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Busting Barriers to Seeking Help for Depression

As a wounded, ill, or injured (WII) service member you face the unique challenges of serving in the Navy or Marine Corps. You may also experience additional challenges, such as depression, as a result of the psychological or physical impact of your wound, illness, or injury. While not everyone experiences the signs or symptoms in the same way, or to the same degree, depression may entail ²:

- Loss of pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- Significant weight gain or loss
- Insomnia or sleeping too much
- Feeling very fidgety or lethargic
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Decreased ability to concentrate and think clearly
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide

Depression is common and treatable, and there are certain barriers that may keep you from seeking help. An important first step in overcoming these barriers is awareness. This fact sheet outlines barriers and also suggests ways to bust them.

It is normal to feel sad or depressed in response to certain life events. However, if your symptoms become overwhelming, interfere with your daily functioning, or you have thoughts of suicide, contact a health care professional, chaplain, corpsman, or MTF immediately. Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text 838255 or chat live online at www.militarycrisisline.net.



Barrier Busters

There are eight common barriers to seeking help for depression. The first step to addressing and busting them is being able to identify which barrier may be keeping you from seeking help. Remember that seeking help takes courage and is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Barrier ³	Description ³	Barrier Buster
Stigma	Concerns about being judged, loss of security clearance, impact on career, official records, family and friends finding out, or the perception that you can't solve your own problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear from fellow sailor Capt. Todd Kruder about his personal battle with overcoming stigma • Hear from others who have sought help • Chat with your local chaplain • Get peer to peer support: Vets4Warriors • Try a free, anonymous mental health screening: Military Pathways
Lack of motivation & negative feelings about therapy	Feeling immobilized from depression, lack of energy, distrust of or bad experiences with medical or non-medical counselors, doubt about the treatment being beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confront lack of motivation in one move; commit to taking that first step • Realize that the effects of depression may be related to slow healing of a wound, illness, or injury⁴ • Understand that depression is treatable, and most people who get help and treatment improve⁵
Emotional concerns & misfit of therapy to needs	Concerns about experiencing upsetting feelings in counseling, things getting worse, that counseling won't help, or your problems aren't bad enough to need counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear from others who have experienced similar feelings: afterdeployment.t2.health.mil • Don't expect an immediate fix, but realize that treatment is a process • Similar to physical wound healing, treatment for psychological stress may be challenging but ultimately worth it
Time constraints	Conflicts with daily responsibilities, such as work or other doctor appointments make it difficult to get help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize your psychological well-being along with physical health. Make an appointment with a behavioral health professional and commit to keeping it • Take a holistic approach to your treatment; mind, body, and spirit all work together to promote your recovery and promote your overall health and well-being
Participation restriction	Physical and transportation problems associated with attending services and treatment	<p>For assistance with logistics contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sailors and Coast Guardsmen contact Navy Safe Harbor for questions on enrollment eligibility. Nationwide (toll-free): 877-746-8563; Email: safeharbor@navy.mil • Marines contact the Wounded Warrior Regiment for more information on the referral process. Nationwide (toll-free): 877-487-6299
Availability of services	Finding suitable counseling options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential services, including non-medical counseling and specialty consultations, are available through Military OneSource • Experienced and fully qualified professionals are available at Fleet and Family Support Centers. Clinical counselors hold a masters or doctorate degree in counseling, social work, marriage and family counseling, or psychology • Ask your doctor or chaplain for a referral



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