



Guide to Mental Health Services at Orlando VAMC



Jan 2015 edition

Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council

The mission of the Orlando Veterans Mental Health Council 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' understandings of those services, and to make services more accessible for Central Florida's Veterans.

Another vital part of our mission on the Orlando Veterans Mental Health Council includes work on local Veteran Affairs committees to help establish policies and guidelines they use to care for our Veteran population.

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For the most updated information, visit the Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council online at <http://cfvmhc.org/>

Last Update to Guide: 1/8/2015

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.

VA's commitment to the mental health of Veterans is evident from the moment you walk in the door. The nurse you saw first asked you about your sleep, personal safety, mood, home life, and habits. He or she probably asked you about any history of depression or anxiety that you've had and any current symptoms, as well.

The questions asked give you an opportunity to get the kinds of help you may need. We want you to feel comfortable in asking for help when you need it. That's why we've put together this guide to mental health services.

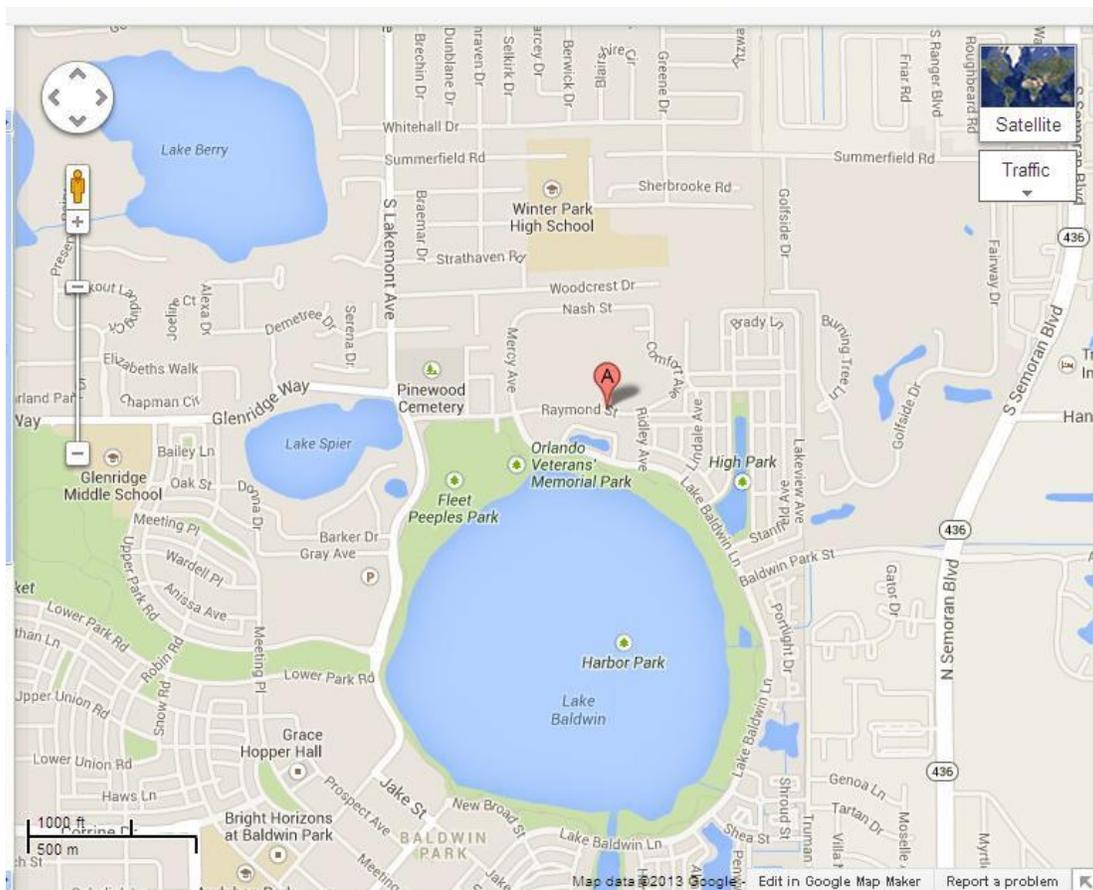


Finding Your Way Around

Facilities

The **Orlando VAMC main campus** is located at 5201 Raymond Street, Orlando, FL. It is in the Winter Park area, adjacent to the Baldwin Park neighborhood. [OVAMC Internet](#).

