

Psychotherapy for Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder



Both psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy are effective in treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).¹ **When both treatment modalities are available and feasible, the Veterans Affairs (VA)/Department of Defense (DOD) Clinical Practice Guideline recommends the use of the indicated psychotherapies over the indicated pharmacotherapies.**¹ Indicated psychotherapies should be selected based on providers' prior training and supervision to achieve proficiency.¹



We recommend the following individual, manualized trauma-focused psychotherapies for the treatment of PTSD:¹

- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Prolonged Exposure (PE)

We recommend using secure video teleconferencing to deliver treatments when that therapy has been validated for use with video teleconferencing or when other options are not available for the treatment of PTSD.¹ In such instances, the benefits outweigh the potential for harm from lack of treatment if patients cannot receive intervention in-person.¹



We suggest the following individual, manualized psychotherapies for the treatment of PTSD:¹

- Ehlers' Cognitive Therapy (CT) for PTSD
- Present Centered Therapy (PCT)
- Written Exposure Therapy (WET)

We suggest that the presence of co-occurring substance use disorder and/or other disorder(s) not preclude treatment by individual, manualized trauma-focused psychotherapies (i.e., CPT, EMDR, PE, WET, CT, or PCT) for PTSD.¹

Resources



Military OneSource provides 24/7 support and information on housing, financial, legal, medical, and psychological services.

- State-side: 800-342-9647
- Overseas: 800-342-9647
- Collect: 484-530-5908

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil>



988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the associated **Military/Veterans Crisis Line** provides free and confidential support for individuals in crisis. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, call or text 988 or <https://988lifeline.org>; you can also press 1 or text 838255 to chat live with a counselor focused on military and veteran callers (<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>).



inTransition offers specialized coaching and assistance for active duty service members, National Guard members, reservists, veterans, and retirees to help callers with their mental health care as they transition between systems of care.

- State-side: 800-424-7877
- Overseas: 800-748-81111 (in Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, and South Korea only)

<https://www.health.mil/inTransition>

References

- 1 Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense. (2023). *VA/DOD clinical practice guideline for the management of posttraumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder*. (Version 4.0). <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/MH/ptsd/index.asp>



Note: This content is derived from the 2023 VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Acute Stress Disorder.



Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense health care providers who use this information are responsible for considering all applicable regulations and policies throughout the course of care and patient education. Created October 2023 by the Psychological Health Center of Excellence.