

# Oklahoma City VA Medical Center

## OEF/OIF Program Office

The OEF/OIF Program Office can assist you with coordinating appointments throughout the Medical Center including:

- Eligibility and Enrollment
- Primary Care Physician
- Specialty Clinics
- OEF/OIF Counseling Program
- Family and Mental Health
- Traumatic Brain Injury Screen
- Vet Center Readjustment Counseling
- Employment Assistance
- Benefits Assistance
- Veterans Service Organizations

*You may be eligible for VA benefits if you are:*

- A veteran
- A veteran's dependent
- A surviving spouse, child or parent of a deceased veteran
- An active duty military service member

### **Women Veterans Health Program**

The number and percentage of women in the military service has grown and the number of women veterans has increased accordingly. Many of the women who have served our country do not know they are entitled to VA benefits and health care, and unsure of how to access these benefits and services.

The Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 enabled the VA to dramatically improve its programs for women veterans by establishing state-of-the-art facilities and programs that focus on women's health, thus creating an environment that is warm, comfortable and private. Program services offered along with the addition of a few at the OKCVAMC range from medical to mental health services including Primary Care, Gynecology Services, Patient Education, Screening, Counseling and Treatment for Sexual Trauma, Substance Abuse, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Domestic Violence, Vocational Rehabilitation and Homeless Programs.

Other assistance provided by the WVPM included establishing eligibility, understanding benefits and obtaining health care in the VA System. The Women Veterans Program Managers work as an advocate to assist you in getting the quality health care you deserve. They focus on improving the public image of the VA and women veterans, targeted out-reach to women veterans, expansion of appropriate women's health care services, case management for high-risk women veterans and monitoring clinical trends and outcomes.

For additional information on Women Veterans Health Program, contact OEF/OIF Support Staff at (405) 456-3214 or log on to [www.va.gov/wvhp](http://www.va.gov/wvhp)

## **OEF/OIF Readjustment Program**

Readjustment for OEF/OIF veterans can be challenging. Returning from a war zone to civilian life requires different ways of coping. The transition from theater of combat to home may not be easy.

During deployment you developed skills that helped you survive in dangerous and stressful environments. As you have now come home, those same skills you once had may get in the way as you try to enjoy life. Readjustment challenges can affect many areas of daily living, including relationships, jobs and school.

Post-deployment veterans may experience some of the following difficulties as they transition back to civilian life: anger, anxiety, depression, difficulty concentrating, marital/relationship problems, reliance on alcohol/drugs and sleep disturbances.

Located at the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center, the OEF/OIF Readjustment Program's staff includes psychology, social work and psychiatry.

Each OEF/OIF veteran will meet one-one-one with an OEF/OIF Readjustment Program staff member. After identifying any concerns, the staff member will give the veteran an overview of treatment options which will include:

- Evaluation
- Individual Therapy
- OEF/OIF Readjustment Class
- Sleep and Nightmare Management Group
- PTSD Symptoms Management Group
- OEF/OIF Support Group
- Psychiatric Evaluation

To schedule an appointment or for more information, call the OKCVAMC OEF/OIF Readjustment Program at (405) 456-3295.

## **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Treatment Program**

### *What is PTSD?*

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a disorder that can develop following a traumatic event that threatens your safety or makes you feel helpless. Most people associate PTSD with battle-scarred soldiers, and military combat is the most common in men, but any overwhelming life experience can trigger PTSD, especially if the event is perceived as unpredictable and uncontrollable.

### *Common symptoms of PTSD to be aware of:*

- Intrusion, upsetting memories of the event
- Flashbacks (acting or feeling like the event is happening again)
- Nightmares (either of the event or other frightening things)
- Feelings of intense distress when reminded of the trauma
- Intense physical reactions to reminders of the event (e.g. pounding heart, rapid breathing, nausea, muscle tension, sweating)

### **PTSD Program at Oklahoma City VA Medical Center**

In this program each veteran will meet one-on-one with an OEF/OIF Readjustment Program staff member. After reviewing how the veteran is doing and identifying concerns, the staff member will give the veteran an overview of treatment options. The veteran also has the opportunity to receive services in the OEF/OIF Readjustment Program and/or be referred to other VA programs and community resources.