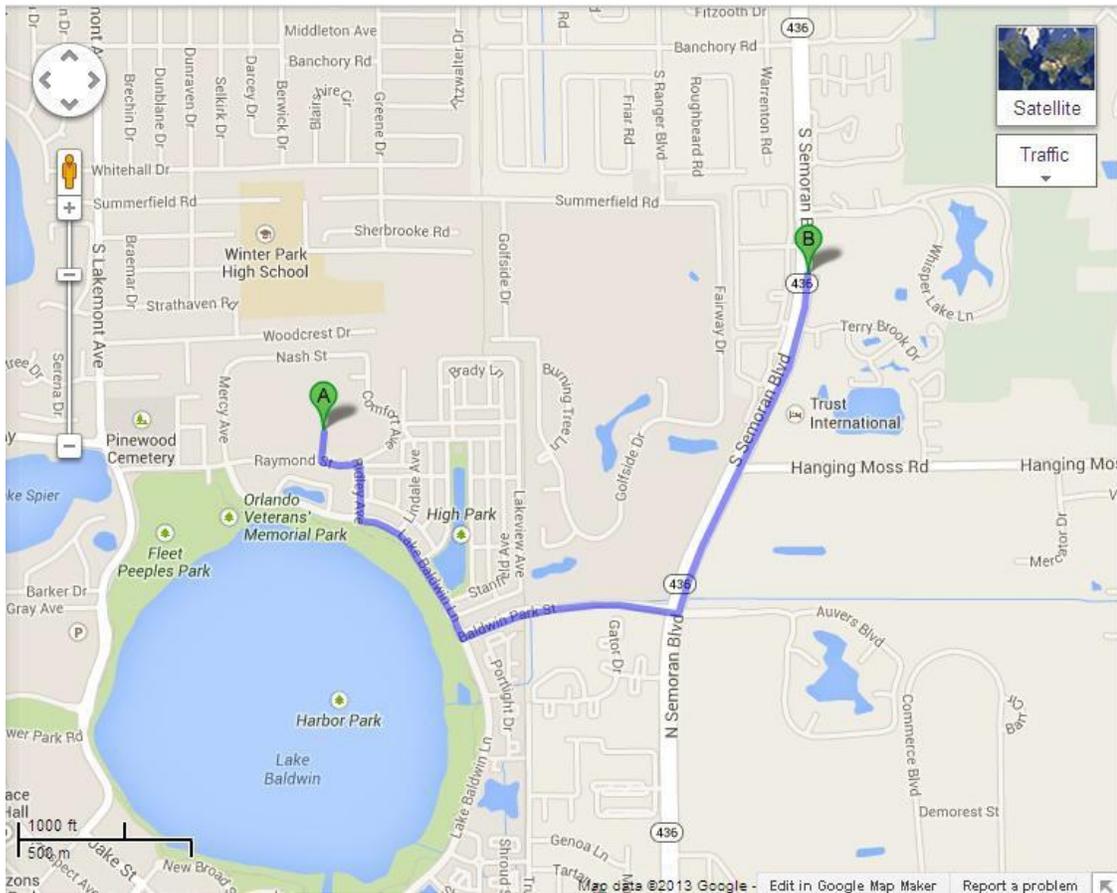
Note: With the nearing completion of the new VA campus in Lake Nona, the names Orlando VAMC Main Campus and Lake Baldwin Campus are used interchangeably.



