

# THE VETERANS GUIDE

To Mental Health Services at the Orlando VA and surrounding area



Compiled by the Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council



## Welcome to your Mental Health Services Guide

The Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council (CFVMHC) has developed this guide to help you access the services you need. We realize that many times accessing Mental Health Services can feel like an overwhelming task, particularly when you are least able to put up with the delays, confusion, and lack of coordination of the system. This guide will help you break through some of the confusion and help you get the services you need -when you need them.

Veterans these days can-and are encouraged to take a more active role in their health care, including mental health. This new model looks at the doctor-patient relationship as one of partners. However, as in any partnership each has specific responsibilities. The doctor (or other provider) has the responsibility to ask questions, actively listen, provide treatment options based on your needs and goals, provide support to meet your goals, and provide follow-up. The Veteran has the responsibility to speak openly and honestly with your provider, ask questions, do what you agree to do, and when that is not possible, communicate with your provider. The days are gone where the doc is going to throw a bottle of pills at you and say “have a nice day.” We on the CFVMHC say: good riddance! The days where you have to trudge out to the VA just to get a message to your provider are also gone. The VA has provided many ways to follow-up with your providers. We urge you to use these methods-- they work! Each of these methods will be discussed in more details in this guide. There is secure messaging, telephone triage, and calling the clinic. To sign up for secure messaging, ask any provider. If you are at the main hospital, there is someone in the library on the 4th floor that will be happy to set you up.

This guide is also designed to provide information to family members and significant others. If the Veteran you care about is in crisis and they are unable or unwilling to reach out — then YOU should call the Veterans crisis line (800-273-8255 option 1). The crisis line can give you the information you need to help your Veteran. Help is out there.

Lastly, recovery from mental illness is real. It may take time and effort, but it is so worth it, and you are worth it. You deserve it.

## A word about the Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council

The Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council is an independent organization with a twofold mission.

The first being to assist Orlando VA Mental Health Services in establishing and maintaining policies and guidelines used to care for Veterans. The second is to establish a true partnership between Veterans, their families, VA Mental Health professionals, community partners and Veteran service organizations in order to improve the quality of VA Mental Health services, to improve Veterans’ understanding of those services, and to make services more accessible for Central Florida’s Veterans.

# Table of Contents

## SECTION 1 Tab Color

Finding your way.....	1
VAMC in Lake Nona.....	1
Lake Baldwin Clinic.....	2
Community Outpatient Clinics .....	3-4
Travel.....	5-7

## SECTION 2 Tab Color

Mental Health Care.....	8-13
OEF/OIF/OND.....	14
Frequently Asked Questions.....	15-17

## SECTION 3 Tab Color

Veterans Community Care.....	18-21
Vet-to-Vet Support Programs.....	22-23
Vocational Rehabilitation.....	24
Emergency Planning.....	25-26
Local Resources for Central Florida.....	26

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For More Info Visit: [www.cfvvhc.org](http://www.cfvvhc.org)

September 2019 Edition  
Version 9.0

# Finding Your Way Around

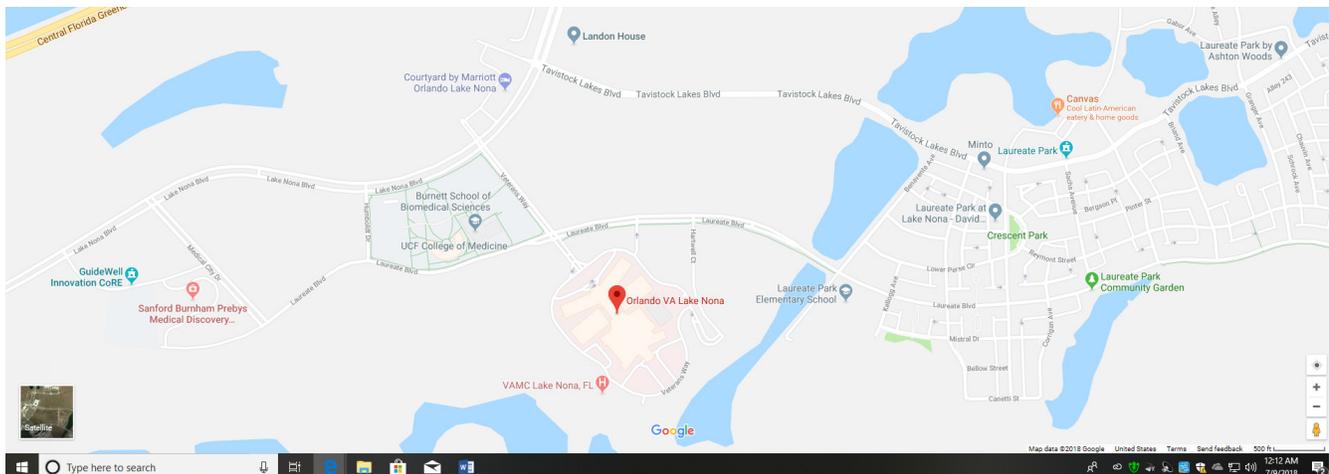
The Orlando VAMC address is: 13800 Veterans Way, Orlando, FL 32827. The new VA Medical Center in Lake Nona is now Open. The 1.2 million square foot facility has a large multispecialty outpatient clinic, 134-inpatient beds, 120-community living center beds, a 60-bed domiciliary and administrative and support services. The VA Lake Nona Campus is co-located with the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, the Burnham Institute, the University of Florida Academic and Research Center, and Nemours Children's Hospital in the area known as the "Medical City."



The emergency Room at Lake Nona is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays, to provide Veterans with walk-in care. The Emergency Room is located on the first floor of the Lake Nona Hospital, to the left of the main hospital entrance at the rear of the facility.

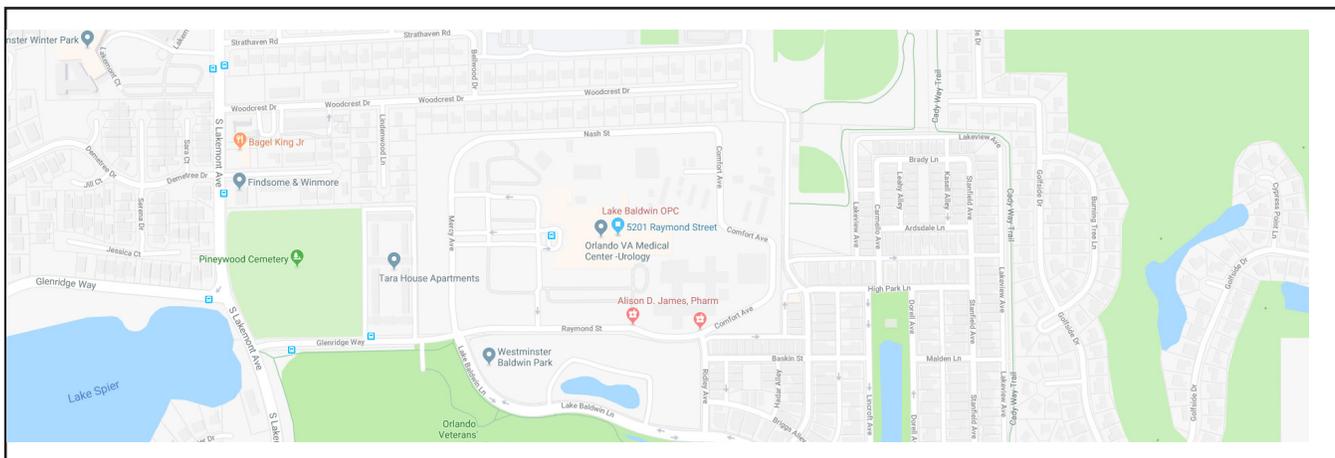
You can find the Phone numbers at:

