

If you ever served in an active combat zone and currently have legal problems, this brochure may help to direct you to treatment or other services to help improve the quality of your life and prevent future legal problems.

Why seek treatment?

Combat stress is a normal set of reactions to the traumatic events which commonly occur in war and it can result in problems readjusting to civilian life. A delayed stress reaction may even surface after many years and include some or all of the following problems:

- Frequent and strong upsetting feelings such as anger, irritability, fear, anxiety, sadness, grief, and/or guilt
- Upsetting memories and thoughts
- Nightmares and sleep problems
- Avoiding things because they trigger painful feelings or memories
- Avoiding interacting with people
- Finding it hard to enjoy or get much pleasure out of things you do
- Feeling emotionally numb (which causes difficulties in relationships)
- Feeling “on guard” and hypervigilant.
- Difficulties concentrating or remembering things
- Alcohol and/or drug use to cope with these problems

Legal problems such as DWI's, DUI's, and assault or domestic violence charges can be an unfortunate consequence of the anger and alcohol or drug use that is often associated with combat stress.

I feel that my mental health issues and/or substance abuse problems have contributed to my current legal troubles.

OR

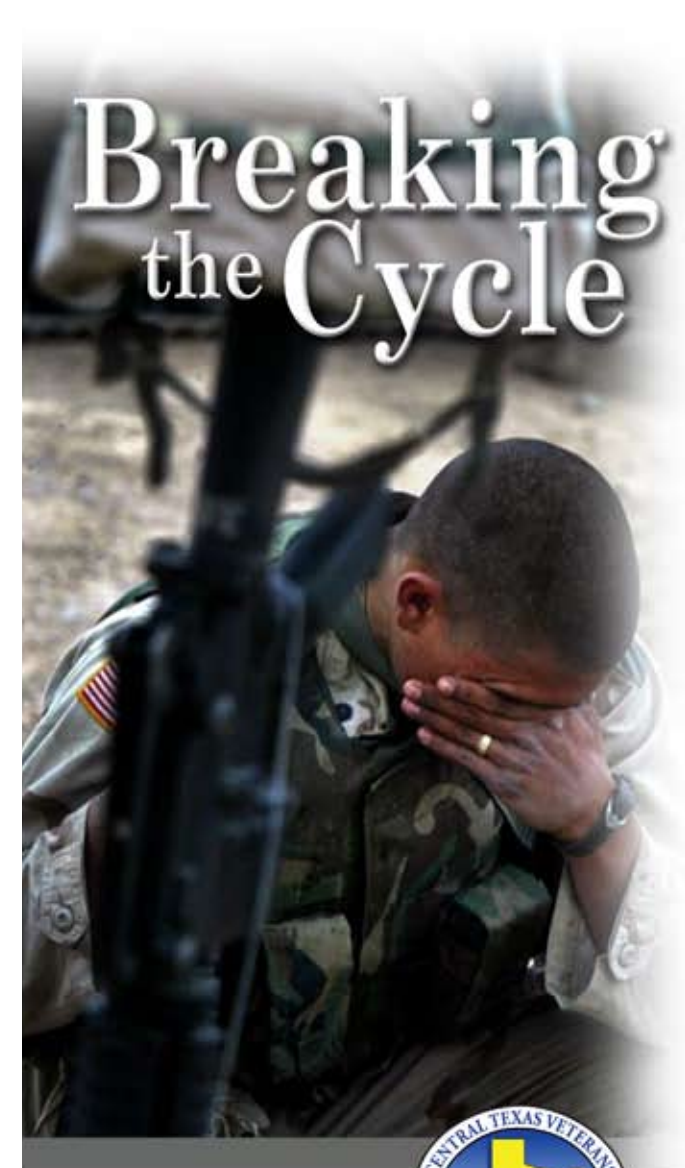
I need assistance with getting my VA treatment notes to my attorney, courts, or parole/probation officer.

Please contact the Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator at (512) 797-9060 for information and assistance.