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Last Update to Guide: 1/8/2015

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 main VA 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. [Crossroads Internet](#)



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Last Update to Guide: 1/8/2015

Community Based Outpatient Clinics Locations

Kissimmee CBOC
Station 675GC
2285 N. Central Ave.
Kissimmee, FL 34741
Phone: 407-518-5004
[Kissimmee Internet](#)

Leesburg CBOC Station 675GE
711 W. Main Street
Leesburg, FL 34748
Phone: 352-435-4000
[Leesburg Internet](#)

Orange City CBOC
Station 675GD
2583 South Volusia Ave
Suite 300
Orange City, FL 32763
Phone: 386-456-2080
Fax: 386-456-2122

Clermont CBOC Station 675GF
805 Oakley Seaver Drive
Clermont, FL 34711
Phone: 352-536-8200
[Clermont Internet](#)

Large Outpatient Clinics

William V. Chappell, Jr., OPC
Station 675GB
551 National Health Care Drive
Daytona Beach, FL 32114-1495
Phone: 386-323-7500
[Daytona Beach Internet](#)

Viera OPC
Station 675GA
2900 Veteran's Way
Viera, FL 32940
Phone: 321-637-3788
[Viera Internet](#)

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

The New Orlando VAMC in Lake Nona

The new VA Medical Center is slated for a “soft opening” in early 2015, with the full medical center open by 2016. At this time, the current VAMC, which is now known as the Lake Baldwin campus, will become a large outpatient clinic. It has not been determined yet which clinical services will remain available at Lake Baldwin, but all major services will be available at the new Lake Nona campus.

Stay tuned!



For the most updated information, visit the Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council online at <http://cfvmhc.org/>

Travel Pay Procedures

Benefit Travel: Veterans may receive travel pay if they meet one of the following qualifications:

- Have a service-connected (SC) rating of 30 percent or more, or
- Travel for treatment of a SC condition, or
- Receive a VA pension, or
- Income does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate, or
- Travel for a scheduled compensation or pension examination

Currently, travel is paid at a rate of 41.5¢ per mile (as of Dec 2014) from your home address to the VA. Scheduled appointments qualify for round-trip mileage. Unscheduled visits may be limited to return mileage only.

There is a deductible applied to all travel pay. The deductible is \$3.00 one-way (\$6.00 round trip). The deductible requirement is subject to a monthly cap of \$18.00. Upon reaching \$18.00 in deductibles or 6 one-way (3 round) trips, whichever comes first, travel payments made for the balance of that particular month will be free of deductible charges.

Waivers to the deductible may be granted to the Veteran under the following conditions:

- Receipt of a VA pension or;
- NSC 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
- SC 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

In order to request travel pay Veterans complete the paperwork at the travel

window. The payment is then sent via electronic transfer to the Veteran's financial institution. Veterans can get the direct deposit form at the travel window and turn the completed direct deposit form in at the cashier window.

For more details on the travel policy and information on special mode transportation please refer to the *frequently asked questions* at <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/BeneTravelFAQ.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, two criteria must be met.

1. The veteran first has to be administratively eligible for transport at VA expense.
2. The Veteran must also be "unable to defray the expenses of travel" as defined in 38 CFR 70.10 (c).



*You served a purpose then
as a Service Member.*

*You serve a purpose
now as a Veteran.*

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**
www.MakeTheConnection.net

Mental Health Care

A *Guide to VA Mental Health Services for Veterans and Families* is available that describes the services at every VA.

[http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/Guide to VA Mental Health Srvcs FINAL 12-20-10.pdf](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/Guide%20to%20VA%20Mental%20Health%20Srvcs%20FINAL%2012-20-10.pdf)

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

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psychologist, just ask your primary care doctor or clerk to introduce you to the team mental health provider.

There are a wide range of group classes and therapies available through PCMH and the Platinum Teams including:

- 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



www.jointogetherstrong.com

Specialty Mental Health Clinic (including the Platinum Teams)

Extended, Specialized Care

Orlando VA Medical Center (OVAMC) has 4 Platinum Teams; 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.

Getting to the Platinum Teams:

Consults must be sent by the PCMH psychologists to the Platinum Teams. Every Platinum Team 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.

Platinum Services:

1. PTSD: The Trauma Recovery Program 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. *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 partial 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 talk therapy for PTSD. Your provider can help you decide the right starting point for

- you.
2. Substance Use Problems: The Platinum Teams offer 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.
 3. 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.
 4. Adjusting to Medical Illness: There are several disease-specific groups, as well as general medical illness support groups available through the PCMH and Platinum teams. 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.
 5. Caregiver/Family Support: Many times, family members suffer along with the Veteran as we live with our mental health problems. For this reason, the Platinum teams 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.



