Vet Centers

“Dedicated to serving those who have served”

Travis J. Riley
Veterans Outreach Specialist, San Marcos Vet Center
What are Vet Centers?

- Community based readjustment counseling centers that are part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and offer free counseling services to eligible service members, veterans, and their families.

- The Vet Center mission is to provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible service members, veterans, and their families in order to help them make a satisfying post-war readjustment to civilian life.
Eligibility for Vet Center Services?

- Did you serve more than 24 hours on active duty in a theater of combat operations?
  (Determined by form DD214)

- Have you experienced or are you currently experiencing sexual trauma during your time in service?
  (No Documentation Necessary)

- Did you Provide direct emergency medical or mental health care, or mortuary services to combat casualties or UAV operators who engaged enemy targets regardless of operators physical presence?

“Ask yourself how Vet Centers can help you and your family”
Vietnam Era Veterans

Congregated in restaurants, bars, pool halls, churches, etc.

Developed social support systems and found that talking with other veterans relieved stress associated with the post-war experience.

Formal unification sparked political movements which began the shift to current model of care for veterans and reintegration.

Established by Congress in 1979
Today’s Vets & the Global War on Terrorism
Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn

- Combat looks different than previous wars, resulting in different types of post-war experiences.

- The needs of GWOT veterans differs from the needs of previous generations.

- We offer individual and group counseling sessions exclusive to GWOT veterans in order to meet these dynamic needs.

- Cutting edge research and evidence-based practices used in a therapeutic approach to a successful transition.
What is Post Traumatic Stress?

- A NORMAL response to ABNORML stress such as combat experience, post-war experience, or transition experience.

- Not a weakness, but can develop because of changes that occur in your body as a result of survival adaptation to combat.

- These changes may effect your transition into a civilian role.

- If not properly treated, Post Traumatic Stress may develop into a disorder.
What is Military Sexual Trauma?

- Trauma that results from sexual harassment, assault, rape, or other acts of sexual aggression.

- Typically associated with a traumatic event that results in depression, loss of confidence, fear, blame, etc.

- Counseling assists veterans in dealing with emotions tied to military sexual trauma and regain individuality and confidence.

- If not properly treated, Sexual Trauma may develop into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
Signs & Symptoms of PTSD

- Anger, irritability, and rage
- Feeling nervous
- Depression
- Survivor’s guilt
- Feeling guilt over acts committed or witnessed
- Hyper alertness and startle reactions
- Feeling grief or sadness
- Alcohol or Substance abuse
- Suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- Emotionally separated or numb
- Isolation and alienation from others
- Trouble sleeping
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Low tolerance to stress
- Having thoughts and memories that will not go away
- Problems feeling good about oneself
- Nightmares
- Anxiety and/or Paranoia
- Relational problems with friends, family, and other persons
Personal Experiences with Vet Centers

- San Diego Sheriff’s Dept.
- Construction
- Commercial Loader
- VA Work-Study Program
- VA Outreach Specialist

- Post 9/11 G.I. Bill & The YRP
- Palomar Community College
- Cal State San Marcos
- University of Southern California
Vet Center Services

- Individual and Group Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Bereavement Counseling
- Military Sexual Trauma Counseling
- Outreach and Education
- Substance Abuse Assessment
- VBA Benefits Explanation
- Screening and Referral for Medical issues including TBI, Depression, etc.
Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy Act of 1975:

- Vet Center Staff respect the privacy of all veterans.

- We hold in the strictest confidence all information disclosed in the counseling process.

- No information will be released to any person or agency including your commanding officer, without written consent from the client, except in circumstances averting a crisis.

- Additionally, the VA has no access to your counseling records at the Vet Center.
Other Services Offered at Vet Centers

Federal/State/County/Agency Representation

One Example: San Marcos Vet Center
(May differ per Vet Center)

- **U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:**
  - Maria M. Sanchez: Fridays from 8:00am – 4:30pm

- **San Diego County’s Veterans Service Advocate:**
  - Mike Piepenburg: Wednesdays from 8:00am – 4:30pm
## Vet Center Locations: Western Region

### Oregon
- **Central Oregon**: 541-749-2112
  - Eugene: 541-465-6918
  - Grants Pass: 541-479-6912
- **Portland**: 503-688-5361
- **Salem**: 503-362-9911

### Washington
- **Bellingham**: 360-733-9226
- **Everett**: 425-252-9701
- **Federal Way**: 253-838-3090
- **Seattle**: 206-553-2706
- **Spokane**: 509-444-8387
- **Tacoma**: 253-565-7038
- **Walla Walla County**: (509) 526-8387
- **Yakima Valley**: 509-457-2736

### Idaho
- **Boise**: 208-342-3612
- **Pocatello**: 208-232-0316

### Nevada
- **Henderson**: 702-791-9100
- **Las Vegas**: 702-251-7873
- **Reno**: 775-323-1294

### Alaska
- **Anchorage**: 907-563-6966
- **Fairbanks**: 907-456-4238
- **Wasilla**: 907-376-4318

[WWW.VETCENTER.VA.GOV](http://WWW.VETCENTER.VA.GOV)
Vet Center Locations: Western Region

California
Antelope Valley: 661-267-1026
   Bakersfield: 661-323-8387
      Chico: 530-892-3800
   Chula Vista: 858-404-8380
Citrus Heights: 916-535-0420
   Concord: 925-680-4526
   Corona: 951-734-0525
East Los Angeles: 323-728-9966
      Eureka: 707-444-8271
      Fresno: 559-487-5660
   High Desert: 760-261-5925
   Los Angeles: 310-767-1221
      Modesto: 209-569-0713
North Orange County: 714-776-0161
   Northbay: 707-586-3295

California
   Oakland: 510-763-3904
   Peninsula: 650-299-0672
   Sacramento: 916-566-7430
   San Bernardino: 909-801-5762
   San Diego: 858-642-1500
   San Francisco: 415-441-5051
      San Jose: 408-993-0729
   San Luis Obispo: 805-782-9101
      San Marcos: 855-898-6050
   Santa Cruz County: 831-464-4575
      Sepulveda: 818-892-9227
   South Orange County: 949-348-6700
      Temecula: 951-302-4849
      Ventura: 805-585-1860
   West Los Angeles: 310-641-0326

WWW.VETCENTER.VA.GOV
Vet Center Locations

Website screenshot: Interactive map

WWW.VETCENTER.VA.GOV
For Those Living Elsewhere:

- There are over 300 Vet Centers nationwide
- However: For those living in rural settings, we also have Mobile Vet Centers that can also provide these services

Visit [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov) for more information
Living Locally: San Diego Area

- **San Marcos Vet Center:** (855) 898-6050
  1 Civic Centre Drive, Ste. 150
  San Marcos, CA 92069

- **San Diego Vet Center:** (858) 642-1500
  2790 Truxton Road, Ste. 130
  San Diego, CA 92106

- **Temecula Vet Center:** (951) 302-4849
  40935 County Center Drive, Ste. A&B
  Temecula, CA 92591

- **Chula Vista Vet Center:** (858) 404-8380
  180 Otay Lakes Road, Ste. 107&108
  Bonita, CA 91902
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