



Surgeon's Corner



Mental health is just as important as physical health, and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you are a veteran struggling with mental health issues, know that you are not alone and there is help available.

Eight actions you can take to improve your wellbeing:

1. Stay connected with loved ones: Maintaining strong relationships with family and friends can provide emotional support during difficult times. Connect with others: Make time for meaningful social connections and relationships, which can help reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Connect with other veterans: Joining a veteran's group or connecting with other veterans can provide a sense of camaraderie and support. Engage in activities you enjoy: Make time for hobbies and activities that bring you joy and help you relax.
2. Prioritize self-care: Practice good self-care habits, such as regular exercise, healthy eating, and getting enough sleep. Getting enough restful sleep is crucial for good mental health.
3. Practice self-compassion: Be kind and gentle with yourself, and practice self-compassion when things do not go as planned.
4. Engage in stress reduction techniques: Mindfulness, yoga, and other stress reduction techniques can help manage symptoms of anxiety and depression. Practice mindfulness: Mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, and yoga, can help reduce stress and anxiety. Engage in regular physical activity: Exercise can help improve mood and reduce anxiety and depression.
5. Eat a healthy, balanced diet: A well-balanced diet can help improve overall physical and mental health.
6. Educate yourself: Learn as much as you can about mental health conditions and treatment options to better understand your own experiences and advocate for your needs.
7. Utilize VA resources: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers a variety of mental health resources, including counseling and therapy services, support groups, and online resources. Your VA primary care provider can help you get an appointment with a VA mental health professional. If you are unsure about your needs, you can call 877-222-8387

References:

WDVA state PTSD counselors: <https://www.dva.wa.gov/counseling/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/find-ptsd-counselors>

1. VA mental health services: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/>
2. Seek professional help: If you are struggling with mental health issues, consider seeking help from a mental health professional who specializes in treating veterans.

Remember, self-care is important for maintaining good mental health, and it looks different for everyone. Experiment with different strategies to find what works best for you.

Resources:

WDVA state PTSD counselors: <https://www.dva.wa.gov/counseling/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/find-ptsd-counselors>

VA mental health services: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/>

Dr. Olav Opedal