



PRIMARY CARE: The Best PTSD Care Anywhere Starts with You!



Primary Care teams have an important role in treating Veterans with PTSD. Know the facts about recommended PTSD treatments to provide the best care to your patients.



Did You Know?



> **1 IN 10** VETERANS RECEIVING CARE IN VA HAVE PTSD

Among OEF/OIF Veterans who use VA care, 1 in 4 men and 1 in 5 women have PTSD



1 IN 4 MEN



1 IN 5 WOMEN

PTSD DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A CHRONIC DISORDER. WITH TREATMENT, RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

TRAUMA-FOCUSED PSYCHOTHERAPIES—NOT MEDICATION—ARE THE BEST TREATMENT OPTION



Plan Ahead for Resistance



You can challenge common misconceptions about PTSD therapy and mental health treatment.

TIPS: STANDING UP TO STIGMA

- ✓ Tell your patient trauma-focused psychotherapy works.
- ✓ Talk openly about mental health issues.
- ✓ Explain that untreated PTSD can impact overall health and enjoyment of life.
- ✓ Explore why a patient is declining referral.
- ✓ Be a myth-buster: Effective therapy is focused and time-limited.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

- ✓ Think twice before you prescribe. Is medication going to prevent your patient from trying psychotherapy?
- ✓ Emphasize that with no treatment, symptoms are unlikely to get better, and may get worse.
- ✓ Start with your Primary Care Mental Health Integration team. Brief, effective treatments are available.



What Works

TRAUMA-FOCUSED PSYCHOTHERAPIES WITH THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)



Teaches patients to reframe negative thoughts about the trauma.

Prolonged Exposure (PE)



Teaches patients how to gain control by facing their fears.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)



Helps patients process and make sense of their trauma.

Antidepressants are Another Option

Though less effective than trauma-focused psychotherapies, antidepressant medication is another treatment option for PTSD. Prescribing medication for PTSD is the same as prescribing medication to treat depression.

Antidepressants with the strongest evidence:



To track clinical progress, use the PTSD Checklist (PCL-5).

Remember: For the best outcome, keep the focus on treating PTSD. Focusing on symptoms like anxiety or insomnia is not as effective.

There is strong evidence against the following: **✗ Benzodiazepines**, **✗ Cannabis**