Washington State's PTSD Counseling Program

Since 1984 the State of Washington Department of Veterans Affairs has maintained a unique outpatient counseling program designed to provide confidential counseling services to men and women veterans with war era readjustment and PTSD treatment needs.

In 1991 Washington State became the first state to establish a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and War Trauma Treatment Program (HB2095). This law has enabled the Department to offer readjustment and treatment services to war era veterans and their family members. These services include grief and support services for eligible family members of those state residents deployed from the National Guard and military reserves in times of conflict.

The King County Veterans Program first contracted with WDVA in 1995 to offer county funded outpatient counseling services to veterans and family members. This partnership resulted in the creation of a nationally recognized service delivery model of county, state, and federal service elements.

The special role of the WDVA PTSD Program, in this blend of treatment services to veterans, has acted to create lifesaving treatment support and other assistance that would otherwise be denied to Washington residents. Our licensed mental health professional contractors offer a wide range of specialized treatment services and linkage to other help.

What are the Symptoms of PTSD?

Most people who are exposed to sudden, dangerous or deadly events—or who are psychologically overwhelmed by these experiences—will often experience several of the following:

- Startle reactions to noise or sudden movements
- Reliving of traumatic memories
- Hostile or suicidal feelings and impulses
- Profound grief reactions—or no emotions at all—when showing feelings would be considered normal
- Problems with intimacy and/or interpersonal relationships
- Avoidance of certain people, movies or topics related to trauma events
- Hyperalert to threats to self or loved ones
- Sleep problems, dreams and nightmares
- Excessive need to control outcomes
- Guilt, depression, or lack of emotion
- Concentration and memory problems
- Anniversary reactions to the trauma
- Alcohol and/or other substance abuse
- Anxiety and hyperarousal
- Marital problems
- Employment difficulties
- Authority problems

Will Time Heal these PTSD Reactions?

Experts agree that the mere passage of time will not relieve PTSD. The longer one waits, the more difficult management may become. On the other hand, it is never too late to start counseling. The use of alcohol, a workaholic life style, or avoidance, may increase the intensity of the symptoms, or delay resolution. Often, the veteran with PTSD will risk everything before seeking help.

Who is Eligible for PTSD Counseling?

A recent study by an independent research firm estimates there are more than 70,000 veterans in Washington state suffering from war related PTSD symptoms.

While the PTSD Program is primarily structured to address the special needs of Vietnam veterans, Washington National Guard, and Military Reserves of the Gulf Wars, WDVA realizes that all veterans who have served during our nation's wars may have a need to be seen by one of our counselors. All honorably discharged men and women, wartime veterans and family members—including veterans from WWII, Korea, and the various recent periods of conflict and peace-keeping operations—are eligible for counseling services.

PTSD can happen to anyone who has been exposed to traumatic experiences.

What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

Traumatic events—war, combat, sexual assault, natural disasters and other life-threatening experiences—have always been a part of human experience. However, the impact of these events on the survivor was not fully understood until recently.

We now know that traumatic events change the survivor psychologically, biologically, and socially.

While it was long-believed that Vietnam veterans were more prone to PTSD, it is now apparent that the culture, the times, the veteran's homecoming, and the war's outcome, all influence the way symptoms are manifested. Untreated, PTSD is highly predictive of physical illness, disrupted family life, and reduced career performance. Moreover, veterans from different wars express PTSD symptoms in era-specific ways.

We are committed to helping veterans whose military trauma may include sexual assault and other abuse.

Call 1-800-562-2308

How do I find a PTSD Counselor?

WDVA PTSD Counseling is currently available in these counties:

Adams	Benton
Chelan	Clallam
Cowlitz	Douglas
Ferry	Franklin
Grant	Grays Harbor
Island	King
Kitsap	Kittitas
Lewis	Lincoln
Okanogan	Pacific
Pend Oreille	San Juan
Skagit	Snohomish
Stevens	Thurston
Yakima	

To locate a counselor in your area, contact the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs at the number listed below, or explore our web site at ***www.dva.wa.gov*** and click on PTSD. Outreach to Reserve and National Guard units is also available.

Consultation to mental health centers, governmental agencies, and other professionals providing counseling to veterans and their families is available upon request.

Thomas Schumacher, Program Director
505 East Union
PO Box 41150
Olympia, WA 98504-1150
(360) 586-1076 or 1-800-562-2308

Veteran PTSD Counseling Program

A Service for War-Era Veterans and Family Members

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Pamphlet available in alternative formats upon request.
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