<https://www.orlando.va.gov/newmedcenter/orlmedcenternew.asp>



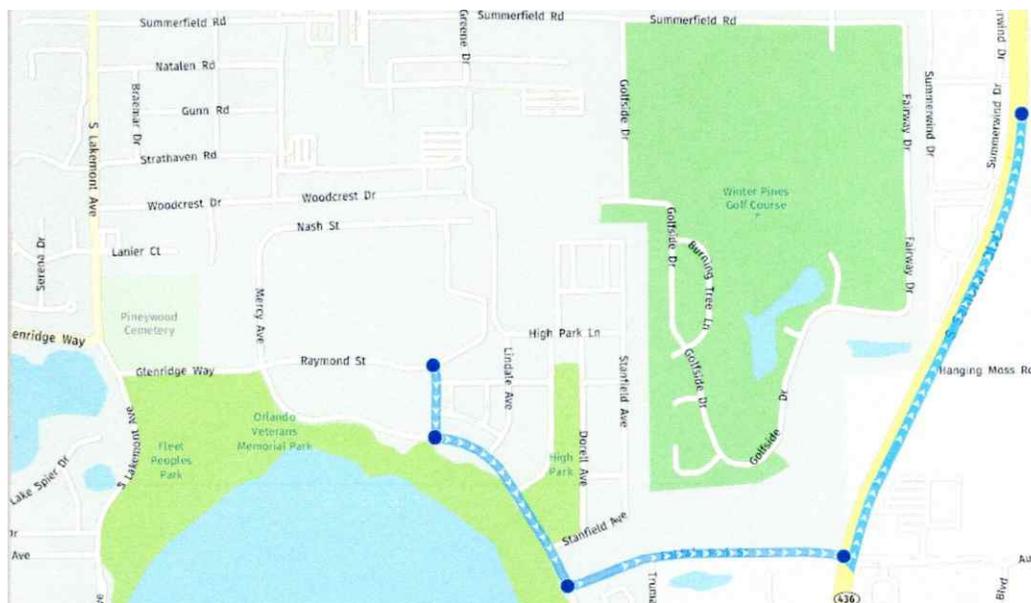
# The Lake Baldwin Community Based Outpatient Clinic

is located at 5201 Raymond Street, Orlando, FL. This is the location of the former Orlando VAMC. It is in the Winter Park area, adjacent to the Baldwin Park neighborhood. <https://www.orlando.va.gov/locations/lakebaldwin.asp>



# Crossroads Annex

3



Many of the mental health services are at the Crossroads Annex. It is located on Semoran Boulevard between Hanging Moss Road and University Boulevard in the Crossroads Business Center. This is about 2 miles from the Lake Baldwin campus at 925 South Semoran Blvd, Suite 114, Winter Park, FL. (If using a GPS, be sure to put Winter Park, not Orlando!) There is a shuttle between the main facility and Crossroads that you can catch outside the lab/pharmacy areas.

An additional facility for the expansion of Mental Health Services for Orlando VAMC.

## Features

- Mental Health Services
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Suicide Prevention
- Neuropsychology
- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Mental Health Intensive Case Management

For Nurse Triage, Pharmacy or to make and cancel an appointment call the Telecare line Monday thru Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm.

Local: 407-599-1404

Toll Free: 1-800-645-6895

## Shuttle

The shuttle service from the Orlando VA Medical Center is currently available on a “On Call” basis. The number to call to schedule shuttle service to or from the Lake Baldwin facility is: (407)793-9408

## Driving Directions

Located on Semoran Boulevard between Hanging Moss Road and University Boulevard in the Crossroads Business Center

Approximately 2 miles from the main clinic

## Parking

Free on premises

## Community Based Outpatient Clinics Locations

Kissimmee CBOC  
2285 N. Central Ave.  
Kissimmee, FL 34741  
Phone: 407-518-5004

<https://www.orlando.va.gov/locations/kissimmee.asp>

Tavares CBOC  
1390 E. Burleigh Blvd.  
Tavares, FL 32778  
Phone: 352-253-2900

<https://www.orlando.va.gov/locations/leesburg.asp>

Clermont CBOC  
805 Oakley Seaver Drive  
Clermont, FL 34711  
Phone: 352-536-8200

<https://www.orlando.va.gov/locations/Clermont.asp>

Deltona  
1200 Deltona Blvd.  
Suites 41-47  
Deltona, FL 32725  
Phone: 407-631-4436

<https://www.deltonafl.gov/home/events/5673>

Large CBOC's  
William V. Chappell, Jr., OPC  
551 National Health Care Drive Daytona Beach, FL 32114-1495  
Phone: 386-323-7500

<https://www.orlando.va.gov/locations/daytona.asp>

Viera OPC  
2900 Veteran's Way Viera, FL 32940  
Phone: 321-637-3788

<https://www.orlando.va.gov/locations/Viera.asp>

Vet Centers  
Orlando: 5575 S. Semoran Blvd. #30, Orlando, FL 32822  
Clermont: 1655 E Hwy 50, Clermont, FL 34711  
Melbourne: 2098 Sarno Rd., Melbourne, FL 32935  
Daytona: 1620 Mason Ave., Suite C, Daytona Beach, FL 32117

# TRAVEL

## Round - Trip Schedule

Lake Baldwin to Lake Nona Shuttle Medical Centers



ORLANDO VAMC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE IS MAKING DAILY ROUND TRIP RUNS BETWEEN LAKE BALDWIN AND LAKE NONA FACILITIES

The Orlando VAMC recognizes difficulties Veterans who are visually impaired, mobilized or elderly may face in traveling to VA healthcare facilities, especially those living in remote and rural areas

The Orlando VAMC program provides Veterans cost-free transportation available from VA clinic or other official pick-up points to and from Lake Baldwin and Lake Nona Medical center facilities

Questions about the schedule or lost and found items, please contact Vehicle Dispatch at:  
407-599-1599 Ext. 28063

Travel time for each shuttle can be from 30 minutes to 1 hour due to traffic. Delays are possible and we appreciate your patience and understanding.

