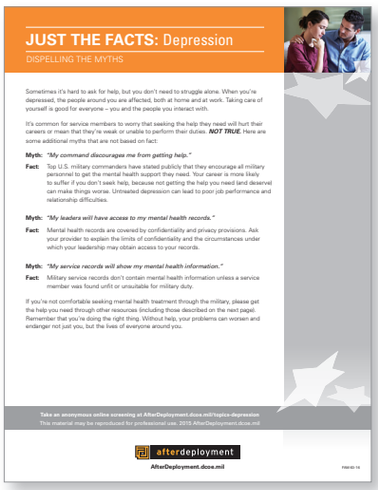
Just the Facts: Understanding Posttraumatic Stress Disorder



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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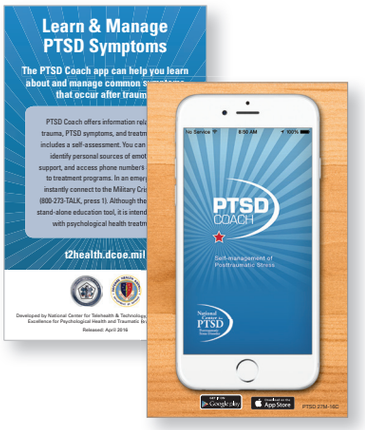
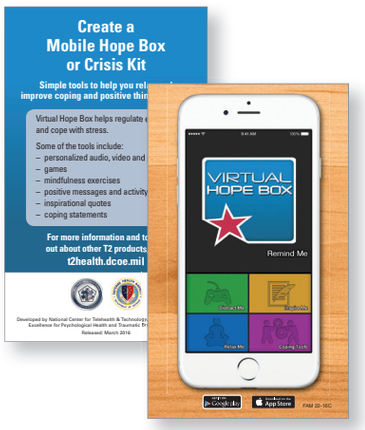
Just the Facts: Depression – Where to Get Help



PTSD Coach Mobile App Card



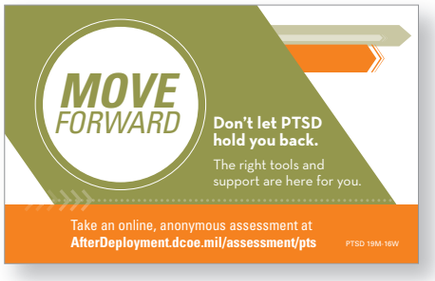
Virtual Hope Box Mobile App Card

Using the Promotional Materials

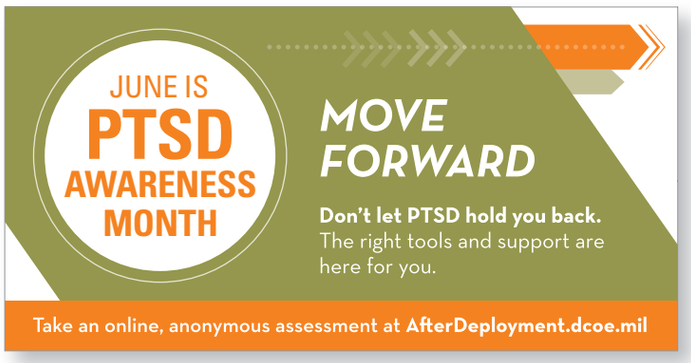
The promotional items in your kit – such as posters, wallet cards, magnets, event banner and stress balls – are intended to introduce a lighter tone to the serious topics addressed during PTSD Awareness Month. These items also encourage service members, veterans and their families to engage with the many resources available on the **AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil** website.

Posters

Wallet Cards



Magnet



Event Banner

Stress Reliever Ball

What is the Purpose of the Event?

The purpose of a PTSD awareness event is to help service members and their families:

- Learn about PTSD and symptoms
- Assess whether participants have symptoms of PTSD, with in-person screenings or using the anonymous online screening tools on the AfterDeployment website (**AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil**)
- Ask questions and consult with staff members and clinicians about PTSD symptoms
- Receive referrals to military health care providers and other practitioners, if needed
- Leave the event with fun promotional items, educational materials and resource lists

When and Where Should I Hold the Event?