If you want to learn more about maintaining or improving your own

relationships, there are classes for that too. You can ask your Platinum Team about the Healthy Relationships classes.

6. Other specific treatment options:

- There are several peer support classes offered at different times, places, and locations. If you'd like to talk to someone else who has walked in your shoes and can tell you first-hand about their recovery journey, please ask about the Peer Support program.
- There is an LGBT support and skills group available on the Platinum Teams, for those who would like to talk with others who are struggling with issues of sexuality and stigma.
- There are several anger management classes available. Ask your Platinum Team for the schedule to see if one fits your needs.
- There are several stress management and problem solving classes available as well. For those who are concerned about their memory, there are memory rehabilitation and memory enhancement classes available.



Specialty Mental Health Services other than the Platinum Teams

Domiciliary (or Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program; DR RTP):

The 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.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (or PRRC): The Orlando VAMC system has two PRRCs: the Center for Recovery Education 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 – 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.

ICMHR: 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
- Are willing 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. The primary goals are to increase Veterans’ functioning in the community and decrease hospitalization. MHICM and RANGE involvement is always voluntary. Your Platinum Team can write a consult to MHICM or RANGE for you to get more information and an evaluation.

Marital 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 (LMFT) who specialize in couple and family issues and treatment. Ask your provider for a referral.

Suicide Prevention: 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.



Dial 1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Text to 838255

Vocational Rehabilitation: Compensated Work Therapy Transitional Work (CWT/TW) is designed to help veterans regain psychosocial stability, learn the skills needed to prevent a return to homelessness and return to competitive employment. CWT Supported Employment (CWT/SE) assists veterans with securing competitive employment in the community. The largest population for SE services is Veterans with psychosis and other serious mental illnesses.

Additionally, SE is provided by for special Veteran populations including traumatic

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brain injury, spinal cord injury, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The goal of the CWT Supported Employment Program is for Veterans to secure and maintain competitive employment. Through participation in CWT/SE, the Veteran will increase his/her level of functioning and self-esteem, expediting the recovery process, and improving his/her overall quality of life.

Medical Psychology Programs

- Behavioral Treatments for Pain and Chronic Illness Management: Group therapies and classes are available for Veterans with a variety of medical problems, to help you adjust to having a chronic illness or learn skills to decrease the pain associated with many illnesses and injuries.
- Home Based Primary Care (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. A psychologist is 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 health care provider(s), and/or document possible changes in your functioning over time. 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.

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.
- Grant and Per Diem (GPD) 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 homeless veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination.
- Veterans Justice Outreach (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.

Personalized, Proactive, Patient-Driven Care

For information, resources and tools, please visit:



<http://healthforlife.vacloud.us/>

Community-Based Mental Health Programs

Great care, out in the community where you want it

Community Based Outpatient Clinics: (CBOCs) Every CBOC has Mental Health staff on-site. Nearly all of the mental health services that are listed in this guide are available at the CBOCs. If the treatment you want/need is not available at your CBOC, you may be referred to the main Orlando campus for treatment. Sometimes this will be in-person, sometimes it can be via Telehealth. Every attempt will be made to help you get the treatment you need, when you need it, WHERE you need it – in your home community.

Telehealth Program: Telemental Health is the use of information and telecommunication technologies to deliver mental health care services in situations where the provider and the Veteran are separated by geographic distance. Telemental Health Clinical Services are used to treat virtually every mental health problem, including mood disorders, anxiety/PTSD, psychosis, and substance use problems. Telehealth employs virtually every treatment modality including individual therapies, group therapies, medication management, family therapy, couples therapy, cognitive behavior therapies, evidence based psychotherapies, psychological testing, etc.

Care-Coordination Home Telehealth: 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. For additional information, ask any mental health or primary care provider for a referral.

Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership: VITAL is an on-campus program for student Veterans. It serves three primary functions—outreach, education of students, faculty and staff, and direct mental health services. The VITAL program is currently active at UCF and Valencia College. You can access them through the student veterans' affairs office on campus.

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.

