**The VA Crisis Line, Text, and Chat**

If you are a veteran in crisis, call the “Veterans Crisis Line” at 988 and press 1 or chat confidentially with a trained VA adviser at <https://bit.ly/41UIcdJ> (<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/>) or text to 838255.  A crisis could be any kind of crisis including thinking of harming yourself or someone else, being homeless or about to become homeless, marital problems, joblessness, depression, or other.  If you are looking for help in encouraging a veteran to get support or mental healthcare and it is not an emergency call VA “Coaching Into Care” at 888-823-7458.

**Ask the VA for help**

Veterans and their families, caregivers, and persons concerned about veterans exhibiting signs of depression, anxiety, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), Suicidal Tendencies, Bipolar, Paranoia, Schizophrenia, Effects of Traumatic Brain Injuries, Substance Abuse, Tobacco Use, Dementia, and other mental health problems should read the following webpages and ask for VA help.

1. The VA’s “Mental Health” master webpage at <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>.

2. The VA’s “Mental Health Services” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3H8KAoE> (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/>).

3. The VA’s “Veteran Suicide Prevention” webpage at <https://bit.ly/4c5sulp> (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/suicide-prevention/> ).

4. The VA’s “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Treatment” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3uM96Je> (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/ptsd/> ).

5. The VA’s “Depression Treatment for Veterans” webpage at <https://bit.ly/4bR35eO> (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health/depression/>).

6. The VA’s “Getting Emergency Care at Non-VA Facilities” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3TskMsO> (<https://www.va.gov/resources/getting-emergency-care-at-non-va-facilities/>).

7. The VA’s “Veteran Training” (Sleep Issues, Anger Management, Problem Solving, etc.)” webpage at [https://www.veterantraining.va.gov](https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/).  These courses may be helpful but they are not meant to replace treatment by a VA healthcare professional.

8. The “VA APP Store for Mental Health Applications” webpage at <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore> (Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Use; Anger and Irritability; Anxiety, Stress, Trauma, PTSD; Depression and Mood; Mindfulness; Resilience; Goal Setting; Relationships; Beyond MST; Insomnia; Mental Health Assessments; Couples Coach; Psychological First Aid; VA Health Chat; Sleep and Insomnia; Safety Plan; etc.).

9. VA’s “Homeless Programs (National Call Center for Homeless Veterans)” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3TJ4bT6> (<https://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp>). Veterans who are homeless can get help finding mental health care at a Veterans drop-in center, or by contacting the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-424-3838, or by visiting the VA’s Homeless Veterans Website at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless).

10. VA Mental Health “Transitioning Service Members” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3PuTK2Z> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/transitioning-service/index.asp>).

11. VA’s Mental Health “Veterans Looking for Support” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3v9se49> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mental-health-recovery/index.asp>).

12. VA’s Mental Health “Women Veterans” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3vkJfs6> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/women-vets/index.asp>).

13. VA’s Mental Health “LGBTQ+Veterans” webpage at <https://bit.ly/491BapW> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/lgbtq-plus/index.asp> .

14. VA’s Mental Health “Family Member or Friend” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3TJpROX> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/families/index.asp>).

15. VA’s Mental Health “Older Veterans” webpage at <https://bit.ly/4alrtDI> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/older-veterans/index.asp>).

16. VA Mental Health “Health Care Provider” webpage at <https://bit.ly/3Vqwp65> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/healthcare-providers/index.asp>).

17. VA Mental Health “Student Veterans and Faculty” webpage at <https://bit.ly/4alldMA> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/student-faculty/index.asp>).

18. VA Mental Health “Substance Use Disorders” webpage at <https://bit.ly/4ckRRzD> and <https://bit.ly/4919SjA> (<https://www.research.va.gov/topics/sud.cfm>) and <https://bit.ly/48ZtZi1> (<https://www.research.va.gov/pubs/docs/va_factsheets/sud.pdf>).

19. VA “Caregiver Support Program” webpage at [https://www.caregiver.va.gov](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/).

20. And the references at each of the above web pages.

**Find a Caregiver Support Program Coordinator**

The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program (CSP) offers clinical services to caregivers of eligible and covered Veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system.  The program’s mission is to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our Nation’s Veterans, through education, resources, support, and services.

Locate your nearest VA Medical Center/System Headquarters using the VA Locator at <https://bit.ly/4928QDR>. CSP Coordinators are located at every [VA](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.va.gov%2Ffind-locations%2F%3FfacilityType%3Dhealth&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2bae86f5e346449144e908da8b66051f%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637975567545404666%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=czBCqG42Zl%2Bq6U1SbLEyQ%2FXz7cjV3UST%2FW7nfvYEKOs%3D&reserved=0) Medical Center.  Contact the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Caregiver Support Program Coordinator at 843-789-7959.  Contact the Dorn VA Medical Center CSP Coordinator at 803-695-6777.

**Guide to VA Mental Health Services**

Veterans Service Officers (VSOs), Veterans Service Organizations, veterans, and persons concerned about a veteran’s mental health should download and read the “VA Guide to VA Mental Health Services for Veterans & Families” at <https://bit.ly/3viFSBX> (<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/MHG_English.pdf>).  Published in July of 2012, this guide describes the guiding principles of VA mental health care.  It explains how to find mental health care and the different treatment settings where the VA offers mental health care, such as hospitals (inpatient care), clinics (outpatient care), and telemedicine (where mental health providers in one location can talk with, evaluate, and treat veterans at another location through closed-circuit video).

The “VA Guide to VA Mental Health Services for Veterans & Families” also provides information about the types of treatments available for the most common mental health problems of veterans (such as depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and PTSD) and describes the special programs offered for particular groups of veterans (such as women veterans, homeless veterans, and older veterans) and more.

**VA Mental Health Resources for family, friends, and caregivers of veterans**

In addition to online resources, VA Caregiver Support Coordinators at your nearest VA medical center and a caregiver peer support mentoring program can help connect caregivers for support and learning. Call the VA’s Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274.

**Coaching into Care**

Family, friends, and caregivers of veterans can also contact the VA’s “Coaching into Care” program to speak directly with a licensed psychologist or social worker, free of charge. They can provide information about mental health and VA services, as well as tips for how to begin the conversation about treatment with a loved one.  Caregivers can reach a licensed psychologist or social worker at 888-823-7458.

***This information was copied from an article by Larry Dandridge.***

*Larry Dandridge is a Vietnam War wounded warrior, a combat 100% service-connected disabled veteran, an ex-Enlisted Infantryman, an ex-Warrant Officer Pilot, and a retired Lt. Colonel Master Aviator.  He is a past Veterans Service Officer (VS0), a Patient Adviser at the RHJ VA Hospital, a Fisher House Charleston and Friends of Fisher House Charleston Good Will Ambassador, and the VP for Veteran Affairs for the Coastal South Carolina Association of the US Army (AUSA) Chapter and the Charleston Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).  Larry is the author of the award-winning Blades of Thunder (Book One), a Motivational Speaker, and a contributing freelance writer with the Island News. Contact him at**LDandridge@earthlink.net**or 843-276-7164.*