

ABOUTFACE

A Guide for

VA Peer Specialists



What is AboutFace?

[AboutFace](#) is an educational website created by the VA's [National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](#). The site explains PTSD in easy-to-read language and features stories from real Veterans, family members, and VA treatment providers.

How can I use AboutFace?

As a VA peer specialist, you know how powerful it can be for Veterans to know that they're not alone — and to hear from others who've been through similar experiences. That's what AboutFace does best. With AboutFace, you have more than 100 unique voices at your fingertips — each ready to share their stories and perspectives.

AboutFace offers a few different ways for Veterans to learn about PTSD. Veterans can choose to go through a guided learning experience, focus on topics that are most relevant to their experience, or explore hundreds of videos.



We use AboutFace videos in our PTSD Orientation and in our Intro to PTSD class. I have also used AboutFace videos in individual sessions. It helps the Veterans realize that they are not alone, and helps me explain how much treatment can help. **It gives them hope.**

— **Kyle Milk**
VA Peer Specialist

Navigating Aboutface

Go to ptsd.va.gov/apps/aboutface and look for these sections at the top of the page:

Learn about PTSD & treatment

This section answers common questions that Veterans may ask, like:

- What is PTSD?
- How does PTSD affect the people I love?
- How can treatment help me?

Together, the pages in this section provide a basic introduction to PTSD, how PTSD affects Veterans' lives, and how treatment can help. For a guided learning experience, Veterans may choose to read the whole section in order. Others may prefer to explore the pages out of order or simply focus on pages that are relevant to their experience.

Explore more PTSD topics

The pages in this section address more detailed topics like:

- PTSD therapies, including Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Race, culture, and PTSD

Watch videos

On this page, you and your patients can explore videos about all the topics listed above. Check out the playlists about common PTSD topics (e.g., "negative thoughts," "avoiding people, places, and relationships"). Or use the drop-down menus and search box to find videos relevant to your interests.



TIP:

At the bottom of the screen, you'll find a "Resources for professionals" page with more helpful resources to use in your work with Veterans

Help Veterans hear from others who are like them.

As you know, dealing with trauma can feel isolating — and it can be powerful to hear from someone else who's been there.

Use the **filters on the Watch Videos** page to find videos featuring Veterans from a specific service branch, service decade, place of deployment, and more — as well as Veterans who have been through a specific type of PTSD therapy.

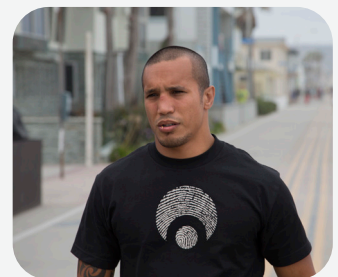


TIP:

You can combine filters to narrow your search further — for example, you can select "Female" and "US Air Force" to see videos from female Air Force Veterans.

Supporting Veterans who are dealing with PTSD and other mental health issues can be challenging. Remember to seek support for yourself as well — from colleagues, friends, or a therapist. Taking care of yourself is an important part of protecting your health and making sure you're ready to keep making a difference in Veterans' lives.

You can use the PTSD Coach app (ptsd.va.gov/app/vid/mobile/ptsdcoach_app.asp) to learn more about ways to support your own health and well-being while working as a peer specialist — and remember that it's okay to ask for a PTSD treatment booster session, too.



PTSD: We've been there.

AboutFace videos feature Veterans from all over the country with a wide range of backgrounds, identities, and experiences. Below, we introduce you to just a few of them.



TIP:

To see all of a Veteran's videos, type their name into the Search box on the Watch Videos page.



I never felt safe. I was always looking over my shoulder and over my back."

As a survivor of military sexual trauma, Yvonne dealt with severe PTSD symptoms for years, including trouble sleeping, panic attacks, and nightmares. She started using alcohol and drugs to cope, and ended up homeless. Treatment helped Yvonne restore her sense of self-worth and get back to the life she wanted.



Yvonne Grissett
US Army 1982–1986
VA Peer Specialist



Richard Adams
US Navy 1971–1972



I was irritable. I snapped at a lot of people. If they yelled at me, it was no good. I had a very violent temper. And now... I wouldn't hurt an ant."

After being assaulted while in the Navy, Rich spent years using drugs and alcohol to deal with feelings of shame and anger. Treatment helped him realize that he didn't do anything wrong — and prompted him to reconnect with his family.



The emotional numbness... will just tear away all of the relationships in your life if you don't learn to get those emotions out."

When Sarah came home from her last deployment, she felt numb — and that made it hard to be there for her family. After years of struggling at work and in her marriage, treatment helped Sarah unlock the cause of her PTSD and realize that she's not alone.



Sarah Humphries
US Army 1994–2012



I couldn't go into restaurants... I got a whiff of a smell that reminded me of Iraq and I just left."

Coming home as a decorated Marine, Vince didn't think anything could be wrong with him. But he felt like he always needed to be on guard — and the smallest things, even hearing his children laugh, made him feel like he was in Iraq all over again. PTSD treatment helped him gain perspective and feel safe again.



Vince Bryant
US Marine Corps
2001–2009
VA Peer Specialist



I was having problems with my kid. Stuff was bothering me. Like he leaves a plate on the table and I just get real mad, real angry, start yelling and screaming."

While in Afghanistan, Eddie started to have nightmares and trouble sleeping. When he got home, he still couldn't sleep — and he couldn't stop worrying that something bad would happen to his family. He thought it was normal, until he learned about PTSD. Treatment helped him feel less angry, get more rest, and just plain feel better.



Eddie Rentas
US Army 1994–2012



Every Veteran is different — and as a VA peer specialist, you have a wide range of resources in your toolbox to help Veterans at every stage of their journey.

We hope that AboutFace is helpful to you in your work with Veterans who have been through trauma. If you have questions about the site, or suggestions on how to make it better, email the AboutFace team at NCPTSD@va.gov (please include AboutFace in the subject line).

To hear more about PTSD and PTSD treatment from Veterans, family members, and clinicians, visit ptsd.va.gov/apps/AboutFace.