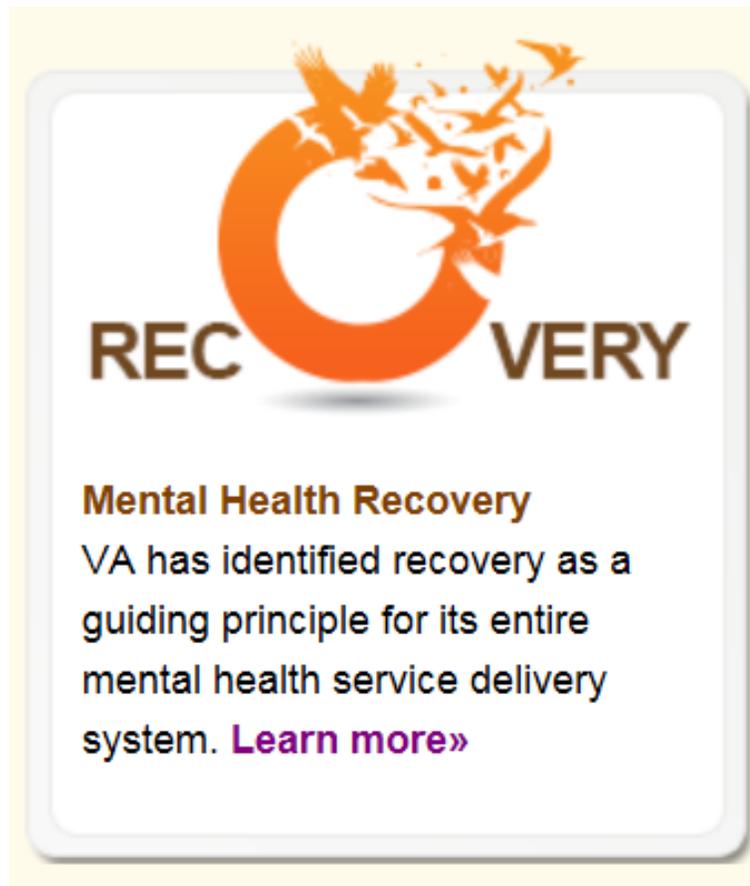


OEF/OIF: The Central Florida Veterans' Mental Health Council and the Orlando VAMC welcome our newest generation of Veterans: those from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation New Dawn, and all other post-9/11 Veterans. Having been in your boots, we know how difficult the

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.

Women's Health: The Orlando Women's Primary Care Clinic 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.

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS
for SPECIAL POPULATIONS



<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/miniclinics.asp>



Frequently Asked Questions:

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, comply with instructions 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.

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 Veteran in

choosing the most appropriate healthcare for specific conditions. VA/DoD CPGs are available for PTSD, major depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse disorder, and patients at risk for suicide. You can read the CPGs at www.healthquality.va.gov.

What is the Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook? In 2008, VA introduced a new mental health handbook that provides guidelines for VA hospitals and clinics across the US. This handbook specifies exactly what mental health services VA hospitals and clinics are required to offer to Veterans and their families. The handbook is available at http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1762. There is also a shorter overview of the handbook for Veterans and families at [http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/Guide to VA Mental Health Srvcs FINAL12-20-10.pdf](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/Guide%20to%20VA%20Mental%20Health%20Srvcs%20FINAL12-20-10.pdf).

What is Secure Messaging? Secure Messaging is a system that allows you to communicate securely with your health care team. It's a form of email that is encrypted for your privacy. You can access secure messaging through My Health e Vet (more info below).



How do I get care for a problem that isn't treated by VA? If you're eligible for health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs, the goal is to provide you with the care you need in a VA facility. However, sometimes that isn't possible...because you live too far from a VA facility, the specialist you need is not available at your VA, or it will take too long for you to be seen at a VA facility. In those cases, you may be referred to a community provider through either the Veteran's Choice Act or the Non-VA Care program, also known as Fee Basis.

The Veterans Choice Act

On August 7, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Veterans Choice Act which helps some Veterans get health care in their local community. The program is currently being implemented, and by the end of January 2015, eligible Veterans should receive a Veterans Choice Card. While this patient-centered approach gives Veterans more control of their health care, the program is voluntary and Veterans can choose to stay within the VA.

