



VFW Urges Vets to Prioritize Mental Health During PTSD Awareness Month and Beyond

To veterans and anyone suffering, you are not alone ... and you don't have to carry this burden by yourself

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. – As June marks PTSD Awareness Month, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is renewing its commitment to destigmatizing mental health challenges and encouraging all veterans to seek the support they need. The VFW stresses the critical importance of mental well-being, knowing when to ask for help and the unique healing power of connecting with and relying on fellow veterans.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a real and often debilitating condition that can affect anyone who has experienced trauma, and it is particularly prevalent among those who have served in combat zones or endured other traumatic military experiences. Data shows that veterans experience PTSD at a higher rate than their civilian counterparts.

While the wounds of war are not always visible, their impact on veterans' lives and the lives of their families can be profound. PTSD displays differently for each person, with some experiencing intrusive memories, nightmares, flashbacks, avoidance behaviors or changes in mood and thinking.

The societal stigmas surrounding mental health, including within the military and veteran community, have made it difficult for many to admit they're struggling. This June, the VFW reminds veterans that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Navigating the complexities of PTSD and other mental health conditions can be a challenging and isolating journey, which is why connecting with brothers and sisters-in-arms who share similar experiences can be incredibly powerful. Within the VFW's nearly 6,000 Posts worldwide, veterans find safe spaces where they can share experiences without judgement, speak freely and receive authentic camaraderie.

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Throughout June, the VFW encourages all veterans, their families and communities to:

- Educate themselves about PTSD and its symptoms.
- Encourage open conversations about mental health within the veteran community.
- Support veterans by listening, offering a helping hand and connecting them with resources.
- Utilize available resources, such as the VA's PTSD programs, the Veterans Crisis Line (Dial 988, then Press 1), and local VFW Posts.

The 1.4 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary remain dedicated to advocating for robust mental health services and ensuring all veterans have timely access to the comprehensive care they need and deserve. This PTSD Awareness month and beyond, the VFW reminds veterans and anyone suffering, you are not alone ... and you don't have to carry this burden by yourself.