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March 2013 Issue

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Feature Topic

PTSD Treatment Can Help

There are [good treatments available for PTSD](#). The therapies and medications below have the best evidence for treating PTSD. Researchers around the world have examined them. They have found better outcomes for people who get these treatments than for people who receive other treatments, or no treatment at all.

"Getting better" means different things for different people, and not everyone who gets one of these treatments will be "cured." But they will likely do better than people with PTSD who were not treated, or who received other kinds of treatment.

Psychotherapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is the most effective treatment for PTSD. Types of CBT include Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure. Learn more:

- [Cognitive Processing Therapy \(CPT\)](#): CPT teaches you how to identify trauma-related thoughts and change them so they are more accurate and cause less distress.
- [Prolonged Exposure Therapy \(PE\)](#): In PE, you talk about your trauma over and over until the memories no longer upset you. You also go to places that are safe, but that you have been staying away from because they are related to the trauma.
- [EMDR](#): This therapy involves thinking about images and feelings that distress you while doing rapid eye movements.

Medication

SSRI's raise the level of serotonin in your brain. This can make you feel better. The two SSRIs that are approved by the FDA for PTSD are sertraline (Zoloft™) and paroxetine (Paxil™).


Sometimes people combine psychotherapy and medication. Learn about therapies and medications, and why to avoid benzodiazepines, in [Understanding PTSD Treatment](#).

Uncertain About Treatment?

- Get your questions answered. Listen to [providers talking about PTSD treatments](#) (YouTube).
- Watch [Considering Professional Help](#) to decide if you would benefit.
- Hear from those who have been there. Veterans talk about how PTSD treatment turned their lives [AboutFace](#).
- Explore options for [Self-help and Coping](#), such as the PTSD Coach App.

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For Providers

To ensure those who experience trauma are offered the best care, experts develop PTSD Clinical Practice Guidelines. You can learn to apply best practices for free with the [PTSD 101 VA/DoD PTSD Clinical Practice Guideline Series](#). Just look for the icon .

Emerging Treatments

Want to stay up to date on the newest treatment trials and assessments? Subscribe to the [Clinician's Trauma Update-Online](#) and the [PTSD Research Quarterly](#) to stay current. Find out if marijuana, ecstasy, yoga, and other treatments really work for PTSD.

You can also read about [Enhancing PTSD Treatment and Delivery](#), which covers methods such as virtual reality, combining treatments, and telehealth.

From the War Zone to the Home Front II - Online Training

Ten years following the start of the Iraq war, Veterans and their families still need support. Last year 6000 providers signed up for this free online training series. Join us for 9 new lectures with Q&A (or view archives). [Learn more and register today](#). Topics for April:

- 4/04: Sleep Issues in Returning Veterans
- 4/11: Substance Abuse
- 4/18: Aggression and Domestic Violence
- 4/25: Managing Grief and Loss in Returning Veterans and Families

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For VA Providers

PTSD Psychopharmacology Best Practices

3rd Wednesday of each month, 2 pm EST. VA staff please [email us](#) to sign up.

- **04/17/13 - Ahsan Naseem** on *Using Telemedicine to Assess, Diagnose, and Prescribe for Veterans with PTSD*

VA PTSD Consultation Program

Free PTSD consultation for anyone working with Veterans. Call 866-948-7880 or email ptsdconsult@va.gov.

Join our **Lecture Series**, based on questions posed to the [VA PTSD Consultation Program](#):

- **04/16/13 - Beeta Homaifar and Hal Wortzel** on *PTSD and Suicide Risk Management*
- 3rd Tuesday of each month, 2 pm EST. VA staff please email ptsdconsult@va.gov to sign up.

VA HSR&D Spotlight on Pain Management

Presentation: *Integrating Treatment for Pain and PTSD* by Steven Dobscha, MD 04/02/13, 11 am EST. [Register online](#).

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Research at the Center

[Acceptance and Commitment Therapy \(ACT\)](#) is being tested for use as a standalone treatment for postdeployment distress and PTSD. ACT includes [mindfulness](#) skills to help individuals relate to their thoughts and feelings in a way that lessens their interference in behavior change. Clarification of values and goal setting skills are taught to increase commitment to valued activities. Two pilot studies to date yielded promising results and a randomized controlled trial is underway.

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PTSD in the News

PTSD and Conflict Behavior between Veterans and their Intimate Partners. A new article about an all-too-frequent consequence of deployments for military couples. [Read more](#).

Drone Pilots Are Found to Get Stress Disorders Much as Those in Combat Do. Mental health problems are developing, much like those of pilots who are deployed to war. [Read more*](#).

Older Veterans and PTSD. Hear from a World War II Veteran in this NY Times blog article. [Read more*](#).

Be sure to forward this update to others so they can [subscribe](#). We send only one update per month to keep you informed of the latest PTSD developments.

Feature Topic next month: Sexual Assault.

The Staff of VA's National Center for PTSD

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