

A large American flag waves in the sky, filling the upper half of the frame. Below it, a family of four—a man, a woman, a young child, and a teenage girl—walk away from the viewer on a paved path. They are silhouetted against a bright sunset or sunrise over a landscape. The man is on the left, holding the child's hand. The woman is on the right, holding the child's other hand. The teenage girl stands next to the woman. The scene is warm and evocative, symbolizing service and family.

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”

The Emergence of Vet Centers



Established by Congress in 1979

- 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.

Today's Vets & the Global War on Terrorism

Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn

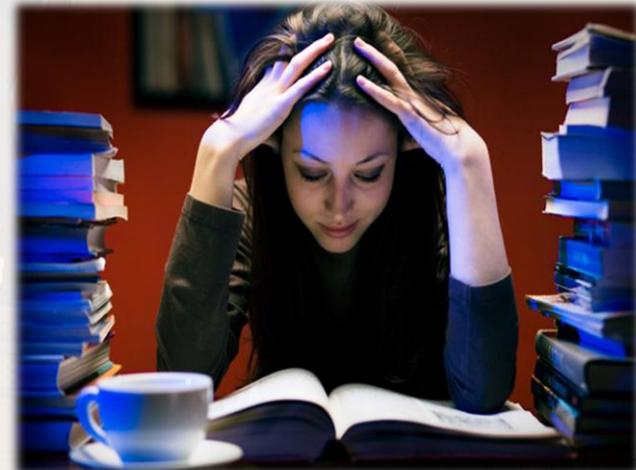


- **Combat looks different than previous wars, resulting in different types of post-war experiences.**
- **The needs of GWOT veterans differs from the needs of previous generations.**
- **We offer individual and group counseling sessions exclusive to GWOT veterans in order to meet these dynamic needs.**
- **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 ABNORMAL 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.



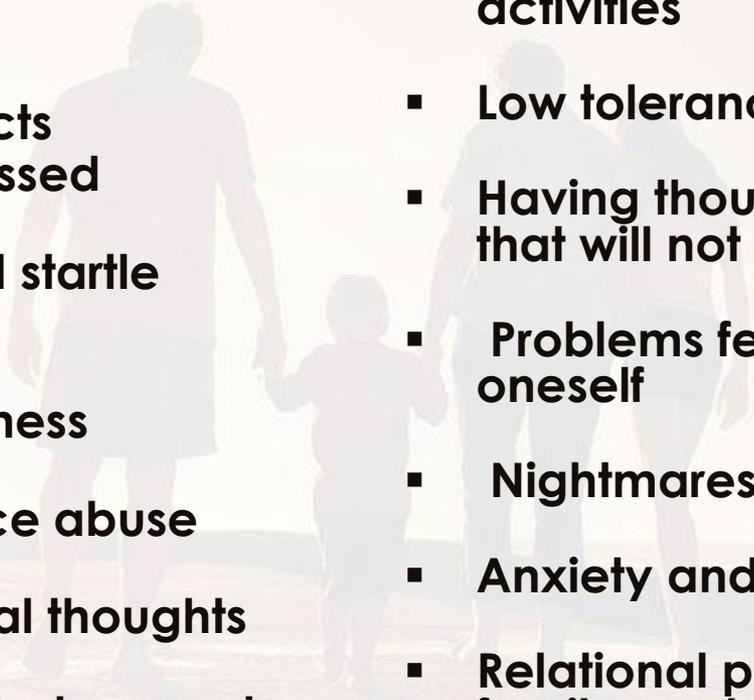
What is Military Sexual Trauma?

- 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



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

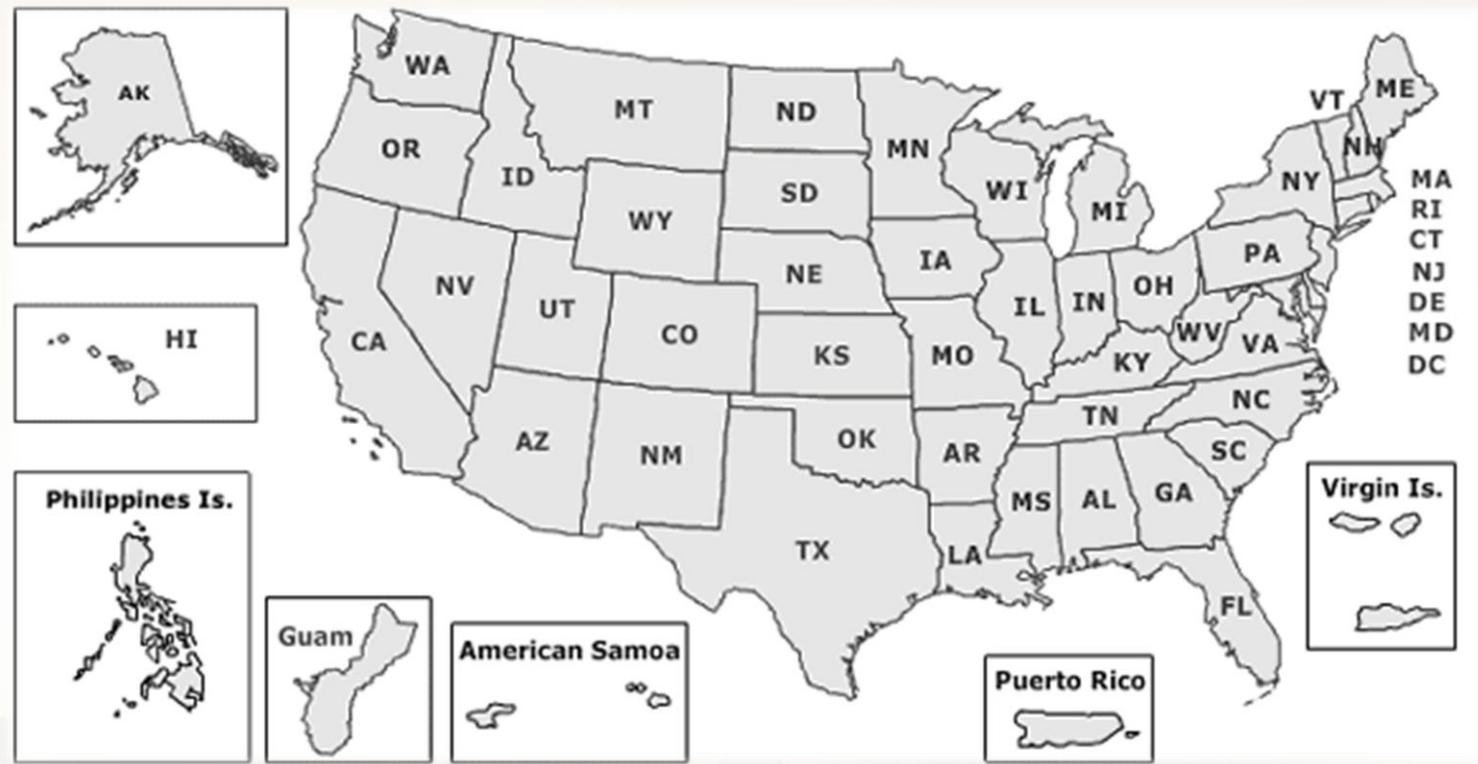
West Los Angeles: 310-641-0326

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 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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