



COPING WITH GRIEF FOR MILITARY & VETERAN FAMILIES

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COURSE PROGRESS

Lesson 1. What is Grief?

Lesson 2. How Grief may Affect the Veteran or Service Member

Lesson 2. How Grief may Affects the Military Family

Lesson 4. Processing Grief & Coping Techniques

Lesson 5. Community Grief Support Resources



MILITARY HELP SEEKING BEHAVIOR & MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA



The military places a high priority on building resilience with the staunch tradition of instilling a mental and physical toughness within military personnel. Members are expected to internalize their thoughts, opinions, and feelings and are often subjected to punishment and shaming when they do not conform.

When military requirements become too strenuous, help-seeking behaviors are often discouraged, forcing many service members not to seek treatment.

The feared stigma associated with seeking help could harm their careers, or they distrust military treatment policies.

Not only are they expected to put their needs last, but they are also expected to put the emotional and physical needs of their families after the needs of the military.

After leaving the military, veterans continue to struggle with the idea of seeking mental health care.

Additional support from family and friends may be necessary to connect the veteran or service member to helpful grief support resources.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES FOR ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS & FAMILIES

Resources may defer according to branch of service. The of resources provided in this program includes information on national programs and branch specific resources. However, please contact your local base or post family service center for local military and civilian resources.



Active Duty Service Members

Contact your installation's Military and Family Support Center. Locate your installation's center [HERE](#) or if you prefer support outside of your assigned installation options:

Military OneSource and the Military and Family Life Counseling Program offer free, confidential, face-to-face non-medical counseling to support you with military and family life challenges, including coping with grief. Find resources [HERE](#)

Active Duty Family Members can also use the Military OneSource listed above or use their [Tricare](#) benefits. Service members must receive a referral to use their Tricare benefits outside their assigned installation.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

For veterans

You may be eligible for VA health care benefits including, mental healthcare for grief support if you served in the active military and didn't receive a dishonorable discharge.

If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981, you must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which you were called to active duty, unless any of the descriptions below are true for you.

This minimum duty requirement may not apply if any of these are true:

- You were discharged for a disability that was caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service, or
- You were discharged for a hardship or “early out,” or
- You served prior to September 7, 1980
- If you're a current or former member of the Reserves or National Guard, you must have been called to active duty by a federal order and completed the full period for which you were called or ordered to active duty. If you had or have active-duty status for training purposes only, you don't qualify for VA health care.

If you received an other than honorable, bad conduct, or dishonorable discharge you may be eligible for a discharge upgrade.

To apply for your VA Healthcare Benefit click [**HERE**](#)



DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

For veterans

If you are experiencing any symptoms of grief or bereavement, the VA can help. VA services range from veteran peer support with other Veterans to counseling, group therapy, medication, or a combination of these options.

If you're already enrolled in VA medical care, contact your primary care provider to request an appointment with a VA mental health provider.

Additional VA mental resources include:

- VA Care in the Community Call 1-877-222-8387
- The Veteran Training online self-help portal for overcoming everyday challenges: You can use this portal's tools to help manage your anger, develop parenting and problem-solving skills, and more. The tools are based on proven mental health practices that have successfully helped other Veterans and families. The portal is free, and you don't have to sign in or provide any personal information to use the tools. [Visit the Veteran Training portal](#)
- Smartphone apps for Veterans: We've partnered with the Department of Defense (DoD) to create free smartphone applications you can use to help manage your physical and mental health. These include apps to help you deal with stress, quit smoking, and more. [Learn more about apps for Veterans \(PDF\)](#)



DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES



For family members

If you're the spouse, surviving spouse, dependent child, or family caregiver of a veteran or service member, you may qualify for health care benefits.

TRICARE If you're the family member of an active-duty, retired, or deceased service member, National Guard soldier, Reservist, or Medal of Honor recipient, you may qualify for the TRICARE program.

TRICARE provides comprehensive health coverage, including health plans, prescription medicines, dental plans, and programs for people with special needs. The Department of Defense's Defense Health Agency manages this program.

[Find out if you qualify for TRICARE and how to apply](#)

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

Are you the current or surviving spouse or child of a Veteran with disabilities or a service member who died in the line of duty? If you don't qualify for TRICARE, you may be able to get health insurance through CHAMPVA. Through this program, we cover the cost of some of your health care services and supplies. This is called cost sharing. [Find out if you](#)

[qualify for CHAMPVA and how to apply](#)

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

This program offers support and services for family caregivers of eligible Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty during certain time periods and meet other eligibility requirements. Services for eligible participants may include a financial stipend, access to health insurance, mental health counseling, caregiver training, and respite care.

[Learn more about eligibility for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers and how to apply](#)

VET CENTER

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS & VETERAN FAMILIES

For veterans

Bereavement counseling is part of a wide range of psycho social services offered to eligible combat Veterans, Service members, and families members of combat Veterans to include individual, family and group counseling.

Eligibility requirements for the veteran and family members: the service member must have served in any combat zone and received a military campaign ribbon (Vietnam, Southwest Asia, OEF, OIF, etc.).