Before the card can be used, Veterans must meet the following test of eligibility:

- a. Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days from your preferred date or the date medically determined by your physician? OR
- b. Is your current residence more than 40 miles from the closest VA health care facility? OR
- c. Do you need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home? OR
- d. Does a geographic challenge, such as extensive distances around water or other geologic formations, such as mountains, present a significant travel hardship?

If any of these questions were answered yes, the next step would be to confirm eligibility by calling 866-606-8198. Callers should be prepared to provide any other health insurance coverage, such as employer or union-provided health plans, so the VA can assess coverage responsibilities. Without proper approval, Veterans may be responsible for some or all of the costs of the non-VA treatment received.

Schedulers at every local VA are currently being trained to notify Veterans who may become eligible under the 30-day rule. If not currently eligible, Veterans are still encouraged to hold on to the card.

Want to learn more? Visit the Choice Act website for detailed information about this new program and the new law.

Fee Basis

In most cases, having VA pay for care in the community requires pre-authorization. And, any care needed or recommended beyond the scope of that authorization must be approved by the VA facility that authorized the care.

In the event of an emergency, you do not need authorization from a VA facility for treatment – simply proceed to the nearest emergency room to get the care you need. A medical emergency is generally defined as a condition of such a nature that a prudent layperson would reasonably expect a delay in seeking immediate medical attention to be hazardous to life or health.

Eligibility for VA payment of emergency care as well as deadlines for filing claims depend upon whether or not you have a service-connected condition. It's important to contact the VA as soon as possible to find out more about VA payment of your emergency care.

Fee Basis Care is not an entitlement program or a permanent treatment option.

How/Why do I call telephone triage? Telephone triage, also called Telecare, is your 24-hour access line to the VA. You can call the Telecare line if you need health care advice, have a question about your medication, or need to schedule an appointment. Your location determines which number to use.

- Within Orlando metro area: 407-599-1404
- Outside of the Orlando calling area: 800-645-6895
- Brevard (Viera OPC patients): 321-637-3625 (local)
- Weekends, holidays, evenings and nights:
877-741-3400



After normal clinic hours, weekends and holidays the Telecare lines will automatically transfer your call to

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the regional (VISN) Telcare line in Lake City. This line is staffed with Registered Nurses who can assist with health care advice, but they cannot schedule appointments or refill prescriptions. Please call for these services during normal clinic hours.

What if I have to go into the hospital? Until the new hospital in Lake Nona opens fully, the Orlando VA does not have any inpatient hospital beds. If you have to go into the hospital for mental health related problems, you will either go to a nearby VA (Tampa or Gainesville) or a community hospital such as Florida Hospital, Lakeside Behavioral, or South Seminole.



General Information

My Health e Vet and e-Benefits



My Health e Vet is an online personal health record and web-based message system that allows Veterans to access information from their medical record, refill VA prescriptions, communicate non-emergency health-related information with their VA providers through secure messaging, view scheduled appointments, monitor and graph personal health statistics, receive wellness reminders, and access online medical libraries. You can sign up at www.myhealth.va.gov. To get the most from My Health e Vet, get a free upgraded account at the VA library.

Release of Information: The Release of Information (ROI) staff can assist you with requests for your medical records, including access to your medical records, obtaining copies of your medical records, requests to amend your medical records, completion of forms, and My Health e Vet In-Person Authentication. The Release of Information Office is located on the first floor, Room 1207.

Making a complaint or compliment: If you have a compliment, complaint, or other issue which you would like to elevate up the chain of command, you may contact the patient representative. They work directly with all departments on your behalf and can address your questions, problems or special needs more quickly. Their contact information is available at <http://www.orlando.va.gov/patients/customerservice.asp>. You can also use the “Blue Ribbon” cards to report excellent customer service and “Talk to the Director” cards to report a problem. These can be found next to drop boxes throughout the medical center and in every CBOC.