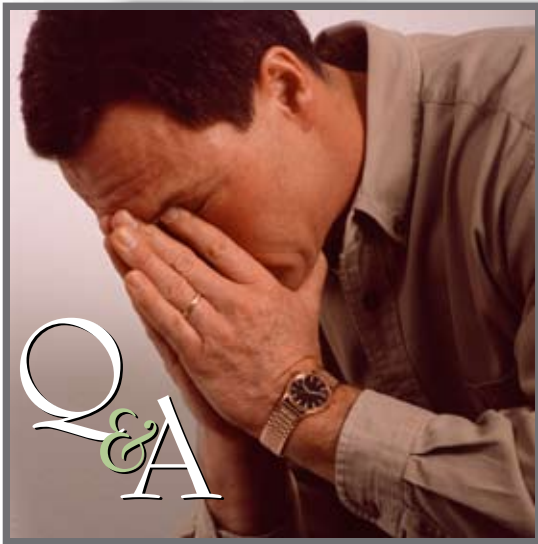


This brochure is a product of the Veterans Intervention Project, representing the efforts of many different Veterans services and legal agencies in Travis County. The goal of this project is to assist our combat Veterans in accessing VA and other services and help prevent further legal problems.

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**A brochure for combat Veterans
with legal problems**



Will treatment help me with my legal problems?

While there is no guarantee that going to treatment will help address your legal issues, efforts to seek treatment for problems that may be related to your legal problems (such as anger management and alcohol or drug treatment) will show the legal system (courts, attorneys, probation/parole officers) that you are serious about changing your behavior and addressing your legal issues.

I need a lawyer; can the Veterans Administration (VA) provide me with legal assistance?

The VA does not provide legal assistance. If you are unable to afford legal counsel, please talk with the judge handling your case about getting a court appointed attorney.

The conditions of my probation state that I need to receive alcohol or drug treatment. Can I get this through the VA?

Yes, the Central Texas VA has outpatient and residential programs for substance abuse treatment. The VA outpatient clinic in Austin can help you. Call (512) 433-2020 (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm) to ask for information about Alcohol and Drug Assessment and Treatment Services. The Austin VA Mental Health services are located at 2101 South IH 35.

Am I eligible to receive treatment from the Veterans Administration (VA)?

Never assume that you are not. Contact the VA and apply. The phone number of the Austin VA Outpatient Clinic is (512) 389-1010. The number for the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (which includes Austin, Temple, and Waco) is (800) 423-2111. Eligibility must be verified before you can receive care. The phone number for Readjustment Counseling Services through the Austin Vet Center is (512) 416-1314.

I am an Iraq/Afghanistan Veteran. How can I find out about programs for my war?

Contact the OEF/OIF Combat Veteran Case Managers at the VA Outpatient Clinic OR the Austin Vet Center. The phone numbers for the VA Case Managers are (512) 389-6672 and (512) 389-6731. The phone number for the Austin Vet Center (a program of the VA Readjustment Counseling Service) is (512) 416-1314.

I am a Veteran from an earlier war or conflict. Can I still be seen for counseling at the VA?

Yes, Veterans can always be seen for combat stress reactions, regardless of the amount of time that has passed since the trauma. You can contact the Austin Vet Center at (512) 416-1314 or the VA Outpatient Clinic at (512) 433-2020 (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm).

I now have a felony on my record. Will that prevent me from getting my VA benefits?

No, if you have an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions, your arrest record does not limit your access to your VA benefits.

I have questions about VA benefits for injuries I received in the military?

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) handles benefits claims for injuries, physical or psychological. Benefits assistance agencies outside the VA include the Travis County Veteran's Service Office and the Texas Veterans Commission.

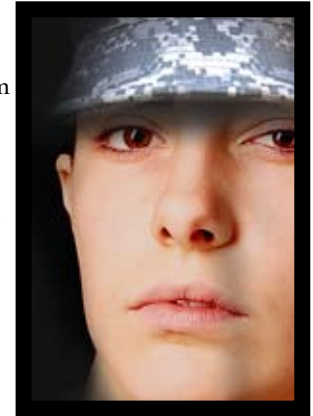
VBA Regional Office: (800) 827-1000

Travis County Veterans Service Office: (512) 854-9340

Texas Veterans Commission (in the Austin VA Outpatient Clinic): (512) 743-7143

What help is available if I don't have a place to live?

The VA has services that may help you. The Austin VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program can be reached at (512) 433-2012.



Something happened to me when I was in the military and I have not talked with anyone about it.

Contact either of the following VA and Vet Center phone numbers and ask to speak confidentially with a counselor/therapist: (512) 433-2020 (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm) or (512) 416-1314.

Sometimes I have thoughts about harming myself.

Please call one of the following numbers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Austin Suicide Helpline: (512) 472-4357

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255) - Press 1 for Veteran specific services