Although it is ideal to schedule your event on National PTSD Awareness Day (June 27) or during PTSD Awareness Month (June), you should select a day that works for your installation/unit. To maximize the number of attendees, you may wish to "piggyback" the event with another planned activity, such as a family day, deployment event or health fair.

When selecting a location for your event, choose an area with plenty of foot traffic, but with a private, quiet place available where clinicians can conduct screenings and discuss results with participants.

Who Can Help Me Plan the Event?

Our team is available to answer your questions and provide suggestions for planning a successful event. For assistance, email us at **mrmc.dcoe.t2-contactus@mail.mil** or call our office at 703-712-4291.

2. Promoting Your Event

This section provides steps for getting your event details out to your installation, community and the media. To ensure that your event is a success, plan to start promotional activities at least *three weeks in advance.*

What is a Promotional Plan?

A promotional plan outlines the actions you will take to promote your event. Your promotional plan may include:

- Creating fliers and handouts with event details
- Posting fliers in high-traffic areas (like the commissary, gym, Exchange store or mess hall)
- Asking individuals (like chaplains or other group leaders) and organizations to spread the word
- Providing event details to the media

How Do I Spread the Word?

To maximize attendance at your event, you should promote your event both on and off base. Here are a few places to start:

Your Installation/Unit

When promoting your event, you should start by spreading the word within your installation/unit. Some contacts to try:

- *Chaplain* (ask if he/she can mention the event at services and to individuals seeking help)
- *Radio stations or newspapers at your installation* (ask if advertising is available)
- *Health center coordinators* (ask if they can display fliers and mention the event to individuals seeking help)
- *Commissary or Exchange store* (ask if they can display fliers, and/or place fliers in shoppers' bags)

Your Community

Also consider posting fliers in locations in your community:

- *Hospitals*
- *Mental health centers*
- *Walk-in medical clinics and crisis centers*
- *Places that military families frequent* (like shopping malls, restaurants, supermarkets and community centers)

The Media

Local newspapers, magazines, television stations and radio stations may also be options for spreading the word about your event. Before contacting these media outlets, you should check in with the Public Affairs office for your unit/installation. *These materials should be submitted well in advance of your event*. Some documents you may want to prepare for the media include:

- *Press Release.* A press release is a document that provides event details to newspapers, radio stations, magazines and other time-sensitive media.
- *Public Service Announcement (PSA).* A PSA is a free advertisement on radio or television, or free advertising space available in a newspaper for public announcements.
- *Op-Ed.* An op-ed is a short newspaper article written by someone not on the editorial staff.

Since media outlets vary in their submission procedures and lead-time requirements, you should consult their website or contact them by email or phone before submitting materials.

3. Assembling Your Event Team

A successful event requires both clinical staff (to screen and refer participants) and administrative staff (to host the table/booth, provide logistical support and assist with planning and publicizing the event).

Clinical Staff

The first step in putting together a team is identifying a clinical coordinator to manage the clinical components of the program. This individual should be a behavioral health professional who is available to be on-site during the event, and has experience screening, diagnosing and treating PTSD.

The primary tasks of the clinical coordinator include:

- *Recruiting and training clinicians for the event.* Once you have located individuals who are available, schedule a training session to review the screening/referral process and any emergency procedures that you have in place. You may wish to invite TRICARE providers to join your staff, who could benefit from referrals made at the event.
- *Reviewing kit materials.* Before the event, determine how you will use the items in the kit.
- *Creating a plan for handling clinical emergencies during the event.*
- *Creating a referral list and participant letter to hand out at the event.* (Resource lists and a sample participant letter are provided in the Appendix.)

