

June is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month

Invisible wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can have a profound impact on our Airmen and their families. There are currently about 8 million people in the United States with PTSD.¹ After experiencing trauma, about 10% of men and 20% of women develop PTSD.² PTSD is treatable and there are many resources available. **94% of Airmen who have received PTSD treatment continued to progress in their career.**³ As Air Force leaders, we must take an active role in supporting all Airmen as we grow from traumatic events. Below are treatment options and available resources for our Airmen.



Evidence-Based Treatment for PTSD

As proven options for treating PTSD, evidence-based treatments typically involve talking through, visualizing, or thinking about the trauma that triggers PTSD symptoms.

Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) is strongly recommended and teaches patients how to gradually face trauma-related memories, feelings, and situations that they have been avoiding. This works to break down fears associated with trauma, which can decrease the symptoms of PTSD.⁴

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) teaches patients how to change their thoughts around trauma with the intent to help change how their trauma makes them feel.⁵

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) uses sound or eye movements to help lessen the severity of traumatic memories while patients process their trauma during therapy.⁶

Medication is also a common option for treating PTSD symptoms and is typically paired with some type of therapy.

The [National Center for PTSD](#) offers a [PTSD Treatment Decision Tool](#) where Airmen can learn about different types of PTSD treatment.

Leading Airmen with PTSD

Leaders and wingmen can empower and support Airmen with PTSD by promoting these tips:



As Air Force Leaders, your engagement and leadership are critical for your Airmen's recovery. Get out in front of the importance of seeking treatment, connect Airmen with resources, share your own story, and empower Airmen to prioritize their mental health as part of Comprehensive Airman Fitness. Airmen look to leaders to set the example.

Resources for Airmen with PTSD

A variety of resources are available to Airmen and their families throughout their recovery.

- ❖ **Military Crisis Hotline:** 24/7 hotline offering confidential, immediate help and connects military service members and their families who are experiencing a crisis with trained counselors. *Contact the Military Crisis Line 24/7 at 800-273-8255, then press 1, or access online chat, or text 838255. Visit <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line>.*
- ❖ **Military Treatment Facility (MTF):** On-base facilities for Airmen and their families that offer evidence-based medical treatment options. *Contact your local MTF to schedule an appointment.*
- ❖ **Military & Family Life Counseling (MFLC) Program:** Service located at the Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) that offers confidential, solution-focused, short-term counseling to Airmen and their families for various life skills. MFLC does not provide medical treatment. *Contact your local A&FRC to use MFLC services.*
- ❖ **Chaplain Services:** On-base services for counseling, crisis intervention, religious and personal support, and spiritual resilience. Regardless of religious beliefs, Chaplains are available to support all Airmen. *Contact the chaplain team at your base chapel or connect with the 24/7 duty chaplain through the base command post.*
- ❖ **Military OneSource:** Provides health and wellness resources and 24/7 confidential help by connecting Airmen to appropriate counseling resources. *Contact Military OneSource via telephone at 800-342-9647, or online via live chat at www.militaryonesource.mil.*

¹ National Center for PTSD. Help Raise PTSD Awareness. (2019). <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/awareness/index.asp>
² National Center for PTSD. Understanding PTSD and PTSD Treatment. (2018). https://www.ptsd.va.gov/publications/print/understandingptsd_booklet.pdf
³ U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine. USAF Public Health Report. Vol 3, Issue 1. (2018).
⁴ American Psychological Association. Prolonged Exposure (PE). (2017). <https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/treatments/prolonged-exposure>.
⁵ American Psychological Association. Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). (2017). <https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/treatments/cognitive-processing-therapy>.
⁶ American Psychological Association. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy. (2017). <https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/treatments/eye-movement-reprocessing>.

Resources



The [National Center for PTSD](#) provides insights on treatment options, resources, and general information on PTSD.



[PTSD Coach](#) helps people learn about and manage their symptoms that often occur after trauma.



Similarly, [PTSD Family Coach](#) can be used by family members to help understand what their loved ones with PTSD are experiencing.



[PsychArmor](#) provides critical resources, such as free online education and a support center staffed with mental health experts, to support military service members, Veterans, and their families.

2019 Warrior Games



June 21-30, 2019
Tampa, FL

The [Warrior Games](#) are here again! The DoD started the Games in 2010 as a way to enhance the recovery and rehabilitation of wounded warriors and to expose them to adaptive sports.

[Team Air Force](#) is an active participant in the Games and encourages Airmen to promote healing through a holistic rehabilitation approach.