No reservation needed, pick-up and drop-off will be at the front entrance (by the fountain at Lake Baldwin) and the front entrance at Lake Nona.

Lake Baldwin Departures	Lake Nona Departures
Times	Times
0600	None
0700	0700
0800	0800
0900	0900
1000	1000
1100	1100
1200	1200
1300	1300
1400	1400
1500	1500
1600	1600
None	1700

When you travel on the shuttle you are required to present your VA ID Card

## TRAVEL (cont.)

Owl Inc. Transportation provides safe and reliable door-to-door local and long distance Non-Emergency Medical Transportation service for private customer and veterans. We are committed to providing the highest quality and safest service to our clients. Our organization's team consist of drivers, patient care managers and management staff that effectively work together to provide each client with the most complete on time door-to door service.

Owl Inc. Transportation manages transportation for:

- VAMAC Medical Centers throughout the U.S.
- Medicare and Medicaid programs
- State and local governments
- Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)
- Private Clients

OWL, Inc is reliable and compassion – the support we provide makes all the difference when you are in need of non-emergency transportation services. We care and guarantee that our guests are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. Non-Emergency Transportation involves getting a guest from point “A” to point “B” when the medical condition is not life threatening.

Examples of non-emergency transportation services are:

Doctor Appointments  
Outpatient Surgery  
Physical Therapy  
Chiropractic Appointments  
Prescription Pickup

We provide Door-To-Door from Point A to Point B Non-Emergency Medical Transportation You may have to arrange this transportation through your provider. They service the entire Central Florida area.

Owl Transportation Orlando office:

690 N. Semoran Blvd  
Orlando Fl 32806  
Office: 407-930-7940  
Fax: 407-930-7941

Beneficiary Travel (BT): The Beneficiary Travel program provides eligible Veterans and other beneficiaries mileage reimbursement, common carrier (plane, train, bus, taxi, light rail etc.), or when medically indicated, “special mode” (ambulance, wheelchair van) transport for travel to and from VA health care, or VA authorized non-VA health care for which the Veteran is eligible.

Beneficiary Travel Benefits:

A Veteran may be eligible for Beneficiary travel services if the following criteria are met.

- You have a service-connected {SC} rating of 30 percent or more, or
- You are traveling for treatment of a SC condition, or
- You receive a VA Pension, or your income does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate, or
- You are traveling for a scheduled compensation or pension examination

How to apply:

Veterans may apply for travel reimbursement by completing VA Form 10-3542 {Veteran/Beneficiary Claim for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses}.

The travel reimbursement form replaces older versions and local forms and improves the process for Veterans applying for mileage reimbursement at more than one VA facility.

## Methods to request travel pay

- Visit the Beneficiary Travel Office after completing an appointment, or
- Complete your Beneficiary Travel claim at one of the conveniently located kiosks, or
- Send the travel reimbursement form via either secure fax (if, applicable) or mail to the local Beneficiary Travel Office.

Applications for payment must be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date the travel is completed or

the date the applicant is notified he or she is eligible for travel payments if the request is based on a change in eligibility.

All receipts (original) must be submitted at the time your claim is placed.

### Mileage Rates

Mileage Calculations: The mapping tool VA uses for beneficiary travel will now calculate the driving distance using the fastest route and shortest route according to Bing maps. This is a change to the Beneficiary Travel program that will make the distance determinations consistent with distance calculations under the Veterans Choice Program.

## General Travel

The current mileage reimbursement rate is \$0.415 (41.5 cents) per mile for general travel. Scheduled appointments qualify for round-trip mileage.

### Mileage Rates

Unscheduled visits may be limited to return mileage only. The reimbursement will be paid for travel to the closest VA facility unless a different location was determined by VA.

### Deductible:

The deductible is \$3.00 one-way (\$6.00 round trip). Deductible requirement is subject to a monthly cap of \$18. Upon reaching \$18 in deductibles or six oneway (or three round trips) trips, whichever comes first, in a calendar month travel payment for the balance of that month will be free of deductible charges.

### Waivers of Deductible:

A waiver of the deductible may be provided, if you are eligible for travel and are:

- In receipt of a VA pension, or
- A Non-Service-Connected Veteran and your previous year's income does not exceed (or your projected current calendar year's income, in the year of application will not exceed) the applicable VA pension rate, or
- A Service-Connected Veteran and your previous year's income does not exceed (or your projected current calendar year's income in the year of application will not exceed) the applicable national means test income threshold or

### Traveling for a scheduled compensation and pension exam.

For more details on the travel policy and information on special mode transportation please refer to the frequently asked questions at: <http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/BeneficiaryTravel.asp>.

Special Mode transportation: These are consults submitted by providers for their patients to have the VA transport the patient to and from the treatment facility. In order to be eligible for special mode of transportation, the following criteria must be met.

1. You must meet one of the eligibility criteria above.
2. Your medical condition requires an ambulance or a specially equipped van as determined by a VA clinician, and
3. The travel is pre-authorized (authorization is not required for emergencies if a delay would be hazardous to life or health).

## Mental Health Care

The information that follows is specific to the Orlando VA and its affiliated CBOCs.

### Primary Care Mental Health

The Front Door to Mental Health Care Primary Care Mental Health (PCMH) is the entry point to all mental health services. Every primary care (PACT) team has a psychologist who is available to you for immediate consultation. That psychologist can help you to better manage your health, mood, life stressors, relationships, and increase your overall engagement in life. Every PACT team also has PCMH care managers who can help you understand your symptoms, how treatment can help you, and keep tabs on your progress.

The psychologist or care manager can suggest care adjustments as needed, including making a referral to the specialty mental health teams. PCMH treatment is designed to be convenient (same-day availability on your team and over the phone) and problem-focused. If you want to see your PCMH psychologist, just ask your primary care doctor or clerk to introduce you to the team mental health provider.

### GROUPS

There are a wide range of groups and classes available including:

- Coping with Medical Disease
- Freedom from Smoking
- Responsible Drinking
- Weight Management
- CPAP Adjustment
- Tinnitus Management
- Coping with Chronic Pain
- Improving Sleep and Nightmare Resolution
- Healthy Relationships
- Mindfulness
- Mood Management
- Behavioral Activation for Depression and Anxiety
- Memory Enhancement
- Problem Solving to Help Achieve Life's Goals



## Specialty Mental Health Services

### Extended, Specialized Care (BHIP):

Orlando VA Medical Center (OVAMC) has 8 Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program Teams (BHIPs); each team consists of psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, psychologists, clinical pharmacists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, addictions therapists, nurses, and peer support specialists. They provide treatment for the full range of mental health issues, including PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, psychoses, homelessness, and other problems. Treatment may be in the form of group, family, or individual therapy and/or medication management. The whole team is your team. If there is something you need, ask any provider to set you up and appointment.

