Seeking Help = Strength

Although many service members suffer from behavioral health problems/concerns, only about one in four seeks help. You may be worried about how treatment will affect your chances of deployment or promotions or that seeking help is a sign of weakness. In fact, a diagnosis of depression, PTSD or anxiety does not automatically prevent deployment and may not impact promotions.

Prevention is Key

Not seeking care could have a negative impact on your life. If you are having any physical, emotional, professional or personal relationship challenges, your PCM can help you decide which assistance options might work best for you. Pursuing treatment can help you or your family member prevent more serious problems.

Road to Recovery is the Primary Goal

We want to provide you with a health care experience designed to recognize and solve problems early. When treatment in primary care is not possible, we will make recommendations for specialty care outside of your primary care clinic to best meet your current needs.

Treatment Provides Relief

Our past and ongoing health care program evaluation shows us that a range of problems like depression, PTSD, anxiety, stress, grief, relationship problems, sleep difficulties, obesity, chronic pain, diabetes tobacco use and other substance challenges can be treated effectively in primary care.

Speak with your PCM, nurse or other health care staff to find out more about the behavioral health services offered within your clinic.

Primary Care Behavioral Health

Primary Care Expands its Focus

Statistics show that nearly half of all people with a treatable behavioral health disorder do not seek care from a behavioral health professional. However, 80 percent will visit their primary care manager (PCM) at least once a year.

Therefore, Department of Defense primary care clinics are expanding their focus to meet more of your health care needs under one roof. You will now find new and expanded treatment options within the clinic itself across all branches of the military for patients with behavioral health issues.

We are changing our primary care teams to better address the needs of our service members, their adult family members and military retirees. If you have served or are serving our country, we want to keep you and your family well while also providing superior care when you get sick.

Integrating Behavioral Health into Primary Care

Adult patients may experience stress related to family and work or due to post-deployment behavioral health problems. These problems may result in depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or general anxiety disorders. The good news is these problems often can be addressed in primary care through the support of behavioral health services integrated into the clinic.

Other common behavioral health issues may also be treated by a consultant in your primary care clinic. These include such issues as smoking cessation, weight management, relationship problems, sleep problems, anger management, medication management, bereavement and chronic pain. For more complex issues, you may receive a referral to a specialist outside the primary care clinic. But if your concern can be addressed in primary care, it will be.

What Happens When You Seek Help

Primary care clinics can identify and address behavioral health needs through simple screening processes. You will be asked a few questions at each of your health care appointments. Based on your answers, if it looks like you have a behavioral health concern, you and your PCM have several options to help manage your health and well-being. Your treatment may include prescription medications, counseling or both.

How Will Team Members Help?

After you have completed your screening and talked with your PCM, you will have options about how to proceed with your care.

Your PCM may recommend services from a behavioral health consultant in your clinic to help you manage your health and behavioral needs. They are specially trained psychologists or social workers who focus on helping patients develop healthy behaviors or change current behaviors that interfere with overall health and well-being. These providers can address issues such as family or relationship problems, as well as behaviors that affect your physical health.

Another option for continuing care is working with a behavioral health care facilitator. A care facilitator will contact you by phone periodically to monitor your symptoms and check on how you are managing your health concerns. The care facilitator will then share your progress with your primary care team. In many cases, care facilitators and behavioral health consultants will work together with your PCM to make quick, effective changes to your treatment and address your symptoms.

How Much Time Will It Take?

Consultations with behavioral health consultants usually involve one to four 30-minute appointments. These consultations help you and your primary care team set a health care plan that involves specific attainable goals and the support, skills development and lifestyle change necessary to meet those goals.