**To enroll, please call the PTSD Program Office at (405) 456-3295.**

### **Adjustments to Traumatic Stress**

**What is ATS?** Individuals who experience a traumatic event may suffer psychological stress related to the incident. Immediately following a trauma, almost everyone finds it difficult to stop thinking about it. Many people find themselves anxious and easily aroused. They may feel more “scattered” and experience problems with concentration, memory, and making decisions and it is important to know these are normal stress reactions to abnormal situations. The important thing to remember, for many people, symptoms of trauma related stress are temporary and resolve on their own in about 3 months; however those with more serious mental health problems can learn coping skills to decrease the frequency and intensity of their symptoms and live a satisfying life.

**Common Reactions After Trauma:** Feeling hopelessness about the future and detached or unconcerned about others, having trouble concentrating or indecisiveness, jumpy and startle

easily at sudden noise, on guard and constantly alert, having disturbing dreams, memories or flashbacks, and work or school problems.

**ATS Class at Oklahoma City VA Medical Center:** If emotional reactions are getting in the way of relationships, work or other important activities, or seem to be increasing rather than decreasing over time, mental health treatment can help. Take action to learn coping skills, decrease feelings of helplessness and put you more in control in your life.

**To enroll, talk to your Primary Care Provider or call the VA Medical Center at (405) 456-5539.**

**MyHealtheVet - [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)**

My healtheVet is VA's award-winning online Personal Health Record. It offers veterans anywhere, anytime internet access to VA health care. Launched nationwide in 2003, My HealtheVet is the gateway to web-based tools that empower veterans to become better partners in their health care. With My HealtheVet, found at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov), America's veterans access trusted, secure and informed health and benefits information, at their convenience.

My HealtheVet features include: VA prescription refills, wellness reminders, VA benefits and services, trusted health information, and healthy living centers. Log on to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) and access personal health journals, vitals tracking and graphing, military healthy history journal, and activity and food journals. Future releases for My HealtheVet include appointments and secure messaging to your provider.

## **REACH Program**

The acronym stands for *Reaching Out to Educate and Assist Caring, Healthy Families* and this program is offered through the Family Mental Health Services.

Living with emotional problems or PTSD does not have to control your life and we understand many parts of your life such as holding down a job, accomplishing set goals, and having good relationships with family members and friends can be overwhelming after post-deployment.

The OKC VAMC REACH Support Staff wants to help you feel good about yourself, have productive activities, and enjoy healthy relationships with family and friends.

*Veterans and families in the REACH Program have the chance to:*

- Learn about emotional problems and PTSD treatment options, medications, etc.
- Ask questions to doctors in a relaxed setting
- Receive and give support from your fellow veterans and their families

- Learn how to cope with rough times
- Figure out how to solve problems effectively as a family
- Learn and practice good communications skills
- Find good ways to manage anger

**For more information about the REACH Program, please call (405) 456-2392.**

## **Polytrauma & Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Support Center**

The Oklahoma City VAMC is considered a Polytrauma/TBI support center. This site provides a high level of expert care and a full range of clinical and ancillary resources. Generally the severely injured veteran is initially evaluated and cared for at one of the main polytrauma sites within our network, then as they stabilize and prepare to return home their ongoing polytrauma needs are continued at our facility.

While serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, military service members are sustaining multiple severe injuries as a result of explosions and blasts. Polytrauma is defined as injuries to physical regions or organ systems, one of which may be life threatening, resulting in physical, cognitive, neuromuscular, psychological, or psychosocial impairments and function disability. TBI frequently occurs in polytrauma in combination with other disabling conditions such as amputation, auditory and visual impairments, PTSD and other mental health conditions.

OEF/OIF veterans access our Polytrauma/TBI Support Center via referral most generally from their primary care doctor of their OEF/OIF Case Manager as they enter the VA Healthcare System. The Polytrauma/TBI Support Center provides ongoing therapy, physical therapy, recreational therapy, and mental health. In addition, the team coordinates with their primary care doctor for specialized medical care needs (e.g. amputation care, seizures, etc.).

The Polytrauma/TBI Support Center consists of a Neurologist, one full time and one part time Physician Assistant, Nurse Coordinator, Speech Therapist, Recreational Therapist, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Psychologist, Clinical Social Worker, two OEF/OIF Case Managers, Occupational Therapist, Audiologist and support from two Neuropsychologists. The OEF/OIF Case Managers also work closely with vocational rehab to identify those veterans needing assistance in returning to the work force. Referral to the center is made most often from the OEF/OIF Case Manager as they are generally the first point of contact for the veteran but may also be made by other health care providers (including primary care or mental health).