

Veterans and Mental Health

AT A GLANCE

Knox County is home to almost 29,000 military veterans, many who struggle to adjust to civilian life. For post-9/11 veterans, and those who experienced combat, that adjustment is particularly challenging.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the three primary mental health concerns that people may experience while or after serving in the military are post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and traumatic brain injury (TBI)¹.



- **11% - 20%** of U.S. veterans experience PTSD compared to 4% of the general population¹.



- PTSD affects at least **25%** of veterans with life-threatening war zone experience².

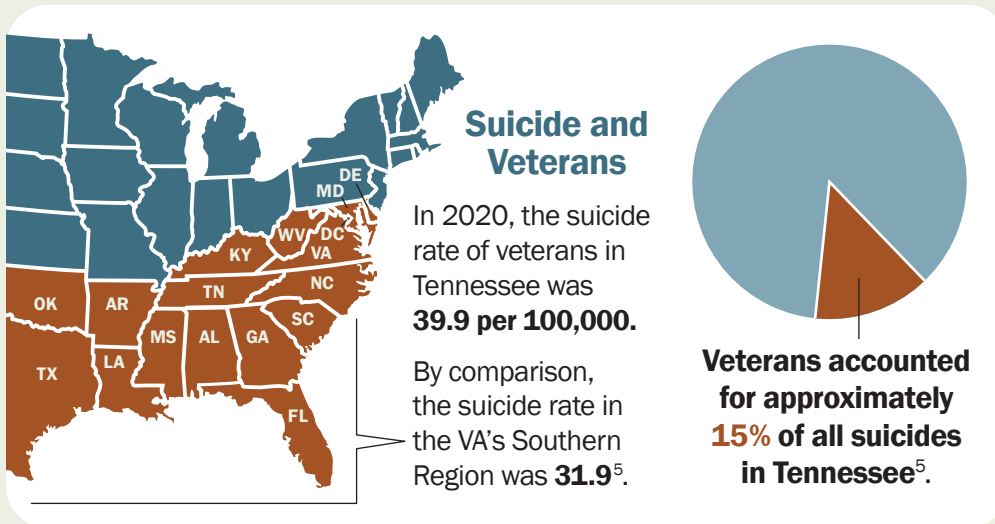
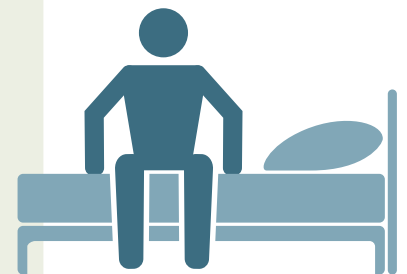


- Up to **9%** of all appointments in the outpatient military health network are related to depression³.

PTSD in Veterans

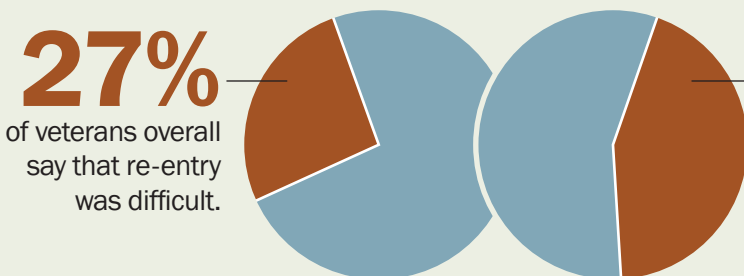
Many older veterans report having symptoms of PTSD even 50 years or longer after their service experience, particularly if they have wartime experience. Some older veterans have late-onset of symptoms that do not begin until later in life.

Symptoms of PTSD often include having nightmares or feeling as if you are reliving the event, being easily startled, or avoiding situations that remind you of the event⁴.



Returning to Civilian Life

Transitioning to civilian life after military service poses unique challenges.



44% of veterans who served after September 11, 2001, report difficulty transitioning back to civilian life.

In addition to those who served post-9/11, veterans who were seriously injured or who served in combat were more likely to report difficulty adjusting back to civilian life⁶.

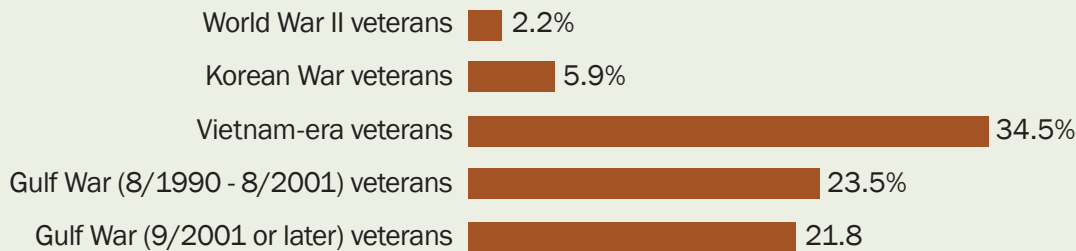


Knox County Veterans

7.7% of the Knox County population are veterans⁷.



Knox County Veterans by Periods of Service (2017-2021)⁷.



In 2018, Knox County veterans reported fewer days of poor mental health in the past month (4 days) compared to non-veterans (5.8 days)⁸.

Resources

The **TN Crisis Line** is a 24/7 call service that assists with mental health crises and emergencies. This is a free service. For more information, visit the TN Statewide Crisis Phone Line website. Call 855-CRISIS-1 or 855-274-7471.

The **Veteran's Crisis Line** (call 988 then press 1) provides 24/7 confidential crisis support for veterans and their loved ones. You do not have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to call. Online chat (VeteransCrisisLine.net) and text message (838255) options are also available.

Coaching Into Care is a national telephone-based support service for family members and others who want to help reluctant veterans access their VA health care benefits, particularly for mental health issues. Call 888-923-7458.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and **Department of Defense** offer free mental health services to veterans regardless of discharge status, service history, or eligibility for VA health care.

NAMI Homefront is a free program for families and friends of service members and veterans with mental health needs.

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