

June is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month

June is dedicated to promoting awareness about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a leader, it's important to openly communicate to your Airmen and Guardians about the signs, symptoms, causes and treatment of invisible wounds, and highlight the importance of recognizing these symptoms in others and themselves, as well as seeking support early and often.



12 MILLION 12 million adults in the U.S. have PTSD during a given year. This is only a small portion of those who have gone through a trauma.

[Download the complete PTSD infographic.](#)

Signs & Symptoms of PTSD

It is essential that all are aware of the signs and symptoms associated with an invisible wound to be able to identify invisible wounds in themselves or others. While everyone experiences trauma and PTSD symptoms differently, the following are the most common symptoms:

- Flashbacks
- Easily irritable, frustrated, or angry
- Trouble with memory and attention
- Fatigue
- Poor self-care
- Feeling anxious
- Trouble sleeping, insomnia
- Feeling depressed

Causes of PTSD

All Airmen and Guardians are susceptible to invisible wounds, regardless of their career field. While everyone experiences different traumatic situations, some events that can lead to PTSD include:

- Combat, non-combat, and other military experiences
- Sexual or physical assault
- Learning about the violent or accidental death or injury of a loved one
- Child sexual or physical abuse
- Serious accidents, like a car wreck
- Individual threat to one's life (e.g., terrorist attacks or natural disasters)

Getting Support and Treatment for PTSD

Treatment is available and can help Airmen and Guardians experiencing PTSD improve their quality of life. Treatment and resources for managing invisible wounds include the Mental Health Clinic, Air Force Chaplains, and Military & Family Counseling Program (MFLC).



[Read retired Lt Col Jason Howell's story](#) about his PTSD diagnosis and his road to recovery through therapy, medication, his service dog Mystic, and Air Force support groups like the Air Force Wounded Warrior program.

Resources



[DAF Medical Service](#) offers resources on PTSD and information on the specific impacts on service members, as well as provides information about risk factors, symptoms, diagnosis, the Comprehensive Airmen Fitness model, deployments, and more.



The [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' National Center for PTSD](#) is the world's leading research and educational center of excellence for PTSD and traumatic stress. Visit the website for more information about PTSD, resources, and treatment options.



[AF Resilience](#) provides a [Leader's Guide](#) on how to support their Airmen and Guardians with PTSD.



The [PTSD Coach app](#) can help Airmen and Guardians manage symptoms that often occur after trauma.

1 - U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine. USAF Public Health Report. Vol 3, Issue 1. (2018).

2 - U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. How Common is PTSD in Women? (2019). https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_women.asp

3 - National Center for PTSD. Help Raise PTSD Awareness. (2019). <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/awareness/index.asp>.