



## Mental Health Resources for Veteran Families

### Mental Health Facts in the U.S.

Veterans, especially those who deployed overseas, face elevated risks of mental health conditions.

Roughly **one in five** veterans experience mental health problems, including posttraumatic stress, depression, and anxiety (Rand Corporation, 2019).

Almost **18 veterans die by suicide daily**. The veteran suicide rate is 1.5 times more than non-veterans (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020).

Deployment can also increase the risk of unhealthy alcohol and drug use, substance use disorders, and suicidal behavior.

If untreated, these conditions can have long-lasting and damaging consequences for the well-being of veterans and their families (Rand Corporation, 2019).



Check out the MSU Extension article “**Mental health resources for veterans**” at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/mental-health-resources-for-veterans>.

### MSU EXTENSION MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension offers evidence-based programs with alternative approaches for mental health:

**Mental Health First Aid (MHFA):** In this eight-hour course, participants are taught how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a mental health crisis, and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

MHFA emphasizes recovery and resiliency, and provides a five-step action plan (ALGEE) to help those trained effectively assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis, and connect them to the care and resources they need to recover:

- **Assess for risk of suicide or harm:**  
Look for signs of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- **Listen nonjudgmentally:**  
Use appropriate verbal and nonverbal skills.
- **Give reassurance and information:**  
Provide beneficial resources to assist with emotional support.
- **Encourage appropriate professional help:**  
Provide a variety of local and national resources.
- **Encourage self-help and other support strategies:**  
Offer helpful sources of support.



Sign up for training on MSU Extension’s MHFA page at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/mental-health-first-aid/>.

**Stress Less With Mindfulness:** In this five-week series, participants are introduced to mindfulness concepts and practices to reduce stress and its related symptoms (for example, anxiety and physical tension). Sign up for a class on MSU Extension’s Mindfulness Events page at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/stress-less-with-mindfulness/events>.

**Michigan Substance Use, Prevention, Education and Recovery (MiSUPER):** This collaborative project combines education and training events to increase awareness of opioid use disorder issues. Learn more at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/misuper/>.

For more information, check out MSU Extension’s Mental Health page at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/mental-health/>.

See Mental Health Resources for Veterans at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/mental-health-resources-for-veterans>.



## MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FOR VETERANS

**VA Healthcare System:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has substantial capacity to deliver mental health care, and despite reports of access problems, most enrollees do not wait long for appointments (Rand Corporation, 2019). In 2018, the VA provided mental health care to an estimated 1.7 million veterans (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2021).

- Call or walk into any VA medical center – anytime, day or night.

**Mental Health Care With Private Providers:**

Veterans receive a substantial amount of care from private providers and the VA is helping private providers serve veterans more effectively through resource sharing and training programs. Seventy percent of inpatient visits and 85 percent of office visits for veterans occur outside of the VA (Rand Corporation, 2019).

- You are not alone, and these services can help.

Find these and many other resources at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/>.

Find a VA, vet center or in-network community care provider at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>.

## VETERAN OUTREACH

MSU Extension provides veterans with programs and services supporting personal and financial wellness:



**SNAP Outreach for Veterans:** This program explains the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit and offers enrollment assistance to veterans through the Food and Other Resources Helpline at 888-544-8773.



**Heroes to Hives:** This unique program offers professional training and community development centered around beekeeping.

Learn more at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/Veterans>.

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Talk to someone right now.



Get connected, no matter your discharge status, service history, or eligibility for VA health care.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
800-273-8255 (TALK)  
Text 838255

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
treatment locator:

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

Psychology Today provider list:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>

Michigan Peer-led Warmline:  
888-733-7753

## REFERENCES

Rand Corporation. (2019). *Improving the Quality of Mental Health Care for Veterans*. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB10087.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10087.html)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2021). *VA mental health services*. <https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. (2020). *2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*. <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2020/2020-National-Veteran-Suicide-Prevention-Annual-Report-11-2020-508.pdf>