

Finding the Right Therapist for You

Veteran 1: With any counselor, you just have to find someone that you connect with. And I found one in Houston that I did.

Veteran 2: Eventually, one day, I just walked into the mental health unit at the VA Hospital and said, "I'd like to see somebody." They hooked me up with somebody right away. And my doctor, I've been seeing her ever since.

Veteran 3: I've ended up going through three counselors to get to the third one to really actually focus on some of the things that I was dealing with and understanding that. And it helped actually a lot.

Veteran 4: He had never been in the military. But he was the only person I met since I had come back from Vietnam that I felt understood what I was going through.

Veteran 5: He understood what was going on with me. He assured me that it is going to be all right. And I trusted that, which, to be honest, I hadn't felt that way since I've been out. I felt alone.

Veteran 6: You're opening up all these memories, and then you're really seeing the person that you've become, and it didn't feel good. But I still stuck with it. I would try to see different people. You know what I mean? Just different counselors, different therapists. I ended up seeing another therapist who really, really helped me. It was nice talking through it.

Veteran 7: I had gone to some clinics before, and they recognized right away that I was not forthcoming, and I was not the greatest candidate because I was still not opening up. So she referred me to another therapist. And I went to see her, and she was young. She was not a veteran. And I figured "This is not going to work. I mean, she's not a veteran. She has no idea what I'm talking about. She's a female. She's never been military. She's a lot younger than I am. She's not going to work." And I found out that she was full of insight, and her specialty was also PTSD with combat veterans. And that was a tremendous help.

Veteran 1: I initially started some counseling in Colorado. I just told them what they wanted to hear. And when I went to the hospital, I met a therapist. She helped me realize one, yeah, you can have PTSD, even though you didn't get blown up, you didn't kill anybody. She was just open and honest. "Tell me about your day. What's every day for you? I mean, what makes you mad?" So she helped a lot.



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Veteran 8: You have to be honest with yourself and your counselor. If you're going and you're finding you're just not making that connection, you need to be honest and find someone else. I didn't do that. I can't help but wonder if I would've just been honest front and said, "I don't think this is helping. Can I see someone else?" what I might have been able to avoid going through.

Veteran 9: There's a lot of service members that don't want to talk to a civilian psychologist or a counselor or a psychiatrist because they just don't feel like they understand. But you don't know until you go to that counselor. Some of them are better than others. Some civilians they're pretty experienced working with military, so they might be a little better.

Veteran 10: I didn't want to talk to somebody who really didn't know what I was talking about. But at the Vet Center, my therapist was an infantry soldier. He was deployed to Vietnam twice. And speaking with him, working with him, it made me feel comfortable to talk about my stories because I knew they were familiar to him.

Veteran 11: I went and checked myself into a civilian hospital, did counseling for about eight months with them. But I didn't feel a click. I started using the VA and met up with a psychiatrist that was an Army Veteran and a psychologist that's an Army Veteran. So there was a rapport, and they could see my side of it, where I was coming from. So I got a bond going.

Veteran 2: I think talking to the psychologist actually helped me be able to talk to my wife better. You get comfortable telling your psychologist things that you don't think that you should tell anybody, and then you can start breaking down some of them things to your spouse a little bit easier.

Veteran 12:

The doctor, my psychologist, he and I established a rapport with one another, and I felt really comfortable with him. A question and answer kind of thing. Why would you do this, and why would you do that? And he wasn't picking at me. He was just trying to get me to open up to him, and I did. So he's helping me out a lot. And I really appreciate the psychologist and the psychiatrist taking time out to try to talk to me and get a handle on it.

Veteran 8: The more I've looked back, the more I can see how helpful the counseling's been, not just for the PTSD, but like I said, throughout my whole life. I think it's consistently gotten better since I've been home.



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