### Getting to the BHIPs:

Consults must be sent by the PCMH psychologists to the BHIPs. Every BHIP provides the full range of services. You will work with the team to determine your Mental Health Treatment Coordinator. That person will help you develop your treatment plan and get you on the path to recovery through medication treatment, therapy, or other services as needed.

### PTSD Services:

PTSD: Trauma Recovery has three levels of intensity. Basic Training is for Veterans who want a better understanding of PTSD and/or who need additional support before beginning more intensive treatment. This level of care is usually done in a BHIP team. Intensive Retraining is designed for Veterans who want to get control of their trauma symptoms quickly and who are ready to do some hard work to get there. Reintegration is designed for those who have achieved recovery from their trauma symptoms, but continue to have some difficulties in their relationships, work, or ability to enjoy life. Medication is often a helpful adjunct to behavioral therapy for PTSD. Your provider can help you decide the right starting point for you. Sometimes your provider will refer you to the specialize PTSD treatment program. These services are available at all sites, on weekends, in the evening, or by telehealth to your home. If you have a preference, ask your provider.

### Substance Use Services

The Orlando VA offers a full range of substance use treatment through a variety of services. You can work with your team to determine whether a residential program, Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), Relapse Prevention, or other substance use services are most appropriate for you.

### Mood Problems (Depression and Anxiety):

There are several treatment options available for depression and anxiety, including the most effective treatments: evidence-based psychotherapy and medication management. If you feel that you would benefit from state-of-the-art treatment for depression or anxiety, please ask your provider about medication options as well as group or individual therapy options. These services are available at all sites, on weekends, in the evening, or by telehealth to your home. If you have a preference, ask your provider.

### Adjusting to Medical Illness:

There are several disease-specific groups, as well as general medical illness support groups available through the PCMH and BHIPs. Talk to your provider if you believe that group support would be helpful to you in coping with your medical illness, sleep apnea, tinnitus, chronic pain, or sleep disturbances.



### Caregiver/Family Support:

Many times, family members suffer along with the Veteran as we live with mental health problems. For this reason, the BHIPs also offer a variety of support and education classes to families. If you have a family member who might benefit from learning more about your mental health issues, please ask about Support and Family Education (SAFE) class or Family-to-Family.

### Peer Support:

There are several peer support classes offered at different times, places, and locations. If you'd like to talk to a Veteran who has walked in your shoes and can tell you first-hand about their recovery journey, please ask about the Peer Support program.

### LGBT Support:

There is an LGBT support and skills group available on the BHIPs, for those who would like to talk with others who are struggling with issues of sexuality, gender identity, and stigma.

### Anger or Stress Management:

There are several anger management classes available. There are also several stress management and problem solving classes available. Ask your BHIP for the schedule to see which one fits your needs.

### Intensive Case Management for Mental Health Recovery:

The ICMHR program includes both the Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) team and Rural Access Network for Growth Enhancement (RANGE) teams. These programs are for Veterans who:

- Have struggled with severe mental illness and just can't seem to get ahead
- Want to stay out of the hospital and learn to live independently
- Want to learn new skills
- Have thought "there has to be more to life than just struggling along with this disease."

The ICMHR programs are home- and community-based care for Veterans who have a history of severe mental illness. These providers will come to a Veteran's home to provide the assistance they need. The primary goals are to increase Veterans' functioning in the community and decrease hospitalization. MHICM and RANGE involvement is always voluntary. Your BHIP can write a consult to MHICM or RANGE for you to get more information and an evaluation.

### Marriage and Family Therapy:

Couples therapy and family therapy are for families who are suffering as a result of a Veteran's illness. These services are provided by Licensed Marriage & Family Therapists (LMFTs) who specialize in couple and family issues and treatment. Ask your provider for a referral.

### Residential Services:

Residential services are programs that house Veterans during their treatment. The Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program – Usually shortened to DR RTP or Dom) is a residential rehabilitative therapeutic community designed to help Veterans achieve their personal goals and return to independent community living. It uses a therapeutic community of peer and professional support. Because the mission is to serve Veterans with multiple and severe deficits, the DR RTP cannot be used simply for housing or lodging. Veterans with multiple and severe medical &

mental illnesses, addictions and psychosocial deficits are welcome to apply for admission through their Mental Health provider. Some people prefer to ask the program staff directly. You can also show up and ask to talk to someone about whether this is right for you. Not all Veterans need this level of structure or monitoring, but if you do ask any provider to do a consult for you.

**Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Centers (or PRRCs):** The Orlando VA has two PR-RCs: the Center for Recovery Education (CORE) at the Lake Baldwin campus and the Veterans Wellness Recovery Program at the Daytona Beach campus. Both programs help Veterans who have serious mental illness like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or chronic PTSD create a meaningful life within their own communities. Veterans in these programs have consistent access to recovery-oriented interventions and natural community-based supports that are essential for living, working, learning, and contributing fully in the community. Some of these interventions include social skills training, community integration, goal setting, wellness planning, peer support, education, help finding or keeping a job, and family support. These activities are organized within a group format and are available as long as needed to support a Veteran's recovery. Programs are available each weekday, and Veterans are encouraged to design their own schedule of attendance. To get assistance just ask for a referral from your Mental Health or Primary Care provider. We very much want to support you along your journey to recovery and a more fulfilling life.

### **Suicide Prevention:**

Some Veterans struggle with thoughts of suicide. Specially trained Suicide Prevention teams are available at all VA Medical Centers across the country, including in the Orlando system. You can reach the Suicide Prevention team 24 hours a day at (800) 273-8255, (Press 1)

### **Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services:**

TSES was formerly known as the VHA Vocational Rehabilitation program. This is Voc Rehab specifically aimed at helping Veterans with serious mental illnesses who need more than traditional Voc Rehab. TSES is a part of a Veteran's comprehensive mental health treatment by promoting recovery through employment. The overall aim of TSES is to help Veterans secure and maintain competitive employment within the community. TSES is comprised of several programs, each with their own unique focus and vocational rehabilitation services. Veterans that are interested in TSES services should discuss this with their mental health providers.

### **Care-Coordination Home Telehealth And Veterans Video Connect (VVC):**

New technologies make it easier for Veterans who have a health problem like depression, psychosis, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to receive treatment in their home. A special device (tele-buddy) can be easily installed in your home to allow you to communicate with a care coordinator daily or as needed. Some Veterans lack transportation or need treatments that are not available close by. Providers can provide those services by video instead of in-person. For additional information, ask any mental health or primary care provider for a referral.

### **Emergency Services:**

The emergency Room at Lake Nona is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays, to provide Veterans with walk-in care. The Emergency Room is located on the first floor of the Lake Nona Hospital, to the left of the main hospital entrance at the rear of the facility.