C&P's: If you file a disability claim for a military related illness or injury, you will probably be referred for a C&P, or Compensation and Pension Exam. Disability Compensation is a tax free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active

military service. Compensation may also be paid for post- service disabilities that are considered related or secondary to disabilities occurring in service and for disabilities presumed to be related to circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. Generally, the degrees of disability specified are also designed to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses. If you have filed for or receive VA disability compensation, the VA may require a C & P exam at any time. You may not refuse a C & P exam or re-exam. Although you may feel that you have provided more than adequate evidence from private physicians, VA will usually insist on a C & P exam by one of their own examiners. Your benefits can be interrupted or even terminated for failure to report for a VA exam.

Veterans' Mental Health Council: The mission of the Central Florida Veterans' Mental Health Council 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' understandings of those services, and to make services more accessible for Central Florida's Veterans. Learn more about us and how to join at www.cfvmmc.org. The CFVMHC is who developed this guide for your use.

Changing Providers: Veterans may request to change to a different provider by discussing the request with their care team leader or with the patient representative. A form must be filled out to request the change at the check in/check out desk at your clinic.



MAKE THE CONNECTION
www.MakeTheConnection.net

"It's amazing what you can do by just telling and owning your own story."

Trista, US Navy, USMC
US Army National Guard, 1992-2008

Transitioning Out of Mental Health Care



Recovery is the expected outcome after having mental health problems. That doesn't mean you'll never need support again. Recovery means that you can live a full and meaningful life in the community and can access care when you need it. This may be through a number of venues:

Vet Centers: also known as Readjustment Counseling Service, are located in the community, frequently in store-front locations, and specialize in helping combat Veterans and those who have suffered MST to regain their equilibrium. Many Vet Centers counselors are Veterans themselves, so they understand what it is like to transition from the warrior role to the civilian role. They are there to help make this adjustment as smooth as possible for you and they do so with group interventions, individual therapy, family services, and outreach activities. A list of local Vet Centers is on page 8 of this guidebook or you can find information at <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/> or 1-877-WAR-VETS.



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

For the most updated information, visit the Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council online at <http://cfvmhc.org/>

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), the Wounded Warrior Project (www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs.aspx), the Mission Continues (www.missioncontinues.org), the Camaraderie Foundation (www.camaraderiefoundation.com), and Team Red-White-Blue (www.teamrwb.org) just to name a few. Military One Source (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.k9sforsoldiers.org and Freedom Ride verticalimitfl@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 <http://t2health.dcoe.mil> for programs such as Start Moving Forward for overcoming life's challenges, and Military Parenting to improve your parenting skills; and check www.militaryonesource.mil for resources including online non-medical 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.

Some examples include:

BioZen



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. <http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/biozen>

Breathe2Relax



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. <http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/breathe2relax>

LifeArmor



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.

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/lifearmor>

PTSD Coach



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).

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/ptsd-coach>

PE and CPT Coaches



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.

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/pe-coach> and

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/search/node/cpt%20coach>

Positive Activity Jackpot



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.

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/positiveactivityjackpot>

T2 Mood Tracker



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.

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/t2-mood-tracker>

Tactical Breather



The Tactical Breather application can be used to gain control over physiological and psychological responses to stress. Through repetitive practice and training, anyone can learn to gain control of your heart rate, emotions, concentration, and other physiological and psychological responses to your body during stressful situations.

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/tactical-breather-0>

You can also search Google or Yahoo for “mental health” or various subjects you may be interested in, all starting with “mental health.” This may include services, associations, jobs, counselors, disorders, facilities, and much more.

Mental Health Advance Directive: This is a legal document that may be completed with your healthcare provider or social worker to outline what types of treatment and interventions you do and don’t want in the case of a mental health crisis. It is used to make your wishes known when you are unable to make or communicate decisions about your treatment. You can find more information about mental health advance directives at www.nrc-pad.org. If you have completed a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), that may also include a mental health advance directive. Be sure that your provider knows about your WRAP and copies the appropriate sections into your electronic medical record.

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

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: For local help, we have developed a website to link you programs offered by the VA. There is a blog on the first page and additional help in the form of pdf files. There are also links to other sites, including the *National Resources Directory* <https://m.nrd.gov/> and information about how to receive VA benefits. The site is sponsored by the Central Florida Veterans Mental Health Council and can be found at www.cfvmmc.org or by scanning the QR code below.



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*



www.cfmhc.org
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