Administrative Staff

Your administrative staff is responsible for the logistics of the event: setting up the table or booth, preparing event materials and assisting participants during the event. For an event preparation checklist, refer to Appendix A.

4. Making Your Event Great

When your event date rolls around, use these tips to keep participants engaged and your screenings running smoothly.

Table Tips

- Set up your table in a high-traffic area and display the kit posters to attract attention.
- In addition to the promotional kit items, place other fun giveaways on your table (candy, pens, discount coupons).
- Make sure that educational materials are placed near the front of the table, where they can be discreetly taken.
- Set up interactive activities that will draw people to your table. For example, you could supply laptops or tablets displaying an educational website (like **AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil**) for participants to try out.
- If children will be in attendance, keep them engaged by setting up a kids' area with small toys, snacks and/or activity sheets (like coloring or word-search pages).

Screening Tips

- Make sure that you have screening forms and a private screening area available.
- A qualified health professional must be on the premises at all times during a screening event.
- Make sure that security staff is available (in case of emergency) throughout the event.
- The clinical screening staff should plan to spend 5-10 minutes with each participant. A screening interview should include a discussion of screening results, possible next steps, and referral recommendations.
- Make sure that participants understand that screening results *do not constitute a diagnosis*, but simply identify symptoms of PTSD. (For liability purposes, this information should also be included in the informational letter given to participants.)
- Hand out a referral list to each participant, regardless of whether he/she talks to a clinician.
- If a participant requests follow-up services or care, refer him/her to a provider affiliated with your installation/unit.

5. Providing Kit Feedback

In exchange for receiving these materials free of charge, program participants are asked to submit feedback about the items; this information allows T2 to refine and update materials for future kits. A summary form is included in your kit and should be submitted within two weeks of your event. Note that the summary form must be completed by the person facilitating the program.

Once you complete your form, you can submit it by fax, email or regular mail:

Fax: 703-712-4010

Email: Scan your completed form, then email to **mrmc.dcoe.t2-contactus@mail.mil**

Mail: Mail your form to this address:

MAXIMUS Federal Services
c/o Military Pathways
3130 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 800
Falls Church, VA 22042

Appendices: Resources and Samples

Appendix A: Event Checklist

Appendix B: Military/Government Resource List

Appendix C: Additional Resources

Appendix D: Sample Participant Letter

Appendix A: Event Checklist

- ❑ Determine the date and time for the event.
- ❑ Reserve the location for the event. Visit the site in advance to determine how much space is available for your table(s), and to locate electrical outlets, internet connections, etc., to support your activities.
- ❑ Identify staff for the event and conduct a training session.
- ❑ Create promotional materials such as fliers and handouts.
- ❑ Contact on-site personnel, military media and other media to provide event details.
- ❑ Post fliers in high-traffic locations at your installation/unit, such as the mess hall, commissary or gym. Also consider posting fliers in other locations that military families frequent, such as shopping malls, restaurants and supermarkets.
- ❑ Distribute handouts and fliers to military and mental health groups.
- ❑ Create a referral list, emergency plan and participant letter.
- ❑ Make copies of your referral list, participant letter and screening forms to use at the event.
- ❑ Decide which materials you want to use at your table/booth (kit items, audio-visual materials, takeaways).
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____

Appendix B: Military/Government Resource List

Below is a list of military and government mental health care resources and providers that you may wish to provide to PTSD event participants.

AfterDeployment (**AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil**)
The National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2) provides wellness resources for the military community. The site provides self-assessment tools, information about downloadable mobile apps, and articles and videos on many topics.

DCoE Outreach Center (**dcoe.mil/Families/Help.aspx**)
The DCoE Outreach Center provides 24/7 consultations for service members, family members and clinicians. Services are available via phone (866-966-1020), email (**resources@dcoeoutreach.org**), or live chat (**realwarriors.net/livechat**).