### **Inpatient Mental Health Services:**

There are 40 inpatient Mental health beds open at Lake Nona. These units specialize in taking care of ONLY Veterans. If you are afraid that you might be a danger to yourself or others, walk into the emergency room or your local MH clinic right away. The VA will get you the help you need.

## Medical Psychology Programs

### Behavioral Treatments for Pain and Chronic Illness Management:

Individual and group therapies/classes are available for Veterans with a variety of chronic pain conditions related to illnesses and injuries (e.g., low back pain, fibromyalgia, complex regional pain syndrome, headaches). Treatments will teach you a number of coping strategies to more effectively manage your pain and improve your overall functioning and quality of life. Providers are available at both the Lake Nona and Lake Baldwin locations, as well as Viera Clinic. For those with transportation and travel difficulties, telehealth services to your home are also available through VA Video Connect (VVC).

### Home Based Primary Care (HBPC):

HBPC provides comprehensive, interdisciplinary, primary care in the homes of Veterans with complex medical, social, and behavioral conditions. HBPC is designed to serve Veterans with complex and chronic illness, providing primary care, palliative care, rehabilitation, disease management, and coordination of care services. Mental health providers are an integral member of each HBPC team. HBPC Mental Health Providers work closely with the HBPC interdisciplinary team (including nurses, physicians, social workers, pharmacists, dieticians, and rehabilitation therapists) to facilitate coordinated evaluation and treatment of mental health concerns.

### Neuropsychology:

Your provider may refer you to a neuropsychologist to assess potential problems with brain functioning, help form a diagnosis, define your thinking skill strengths and weaknesses, guide treatment for your personal, educational or vocational needs, make relevant recommendations to you, your family, and your doctors.

A neuropsychological evaluation involves testing that is sensitive to problems in brain functioning. Unlike CT or MRI scans, which show what the structure of the brain looks like, neuropsychological testing examines how well the brain is working when it performs certain functions (e.g., learning). The types of tests you will take depend upon the questions you and your doctor have. These tests are not invasive - they do not involve attaching you to machines or using x-rays. Most of the tests will involve questions and answers or working with materials on a table. You will also spend time talking about your medical, personal and school history. After the completion of your testing, they will schedule an appointment to go over the results and discuss recommendations. This information will also be sent to your medical providers.

### Special Populations

**Military Sexual Trauma:** Military sexual trauma (MST) is the term that the Department of Veterans Affairs uses to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment that occurred while the veteran was in the military. It includes any sexual activity where someone is involved against his or her will -he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities (for example, with threats of negative consequences or with implied favors in exchange for sex), may have been unable to consent to sexual activities (for example, when intoxicated), or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Other experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and/or threatening and unwelcome sexual advances. Both women and men can experience MST during their service. We also know that people can recover from trauma. The VA has services to help veterans with recovery from MST. You do not need to be service connected and may be able to receive this benefit even if you are not eligible for other VA care. You do not need to have reported the incident when it happened or have other documentation that it occurred. Ask your Primary Care provider, social worker, or another direct care staff to refer you to a mental health provider. More information is available at [http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/Military Sexual Trauma.asp](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/Military%20Sexual%20Trauma.asp).

## Health Care for Homeless Veterans

The Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Team facilitates referrals for physical and mental health evaluations and/or to programs which are the most appropriate for the veteran, such as:

### HUD-VA Supportive Housing (VASH):

HUD-VASH program is a joint effort between HUD and VA to move veterans and their families out of homelessness and into permanent housing. HUD provides housing assistance through its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) that allows homeless veterans to rent privately owned housing. Goal of helping homeless veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination.

### Grant and Per Diem (GPO) Transitional Housing:

VA's Grant and Per Diem Program funds community agencies providing services to homeless veterans. The purpose is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping Veterans find permanent housing and employment.

### Veterans Justice Out- reach (VJO):

The purpose of the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Initiative is to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans have timely access to VA mental health and substance use services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.

## Special Populations

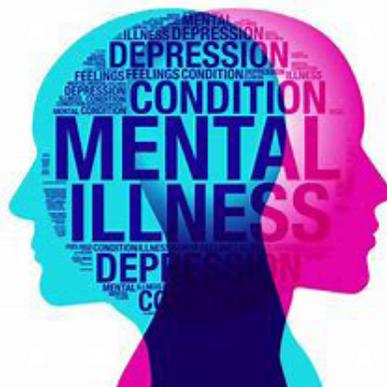
The VA recognizes that some groups of Veterans need a little extra attention and help. There are programs to make sure they get what they need. These are called the Special Emphasis Programs. You will see posters and video advertisements for these programs at all sites of care and on the OVAMC website. These programs include:

### Women's Health:

The Orlando Women's Primary Care Clinic (Liberty Team at Lake Nona) offers comprehensive medical and mental health services for our female veterans. Some Women's health care services are also available at the CBOCs. Please ask any provider or social worker for more specific information.

### Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):

If you are experiencing physical or psychological violence from your spouse or partner, the VA can help. Ask and MH or Primary Care provider to connect you.



## OIF/OEF/OND

The Central Florida Veterans' Mental Health Council and the Orlando VAMC welcome our newest generation of Veterans: those from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation New Dawn, and all other post-9/11 Veterans. Having been in your boots, we know how difficult the transition from military to civilian life can be, and we would like to help you. We extend a hand to any who will accept it. Please reach out to us at: <http://cfvmhc.org/>. The OVAMC is also extending services to you: for the first five years after combat deployment, you are eligible for all of your medical and mental health care here, regardless of service connection status. There are OEF/OIF case managers and mental health services available in the post deployment clinic.

The Orlando VA Medical Center is grateful to the men and women who risk their lives to fight terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq and many other places around the world. We value your service, sacrifice and the dedication given in support of our country and our cherished freedom. Transition assistance and case management services are offered to returning veterans with the mission to ensure continuity and improved coordination of health care and benefits for seriously injured or ill service members returning from theaters of combat operations as they transition from DoD to the VA Healthcare System. All Veterans are encouraged to enroll in the VA Health Care System. To begin the process, please complete an application for health care benefits. Please feel free to contact our eligibility office or the OEF/OIF/OND Program Office.

Special Eligibility and Coordination of Care for Combat Veterans Serving in Combat Theater After 11/11/1998- Returning Servicemembers (OEF/OIF/OND): The Post-9/11 Transition and Care Management Program offers transitional assistance, case management and outreach services to all Veterans who have served after September 11, 2001 in their transition to civilian life. For more information about the various programs available for recent returning service members, log on to the Returning Servicemembers web site.

Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations also have special eligibility for VA health care. Under the "Combat Veteran" authority VA provides cost-free health care services and nursing home care for conditions possibly related to military service and enrollment in Priority Group 6 or higher for 5 years from the date of discharge or release from active duty, unless eligible for enrollment in a higher priority group.

