

PTSD treatment works: Resources from the National Center for PTSD

Learn how PTSD treatment can help you

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Appears In

What is PTSD treatment like?

PTSD treatment helps you process trauma, reduce symptoms and improve your quality of life. “PTSD treatment has been transformative,” said [Marine Corps Veteran Jeremiah Civil](#). “It has helped me regain a sense of control over my life.”

The National Center for PTSD recommends [trauma-focused talk therapy](#) or therapy that focuses on your memory of the traumatic event and what it means to you. During 8-16 sessions, you’ll meet with a licensed provider (either in person or online) and learn ways to work through your trauma by visualizing, talking or thinking about the traumatic event until it becomes less upsetting. You may also focus on changing unhelpful beliefs about the trauma or feelings you’ve had since the trauma happened.

Talk therapy options include:

- Prolonged Exposure (PE): Teaches you to gradually approach trauma-related memories, feelings and situations you’ve been avoiding.
- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT): Teaches you to change upsetting thoughts or feelings about your traumatic experience.
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR): Helps you process and make sense of your trauma while paying attention to a back-and-forth movement or sound like a light or a tone.

When it comes to PTSD treatment, you have options. You can choose in-person talk therapy or treatment through secure telehealth. VA offers [treatment programs](#) at VA medical centers, community clinics, specialized PTSD programs and Vet Centers across the country. Apps like PTSD Coach provide additional support that you can use anytime, anywhere, to track progress and manage symptoms, though they are not a replacement for PTSD treatment.

Why should I get treatment for PTSD?

Everyone’s reason to start treatment for PTSD is different, but for many people it’s a chance to take back control of their lives. PTSD can affect both your mental and physical health, impacting relationships, work, sleep quality, your experience with drugs or alcohol and

more. PTSD treatment is a way to take care of yourself and those around you. It provides you with tools to help you change how you think about trauma and how it affected you, manage symptoms, and rebuild connections with loved ones.

“I was able to talk to my family about things that I had never been able to talk to them about before,” [shared](#) Army Veteran Andrew Reeves, reflecting on the impact of PTSD treatment on his relationships.

How do I get started?

Deciding to get treatment for PTSD can feel like a big step, but there are resources available to help you find the support you deserve:

- [Take a self-screen](#): Answer five questions to see if your feelings or behaviors might be related to PTSD.
- [Talk to a provider](#): Speak with a primary care or mental health provider or find a VA PTSD treatment program near you.
- [Explore treatment options](#): Use the PTSD Treatment Decision Aid to learn about evidence-based therapies.

Does PTSD treatment work?

No matter what you’ve experienced and whether it’s been months or decades since your trauma, PTSD treatment can help. Asking for help can feel challenging, but it’s a step that shows strength. “It was hard to admit I needed help,” said [Army Veteran Ron Whitcomb](#), “but it was the most courageous thing I ever did.”

Seeking treatment for PTSD is self-care; it’s a commitment to your health and happiness.

If you’re a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don’t have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.