DCoE Website (**dcoe.mil/PsychologicalHealth/About_PTSD.aspx**)
The DCoE website is an online resource for service members, veterans and their families. The DCoE website provides information regarding post-tramautic stress.

InTransition (**intransition.dcoe.mil**)
U.S.: 800-424-7877; Overseas: 800-424-4685 (DSN)
InTransition is a free, voluntary program with coaches who provide psychological health care support to service members, veterans and their health care providers during times of transition. Service members can call to self-enroll 24/7.

Military Crisis Line (**veteranscrisisline.net**)
U.S.: 800-273-8255; Europe: 08000-1273-8255 or DSN 118
This free, confidential hotline is available 24/7 to all service members, Guard and reserve members and veterans.

Military OneSource (**militaryonesource.mil**)
U.S.: 800-342-9647; Overseas: 1-800-342-9647 or 1-703-253-7599
The Military OneSource website provides a 24/7 help line for active duty, Guard and reserve members and their families.

Appendix B: Military/Government Resource List (continued)

National Center for PTSD (**www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline/default.htm**)
This U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website provides a "PTSD Coach" tool, videos, a health provider locator and other resources about PTSD symptoms and treatment.

The National Institute of Mental Health
(**nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml**) website provides a comprehensive overview of PTSD (such as symptoms, causes and treatments) and current research articles about PTSD.

TRICARE (**tricare.mil**)
To locate a TRICARE health provider or service center in your area, use the provider locator on the website, or call:

North: 877-874-2273
South: 800-444-5445
West: 877-988-9378
Eurasia-Africa: +44-20-8762-8384 or 877-678-1207 (toll-free from U.S.)
Latin America/Canada: 1-215-942-8393 or 877-451-8659 (toll-free from U.S.)
Pacific (Singapore): +65-6339-2676 or 877-678-1208 (toll-free from U.S.)
Pacific (Sydney): +61-2-9273-2710 or 877-678-1209 (toll-free from U.S.)

TRICARE also has a website for National Guard and reserve members and families (**tricare.mil/Reserve**).

Appendix C: Additional Resources

Below is a list of mental health care organizations and resources that you may wish to provide to PTSD awareness event participants. Note that inclusion in this list does not constitute official endorsement by the Department of Defense, the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury or the National Center for Telehealth & Technology.

Local:

- General hospitals with mental health services
- Health facilities that provide free or sliding-scale treatment
- Mental health clinics
- Pastoral counseling centers
- Private practitioners
- Self-help groups

State:

- Psychological associations (**apa.org/about/apa/organizations/associations.aspx**)
- Psychiatric associations (**psychiatry.org/about-apa/meet-our-organization/district-branches**)

National:

- Advocacy groups (e.g., Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)
- Suicide prevention hotlines
- American Psychological Association (**apa.org**)
- National Association of Social Workers chapters (**socialworkers.org**)
- The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (**adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/posttraumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd**) website provides PTSD educational resources, including an Online Coach for managing symptoms, articles, videos and screening tools.

Appendix D: Sample Participant Letter

Below is a sample letter to provide to event participants.

Thank you for your participation in our posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) awareness event! This initiative is intended to help you learn about PTSD, recognize the symptoms and seek treatment options, if needed. At our table you will find educational materials, resource lists, and a chance to speak with our clinical staff about your concerns, confidentially.

We will provide anonymous screenings to help you assess whether you are experiencing symptoms of PTSD. If you choose to participate in a screening, keep in mind that the results are educational, not diagnostic; screening results indicate if you have symptoms of PTSD, but do not constitute a diagnosis of any kind. Based on your results, you may choose to contact a health care provider to discuss possible next steps. If you prefer, you can also complete this screening online at **AfterDeployment.dcoe.mil/assessment/PTS***.*

Thank you for attending, and please let us know if you have questions we can answer. We hope today's event is educational for you and your family.

Thank you!

Developed by National Center for Telehealth & Technology, a Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury center.
Released: May 2016
PTSD 15M-16M