Combat Veterans who enroll with VA under this enhanced Combat Veteran authority will continue to be enrolled even after their enhanced eligibility period ends, although they may be shifted to Priority Group 7 or 8, depending on their income level, and required to make applicable copays. Additionally, for care not related to combat service, copays may be required depending on their financial assessment and other special eligibility factors.

NOTE: The 5-year enrollment period applicable to these Veterans begins on the discharge or separation date of the service member from active duty military service, or in the case of multiple call-ups, the most recent



## Frequently Asked Questions:

### What is Recovery-Oriented Care?

Recovery is the process of restoring or building a life worth living, after the diagnosis or the illness. Recovery is a process of change through which people improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. There are four major dimensions that support recovery:

1. Health—overcoming or managing one’s disease(s) or symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being.
2. Home—having a stable and safe place to live.
3. Purpose—conducting meaningful daily activities and having the independence, income, and resources to participate in society.
4. Community—having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

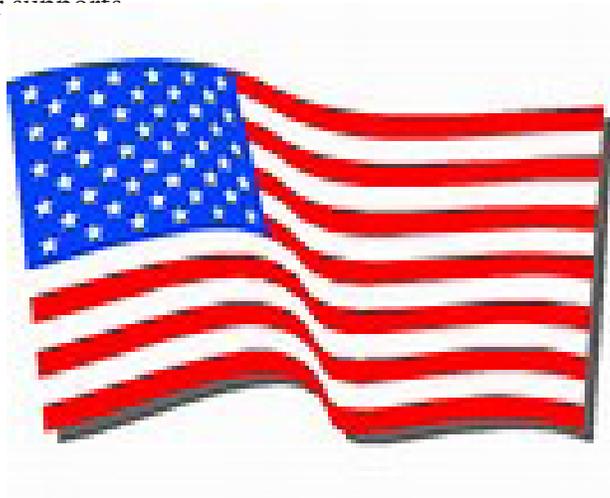
15

There are 10 Fundamental Components of Recovery:

1. Self-direction
2. Strengths-based
3. Individualized and person-centered
4. Holistic
5. Empowerment
6. Non-linear
7. Peer Support
8. Respect
9. Responsibility
10. Hope

### How Can My Treatment Have a Recovery Focus?

1. Talk about your goals, and strengths: past, present and future.
2. Let the seeds of possibility grow. Don’t lose hope.
3. Include what are you proud of and what things are going well.
4. Discuss the concepts of recovery to help fight “self stigma”.
5. Be a partner with providers to discuss goals and barriers to reaching of goals.
6. Learn how using treatment tools such as medicines and therapy can support you in managing symptoms and achieving your goals.
7. Consider connecting with community based and self-help supports
8. Include family or other supports



## What does VA mean by “Levels of Care?”

Levels of care refer to how intensive and controlled care is. Not everyone needs the highest level of care possible. In fact, the lower the level the better. People deserve as much freedom and as little disruption as possible while getting their care. Examples of the levels of MH care available are:

- Getting education about MH conditions and how to manage them
- Use of Apps to manage symptoms
- Problem-focused outpatient behavioral treatments in your primary care team
- Specialized general MH care in a BHIP or CBOC
- Specialized and intensive outpatient care for specific disorders like PTSD, SUD, or Schizophrenia
- Intensive daily or in-home services like PRRC, MHICM or Home Based Primary Care
- Residential Programs like the DOM
- Emergency Services
- Inpatient Mental Health Care.

## What are episodes of care?

Episodes of care refers to getting what you need and getting on with your life. Some people believe that once diagnosed with a mental illness, they will be in treatment forever. For most Vets, this is not true. Both Behavioral therapies and medicines are better than in the bad old days. Most Vets can get a specific problem (sleep, anxiety, depression, PTSD) treated and go back to a satisfying life. If new problems develop in the future, the VA will be here to help.

## How can I encourage a loved one to get mental health treatment?

Coaching into care Coaching Into Care (CIC) has been a national VA call center for over four years now. Our mission is to educate, support and empower family members and friends who are seeking care or services for a Veteran. We assist callers in a myriad of ways - from directing them to information on VA health care and enrollment to helping them know how to respond in a crisis. Most of what we do is help callers talk with their loved one about difficult topics like mental health and making a decision to seek treatment. The mental health talk can be one of the most difficult conversations we will ever have with a loved one. Let Coaching Into Care guide you. Each person and situation is different, but we know of some key steps to having a successful talk. Call us to learn what some of them are and what strategies might work best for you. When a Veteran you know needs help, call Coaching Into Care at (888) 823-7458 Monday through Friday 8am to 8pm Eastern.

## What is Self-Directed Care?

Self-Directed Care means that Veterans can-and are encouraged to take a more active role in their health care, including mental health. This new model looks at the doctor-patient relationship as one of partners. However, as in any partnership each has specific responsibilities. The doctor (or other provider) has the responsibility to ask questions, actively listen, provide treatment options based on your needs and goals, provide support to meet your goals, and provide follow-up. The Veteran has the responsibility to speak openly and honestly with your provider, ask questions, do what you agree to do, and when that is not possible, communicate with your provider. The days are gone where the doc is going to throw a bottle of pills at you and say “have a nice day.” We on the CFVMHC say: good riddance! The days where you have to trudge out to the VA just to get a message to your provider are also gone. The VA has provided many ways to follow-up with your providers. We urge you to use these methods-- they work! Each of these methods will be discussed in more details in this guide. There is secure messaging, telephone triage, and calling the clinic. To sign up for secure messaging, ask any provider. If you are at the main hospital, there is someone in the library on the 4th floor that will be happy to set you up.

## What is an Evidence-Based Therapy?

Therapies that are repeatedly shown in controlled research to be effective for a particular condition or conditions are referred to as “evidence-based” therapies. In mental health, there are evidence-based psychotherapies and pharmacotherapies (medicine) for PTSD and other anxiety disorders, depression, schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses, insomnia, and marital problems.

## What are the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs)?

CPGs are systematically developed statements to assist the practitioner and Veterans in choosing the most appropriate healthcare for specific conditions. In other words, they are a list of what works best for treating Mental Health problems. VA/DoD CPGs are available for PTSD, major depression, bipolar disorder, substance use disorder, and patients at risk for suicide. You can read the CPGs at [ww.healthquality.va.gov](http://ww.healthquality.va.gov) Or you can ask your provider to discuss what is right for you.



# Veterans Community Care

## Veterans Overview

VA provides health care for Veterans from providers in your local community outside of VA. Veterans may be eligible to receive care from a community provider when VA cannot provide the care you need. This care is provided on behalf of and paid for by VA. Community care is available to Veterans based on certain conditions and eligibility requirements, and in consideration of a Veteran's specific needs and circumstances. Community care must be first authorized by VA before a Veteran can receive care from a community provider.