Vet Centers are community-based facilities located in easily accessible neighborhoods near Veterans, Service members, and their families. [Find a Vet Center near you](#)

Although funded under the Department of Veteran Affairs, Vet Centers are separate from VA organizational sites to ensure confidential counseling and reduce barriers to care. All Vet Center services are prepaid through military service. Contact your nearest Vet Center through information provided in the Vet Center Directory or listings in your local blue pages. Vet Center staff are available toll free and around the clock at 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387).



DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES

For family members

You may be eligible for bereavement counseling if you're the surviving spouse, child, or parent of:

- A service member who died while serving their country
- A Reservist who died while on active duty
- A National Guard soldier who died while on active duty



Connection.
Camaraderie.
Community.

To access bereavement counseling services, contact a VA Readjustment Counseling Service staff:

- By phone at [202-461-6530](tel:202-461-6530)
- Or
- By email at vetcenter.bereavement@va.gov

The VA staff will help you contact your nearest Vet Center to arrange for counseling services in the location of your choice.

Additional information on military burial benefits and survivor pensions can be found [here](#).

TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS (T.A.P.S.)

TAPS is a national nonprofit 501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization and is not part of, or endorsed by, the Department of Defense. TAPS provides compassionate care to all those grieving the death of a military loved one through the following programs:

- TAPS national peer support network and connection to grief resources, all at no cost to surviving families and loved ones.
- TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp during Memorial Day Weekend.
- TAPS [regional survivor seminars for adults](#)
- TAPS [youth programs](#)
- TAPS [retreats](#)
- TAPS international [expeditions](#)
- Connects survivors to [counseling in your community](#)
- Help survivors [navigate benefits and resources](#).

If you are grieving the loss of a fallen service member, or if you know someone who can use our support, the [TAPS 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline](#) is always available toll-free with loving support and resources at 800-959-TAPS (8277).



NATIONAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

A comprehensive list of resources can also be found [here](#) or click the right to open the full document.

GRIEF SUPPORT RESOURCES

- [Center for Loss & Life Transition](#) is an organization dedicated to helping people who are grieving and those who care for them by offering resources and understanding. For more information, you may also call 970-226-6050.
- [Give An Hour](#) is a national network of volunteers capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society by harnessing the skill and expertise of volunteer professionals to increase the likelihood that those in need receive the support and care they deserve.
- [Department of Veterans Affairs Bereavement Counseling](#) offers bereavement support to parents, spouses, and children of active duty, the National Guard, or reserve members who die while on military duty. For more information, you may also call 202-461-6530.
- [The Compassionate Friends](#) provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family. For more information, you may also call 877-969-0010.
- [Vets4Warriors](#) is a 24/7 peer support network committed to ensuring that all veterans, service members, their families, and caregivers always have direct and immediate access to a peer who understands their life experiences and the challenges they face and can provide support whenever they confront an issue, wherever they are in the world. For more information, you may also call 855-838-8255.
- [AirCraft Casualty Emotional Support Services \(ACCESS\)](#) is an air disaster bereavement support network dedicated to connecting those who have survived or lost loved ones in private, military, and commercial airplane crashes, as well as other aviation tragedies with individuals who have lived through similar losses.
- [Hospice Foundation of America](#) educates the public and health care professionals about death, dying, and grief by bringing together the nation's leading experts to contribute to books, web-based tutorials and programs, and videos. For more information, you may also contact 800-854-3402.
- [Open to Hope](#) helps people find hope after loss through articles, books, television, and podcast broadcastings, as well as allowing you to share your stories of hope and compassion.
- [eCondolence.com](#) provides guidance about expressing condolences, grief and coping, and bereavement, as well as tools and resources to plan and coordinate following the loss of a loved one.
- [What's Your Grief](#) promotes grief education, exploration, and expression in both practical and creative ways by providing resources related to understanding and coping with grief and loss, guidance on how to help a grieving friend or family member, online courses about grief and supporting someone who's grieving, resources, education and training for grief counselors, volunteers and other professions in related fields, a podcast about grief, and a support community.
- [Domani for Grief](#) provides grief support, honest conversation, and a heartfelt community through resources and information available to begin the healing process. You can explore courses, read blogs, join live events, and sign-up for their monthly newsletter.
- [Survivors of Suicide Website](#) created by a survivor of suicide. www.survivorsof suicide.com
- [Hospice Foundation of America](#) Variety of resources on grief <https://hospicefoundation.org/End-of-Life-Support-andResources/Grief-Support.aspx>
- [The Compassionate Friends](#) Assists families following the death of a child of any age. www.compassionatefriends.org
- [AARP Grief and loss resources](#) www.aarp.org/families/grief_loss
- [Website GriefNet.org](#) An internet community of persons dealing with grief, death, and major loss. www.griefnet.org



THANK YOU!

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

WISHING ALL OUR MILITARY AFFILIATED FAMILIES PEACE, LOVE AND HAPPINESS!

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