

Barriers to Care: Career Concerns

The problem: **60%** of service members with mental health symptoms **do not** seek treatment.

Survey research suggests that up to **38%** of service members believe receiving mental health treatment would negatively impact their careers.



Career concerns are among the factors that keep service members from seeking mental health care. Career impact fears include:

Members of my unit will have less confidence in me for seeking mental health care.

Leaders will blame me for having "this problem."

My career will be harmed.

Unit leadership will treat me differently.

I will be seen as weak.

Talking Points for Providers

While each service member should be treated on a case-by-case basis, research suggests three take-aways to discuss with service members who identify career concerns as a barrier to treatment:

The Importance of Early Treatment

Studies suggest that seeking treatment shortly after the onset of symptoms is less likely to yield negative career repercussions than later treatment-seeking.



Self-referred vs. Command-referred Treatment

Self-referred treatment is associated with fewer duty restrictions and fewer provider disclosures to command than command-referred treatment.



Mental Health Treatment and Security Clearance

Disclosing mental health treatment does not, in and of itself, adversely impact one's ability to gain or retain a security clearance. In fact, seeking help may favorably impact one's eligibility for a national security position.



Sources: Sharp et al., 2015; Health Risk Behavior Survey, 2013; Rowan et al., 2014; Christensen & Yaffe, 2012; Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 2012

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