



afterdeployment.org

Mission

In August 2008, National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2) launched afterdeployment.org to support service members, veterans, families and health care providers serving the military community. The website provides interactive, media-rich, self-paced solutions addressing commonly experienced post-deployment adjustment challenges.

Vision

Afterdeployment.org is a Defense Department initiative developed in response to the 2006 and 2007 National Defense Authorization Acts, which required an Internet-based platform focused on post-deployment psychological health concerns. T2 strives to make the website the foremost authority for service members dealing with post-deployment challenges.

Goals

- Incorporate psychological health/traumatic brain injury (TBI) standards, processes and review mechanisms
- Act as the Defense Department resource for providing pre-clinical care to warfighters and their families in the months following a deployment
- Coordinate telehealth services to educate, prevent, screen, assess and treat common adjustment concerns

Objectives

- Train senior leadership and providers on best practices for treatment and prevention approaches using technology

- Offer self-care solutions for addressing psychological health care needs
- Obtain resources necessary to develop new programs on an as-needed basis

Background

The Defense Department, military health care providers and unit leaders continue to emphasize the importance of a fighting force that is resilient in the face of adversity. Studies indicate that approximately 20 percent of service members returning from Iraq or Afghanistan report adjustment concerns in the months following their deployment. Unfortunately, resilience is impeded when service members avoid psychological health care because of stigma or other barriers. The need for privacy and accessibility when seeking care is a necessary objective to counter such concerns. This can be accomplished by providing the military community with interactive and privately accessed tools that avoid common barriers associated with face-to-face office visits such as attending appointments during work, securing child care, transportation, confidentiality concerns and medical records documentation.

afterdeployment.org Features

- Educational libraries spanning 18 topics: post-traumatic stress, depression, anger, drugs and alcohol, tobacco, physical injury, resilience, military sexual trauma, health and wellness, sleep, families and friendships, anxiety, traumatic brain injury, life stress, stigma, families with kids, spirituality and work adjustment

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- 29 standardized self-assessments, where assessment scores are algorithmically located along a low/moderate/high acuity rating, and users receive immediate feedback and recommendations tailored to their scores. In the next phase, feedback will be rendered via video-based coaches
- Interactive exercises where users obtain ‘hands-on’ guidance with various self-management strategies, i.e., deep-breathing exercises, developing a trauma-trigger record, etc.
- Video-based presentations from service and family members describing their post-deployment adjustment challenges and successful coping strategies
- Routinely refreshing content, i.e., polls, daily quotes, health tips
- RSS feeds canvassing relevant psychological content
- Portable resources via topic-specific podcasts, i.e., depression, anger, post-traumatic stress
- Networking via community forums and subject expert blogs
- Resource lists for accessing community support and Web resources
- Outreach call centers and national crisis lines to assist users with more immediate needs
- Geospatial locator to identify local providers for face-to-face consultation
- Links to partner sites such as [Real Warriors Campaign](#), [Sesame Workshop](#), [MyHealthVet](#) and [National Center for PTSD](#)
- Social media presence, i.e., Facebook and Twitter
- Provider portal containing descriptions and scoring information for the site’s 29 self-assessments; quick facts about post-traumatic stress disorder and TBI; client handouts; clinical practice guidelines and links to continuing education materials
- Anonymous registration is required only for the community forums and the site does not collect any personally identifying information

Future Initiatives

- New program materials including one devoted to suicide prevention
- Improved multimedia features on all existing self-paced workshops
- Content downloadable to smart phones

“We need tools that are easily accessed, afford users privacy and use platforms that engage the preferences of our population.

[Afterdeployment.org](#) meets all of these qualifications.”

—Gregory A. Gahm, Ph.D., T2 Director