## Accessing Community Care

Follow the steps below to see if you are eligible for community care:

### 1. Go to VA

Schedule an appointment with a VA provider (doctor).

Your VA care team will work with you to see if you are eligible for community care.

Eligibility is based on your medical needs, care that is available at VA, and other requirements.

### 2. Make an Appointment

VA will work with you to find a community provider and make an appointment.

You can select a community provider or VA can select one for you.

### 3. Receive Care

Arrive promptly for your appointment.

If you need to schedule a follow-up appointment, check with your community provider to make sure VA has authorized the care.

**IMPORTANT:** Make sure VA confirms you are eligible and authorized before proceeding to Step 2.

**IMPORTANT:** The community provider selected must be in VA's network and be willing to accept payment from VA.

**IMPORTANT:** If VA has not authorized follow-up care, your community provider should contact VA to arrange the care you need.

If you have a question about your specific care needs, contact your VA medical facility.

Veterans Choice Program Support Line:

(866) 606-8198

Call for additional information or to speak to one of our service agents.

VA Adverse Credit Helpline:

(877) 881-7618

Call for help resolving adverse credit reporting and debt collection issues as a result of using the Veterans Choice Program.

## Emergency Medical Care

During a medical emergency, Veterans should immediately seek care at the nearest medical facility. A medical emergency is an injury, illness or symptom so severe that without immediate treatment, you believe your life or health is in danger. If you believe your life or health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an emergency department. During a medical emergency, VA encourages all Veterans to seek immediate medical attention without delay. A claim for emergency care will never be denied based solely on VA not receiving notification prior to seeking care.



## Veterans Community Care Emergency Medical Care (cont.)

### Nonservice-Connected Emergency Care

VA can also pay for emergency medical care at a community ED for a Veteran's nonservice-connected condition. However, there are several requirements and factors that affect the extent to which VA can cover those services. Specifically, emergency medical care for a Veteran's nonservice-connected condition(s) is eligible for VA payment when all of the following five elements are true:

Care was provided in a hospital emergency department (or similar public facility held to provide emergency treatment to the public); AND

The emergency was of such a nature that the Veteran (or other prudent layperson without medical training) would reasonably believe that any delay in seeking immediate medical attention would cause their life or health to be placed in jeopardy; AND

A VA medical facility or another Federal facility was not reasonably available to provide the care; AND

The Veteran is enrolled and has received care within a VA facility during the 24 months before the emergency care; AND

The Veteran is financially liable to the provider of emergency treatment.

There are limitations on VA's ability to provide coverage when a Veteran has other health insurance (OHI). If OHI does not fully cover the costs of treatment, VA can pay certain costs for which the Veteran is personally liable. By law, VA cannot pay copayments, coinsurance, deductibles, or similar payments a Veteran may owe to the provider as required by their OHI.

VA is also legally prohibited from providing coverage for individuals covered under a health plan contract because of a failure by the Veteran or the provider to comply with the provisions of that health plan contract, e.g., failure to submit a bill or medical records within specified time limits, or failure to exhaust appeals of the denial of payment.

NOTE: Legal authorities and payment methods for VA payment for emergency care for nonservice-connected conditions are contained in Title 38 U.S.C. §1725 and 38 CFR §17.1000.



# Veterans Community Care Emergency Medical Care (cont.)

## Filing a Claim

### Veterans/Veterans' Representatives

Veterans or their personal representatives may file a claim for reimbursement of emergency treatment costs that they have incurred and paid to the provider. In this situation, Veterans should obtain and submit all related treatment and billing records to the closest VA medical facility. In most cases, providers will submit a claim directly to VA, and the Veteran will not have to take further action. Submit claims for services not preauthorized by VA to the VA medical facility closest to where the emergent treatment was provided.

### Providers;

Submission must include a standard billing form (such as a CMS 1450 or CMS 1500), containing false claims notice.

Submit claims via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transaction (such as an 837I or 837P).

Documentation related to the medical care may be required prior to claim processing.

### Service-Connected Condition

Claims must be submitted to VA within two (2) years of the date emergency medical care was received. However, filing the claim as soon as possible after care has been provided is highly recommended because it helps ensure that all required documentation is readily available and that providers receive their payment in a timely manner.

### Nonservice-Connected Condition

Claims must be submitted to VA within 90 days of the date of discharge, or 90 days from the date that all attempts to receive required payments from a liable third party are completed and not successful in eliminating the Veteran's personal liability to the provider. A liable third party includes other health insurers, worker's compensation, civil litigation, etc.

## Payment Rates

Service-Connected Condition: Generally, 100% Medicare rates

Nonservice-Connected Condition: Generally, 70% Medicare rates



## Vet-to-Vet and other mutual support programs

Many times, Veterans feel most comfortable in the company of other Veterans. Talking with others who have “been there, done that” provides support, assurance, understanding, and empowerment. King Solomon of Israel may have been the wisest man who ever lived.

He said: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up.” There are several peer support groups available at the Orlando



VA, the local Vet Centers, and in the community. Ask your provider for a list of mutual support groups. Community supports and programs: Support is available in the community as well. There are many organizations that specialize in mental health recovery, including NAMI ([www.namigo.org](http://www.namigo.org)), the Wounded Warrior Project

[www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs.aspx](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs.aspx) The Mission Continues

[www.missioncontinues.org](http://www.missioncontinues.org) the Camaraderie Foundation

[www.camaraderiefoundation.com](http://www.camaraderiefoundation.com) and Team Red-White-Blue

[www.teamrwb.org](http://www.teamrwb.org) just to name a few. MilitaryOneSource ([www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)) is an excellent source of information for community organizations supporting Veterans and our families. There are also several animal-assisted programs in the community, including K9s for Vets [www.k9sforveterans.org](http://www.k9sforveterans.org) and Freedom Ride [verticallimitfl@aol.com](mailto:verticallimitfl@aol.com), among others.

**Alumni programs:** The Orlando VA has several drop-in groups available for Veterans who have completed their formal therapy but want periodic check-ins to keep their skills sharp. The Dom, CPT groups, and the PRRC are some of the programs that offer alumni activities. Ask your provider.

**On-line resources and apps:** There are excellent online resources developed specifically for Veterans and military to cope with problems and mental health issues. Check programs such as Start Moving Forward for overcoming life’s challenges, and Military Parenting to improve your parenting skills; and check [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) for resources including online nonmedical counseling and transition services.

There are literally hundreds of apps for the iPhone for mental health. Some are free and some cost money to download. There are subjects ranging from self help to mental health tests and studies on mental health. To access these apps on your iPhone, tap “App Store” and then “Search” at the bottom of the page.



The Department of Defense developed BioZen to help service members use the therapeutic benefits of biofeedback. BioZen is the first portable,

low-cost method for clinicians and patients to use biofeedback in and out of the clinic.

This app takes many of the large medical sensors in a clinic and puts them in the hands of anyone with a smart phone. BioZen makes it easier for anyone to get started with biofeedback. <https://store.neurosky.com/products/biozen>



Breathe2Relax is a portable stress management tool. Breathe2Relax is a hands-on diaphragmatic breathing exercise. Breathing exercises have been documented to decrease the body's 'fight-or-flight' (stress) response, and help with mood stabilization, anger control, and anxiety management.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/breathe2relax/id425720246>



LifeArmor is a comprehensive learning and self-management tool to assist members of the military community with common mental health concerns. LifeArmor is portable and provides information and assistance at the touch of a button. <https://psyberguide.org/apps/lifearmor/>

PTSD Coach is a mobile application to assist Veterans and Active Duty personnel (and civilians) who are experiencing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).



[mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach](https://mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach)

The Positive Activity Jackpot app uses augmented reality technology to combine a phone's GPS and camera to find nearby enjoyable activities or pleasant diversions.

<https://psyberguide.org/apps/positive-activity-jackpot/>

PE Coach and CPT Coach are mobile apps designed to support your evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD. Providing hip-pocket access to the necessary tools for successful PE or CPT participation, the app includes audio recording capability for easy playback after sessions; tools to support patient tasks between sessions; and visual displays of symptom reduction over time.

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/pecoach\\_app\\_public.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/pecoach_app_public.asp)

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/cptcoach\\_app\\_public.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/cptcoach_app_public.asp)

T2 Mood Tracker is a mobile application that allows users to monitor and track emotional health. Originally developed as a tool for service members to easily record and review their behavior changes, particularly after combat deployments, it has now become very popular with many civilian users around the world.



<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.t2.vas&hl=en>



# Eligibility for Vocational Rehab and Employment

If you have a disability that was caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service and that limits your ability to work or prevents you from working, you may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits and services. Find out if you can get employment support or help living as independently as possible.

If I'm a Veteran, can I get VR&E benefits and services?

You may be eligible for VR&E benefits and services if you're a Veteran, and you meet all of the requirements listed below.

All of these must be true. You:

Didn't receive a dishonorable discharge, and

Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10% from VA, and

Apply for VR&E services

Basic period of eligibility

Your basic period of eligibility ends 12 years from the date you received notice of your:

Date of separation from active military service, or

First VA service-connected disability rating

Please note: The basic period of eligibility may be extended if a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) finds that you have a Serious Employment Handicap (SEH). Having an employment handicap means your service-connected disability limits your ability to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment (a job that doesn't make your disability worse, is stable, and matches your abilities, aptitudes, and interests).

If I'm still on active duty, can I get VR&E benefits and services?

You may be eligible for VR&E benefits and services if you're a Servicemember and you meet at least one of the requirements listed below.

At least one of these must be true. You:

Have a 20% or higher pre-discharge disability rating (memorandum rating) and will soon leave the military, or  
Are participating in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) process or awaiting discharge due to a medical condition resulting from a serious injury or illness that occurred in the line of duty.

Learn more about accessing VR&E services through IDES.

Please note: Severely injured active-duty Servicemembers can automatically receive VR&E benefits before VA issues a disability rating, because of Sec. 1631(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act (PL 110-181). The sunset date of that law has been extended to September 30, 2018, through Sec. 724 of Public Law 113-291.

What should I do if I received an other than honorable, bad conduct, or dishonorable discharge?

If you've received one of these discharge statuses, you may not be eligible for VA benefits.

# Emergency Planning

All good things must come to an end, and eventually, so do all of us. One of the Veterans' groups at Orlando VA has put together a list of topics to discuss with your loved ones to make it easier for them to make your final arrangements and follow through on your responsibilities after you're gone.

1. Wills -State rules/laws apply
  - Living Wills/ Advance Directives Resuscitation
  - Mechanical ventilation
  - Nutritional and hydration assistance Dialysis
  - Organ donation
  - Psychiatric Advance Directive for medications
2. Powers of Attorney
  - Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
  - General: right to take care of all your business
3. Titles and Deeds: auto, home, property, recreational vehicles
4. Stocks/Bonds/Investments/Retirement Accounts
5. Insurance Policies: life, medical, home, auto
6. Bank Accounts
  - Account type
  - Account number
  - PIN number
  - Payable On Death account
7. Copies of:
  - DD-214
  - Driver's license
  - VA ID card
  - Insurance cards
  - Birth certificate
  - Marriage license
  - Social Security Card
8. Emergency Funds: cash, blank check
9. Safe combination or storage box key
10. List of Financial Contacts:
  - Insurance companies: policy numbers, agent, telephone number
  - Banks: account numbers, PIN numbers, telephone numbers
  - Debtors: account numbers, telephone numbers
11. List of Monthly Expenses
  - Utilities, mortgage, car, credit cards, phones
  - Form of payment (automatic withdrawal, credit card, check, etc.)
12. List of Health Information
  - Medications
  - Allergies
  - Treating doctors' names and telephone numbers
  - Important health information (for example, any infectious diseases or implanted devices)
13. Social Security information
14. Plans/preferences for body recovery or transportation to home or desired location

## Emergency Planning (Cont.)

15. VA Information
  - Notify in case of death (telephone number)
  - Compensation and Pension
  - Cemetery
16. Death Arrangements:
  - Burial or memorial service: flowers, music, officiator, internment clothes, cemetery, prepaid plans
  - Cremation: prepaid plans, preferences
  - Donor Status: organ, whole body; contact information
17. List of Internet site user ID's, passwords, security questions/answers
18. List of family/friends to notify: names, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses
19. Instructions for Significant Others
20. Keep all documents updated on a backup copy: CD, thumb drive, rented data storage site

## Local Resources for Central Florida

Central Florida Behavioral Hospital  
6601 Central Florida Parkway  
Orlando PH (407)370-0111  
<https://centralfloridabehavioral.com/>

Aspire Healthcare INC.  
4524 Thistledown Dr.  
Orlando PH (407)875-3700  
<https://aspirehealthpartners.com/programs-and-services/>

Center-behavioral Health  
601 E. King St.  
Orlando PH (407) 303-8533  
<https://www.adventhealth.com/behavioral-health>

Central Florida Behavioral Health Care LLC  
7350 Futures Dr.  
Orlando PH (407)226-3733  
<https://aspirehealthpartners.com/programs-and-services/>

Mental health Association of Central Florida  
1525 Robinson St.  
Orlando PH (407)898-0110  
<https://www.mhacf.org/mental-health-connections/>

Thanks for reading this guide!  
We're here to help and cheer you along on your journey toward recovery!



Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council

If your organization wants to be included in this publication, Please contact

Tim at one of the contacts listed below.

Distributed by Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council

For More Info Visit: [www.cfvvhc.org](http://www.cfvvhc.org)

Or E-Mail us at: [support@cfvmhc.org](mailto:support@cfvmhc.org)

