



VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

April 2025

Five Apps To Help Manage Stress

April is Stress Awareness Month. Unmanaged stress can affect your overall well-being and lead to anxiety, high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, substance misuse and more. Managing stress can be additionally challenging for those with PTSD - a condition that is more common among Veterans than civilians.

That's why VA offers virtual resources specifically designed to help Veterans manage stress and practice self-care. These free tools offer education about PTSD and a range of related mental health concerns while also offering information about how to connect with professional support when needed.

Here are five VA mobile apps that Veterans can use to manage stress and support their self-care:

1. [PTSD Coach](#) - PTSD Coach helps Veterans manage stress in-the-moment. Developed with input from Veterans and mental health professionals, the app provides self-assessment tools, educational resources and coping strategies for managing PTSD symptoms.

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“Remember that stress doesn’t come from what’s going on in your life. It comes from your thoughts about what’s going on in your life .”

- Andrew J. Bernstein

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App Store

YOUR LIFE. YOUR HEALTH. YOUR SCHEDULE

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You can use PTSD Coach to take a PTSD self-assessment and track symptoms. The app also offers tools for managing the stress of daily life, including guided relaxation exercises, soothing sounds and images, relationship tips and more.

2. [Mindfulness Coach](#) - The Mindfulness Coach app teaches you how to establish a simple mindfulness routine. Mindfulness means noticing and paying attention to the present moment without passing judgement. It has been shown to be helpful for reducing stress and improving symptoms of anxiety, depression and chronic pain. Mindfulness Coach features a self-guided training program with 12 audio exercises and a catalog of additional exercises you can download.
3. [Annie for Veterans](#) - Annie for Veterans is VA's automated text messaging service that empowers Veterans to take an active role in their health care. Messages you receive from Annie can include medication reminders, tips for reducing stress and more. The Stress Management message subscription sends weekly motivational texts to help you become more mindful, learn relaxation techniques and better manage stress. Registration is required to begin receiving Annie messages.
4. [VetChange](#) - The VetChange app is designed to help Veterans who are concerned about their drinking habits and would like to cut down or quit. It features numerous categories of interactive tools and strategies for managing stress and urges related to drinking. You can gain insight into how your drinking relates to different moods and situations, learn about alcohol use and PTSD, and track your progress.
5. [MOVE! Coach](#) - Exercise has been proved to lower stress levels and the MOVE! Coach app is an excellent choice for those who want to combat stress as well as get in shape. With this mobile tool, users can find weight management information and resources, and records their progress toward weight goals. Features include self-management modules, trackers, nutrition information and built-in support systems, allowing users to share their progress on social media, challenge friends to build healthier habits and read stories from other MOVE! Coach users.

By using these applications, Veterans can take proactive steps toward improved mental health, fostering a sense of empowerment and connection as they navigate post-service life. VA mobile apps are not intended to replace therapy or for use in a crisis. Talk with your VA care team about getting help for medical or mental health issues related to stress.



APRIL IS
STRESS
AWARENESS MONTH

Stress Awareness Month

Stress Awareness Month increases public awareness about the causes of stress and how to help combat it in this hurried, modern-day life. Stress can filter in from various parts of life, from the workplace as well as personal relationships.

There are plenty of resources and helpful organizations to help with struggles regarding stress, whether it is related to home life, work-life or various relationships. Stress Awareness Month is a time that encourages everyone to stop overlooking stress and pay more attention to its causes and effects. And then try to do something about it!

Try out some of these simple practices that have been known to help people reduce the negative impact of stress on their lives:

1. **Breathing Exercises** - One of the easiest ways to bust stress is by pausing to focus on the breath.
2. **Laugh More** - Studies show that people are more relaxed and have an improved mood when they practice laughing.
3. **Exercise** - One of the best ways to minimize the impact of stress on the body is through exercise.
4. **Reduce Stress Triggers** - Take this month to become aware of what triggers tend to cause stress and anxiety. Look at ways that stress begins and then aim to resolve those with life skills.

Suicide Prevention: Self-Check Assessment

Checking in with yourself can save your life. Veterans tend to prioritize others' needs. But if you're at the point where it's second nature to just keep pushing through negative issues, you could end up overwhelmed. You could even face a crisis. It's always a good idea to check in with yourself, and we want you to know that there's a tool available for you.

What is VA's self-check assessment?

VA and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention teamed up to create the Veterans Self-Check Assessment, a free, confidential tool to help you find out if stress and depression are affecting you and what you can do about it.

The assessment includes a series of questions that takes about 10 minutes to complete. It's designed specifically for Veterans, active-duty military service members and members of the National Guard and Reserve, as well as their family members.

What to expect

When you first go to the [Veterans self-check assessment](#), you'll see a welcome screen with information about how the service is voluntary, confidential and safe. You won't be asked to provide your name or any other identifying information.

You'll be asked about the degree to which you or the person you're taking the assessment for has been bothered by certain feelings in the last four weeks, such as:

- Feeling nervous or worrying a lot.
- Becoming easily annoyed or irritable.
- Feeling your life is too stressful.

The next questions relate to substance use and eating behaviors as well as problems and concerns. Veterans sometimes have a response to stressful military experiences, such as:

- Repeated disturbing memories, thoughts or images of the stressful experience.
- Having physical reactions (like heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating) when something reminded you of the stressful experience.
- Avoiding activities or situations because they remind you of the stressful experience.
- Difficulty concentrating.

This assessment will then ask about feelings and behaviors experienced in the last two weeks, including whether you or the person you're taking the assessment for has had thoughts of suicide or self-harm. It covers a lot of very serious issues that may seem uncomfortable to think about. But it's designed to get you thinking about your stress level and give you the option to access resources that may be helpful.

What happens after you take the assessment

Once you answer all the questions, you can choose to submit your assessment. If you do, you'll be given a unique reference number for you to jot down. A [Veterans Crisis Line](#) responder will review your answers and leave you a personal response on the self-check assessment website, for which you'll need the reference number. If the responder thinks resources could be helpful, they'll provide information in their note.

Again, you're in control and you decide what to do at this point. You don't have to read the note or use the resources. If you want to chat with a responder, you can enter the Veterans Crisis Line online chat. It's up to you. No follow-up services will be provided unless you want them. If an online chat is not what you want, you can also reach the Veterans Crisis Line via phone, dial 988 then press 1, or text 838255.

Upcoming Event



FREE ADMISSION

Military History Day

WWII and Vietnam Battle Reenactments

Saturday, May 3rd, 2025 10:00am - 3:00pm at
Military Veterans Museum and Education Center

4300 Pobereznny Road, Oshkosh, WI 54902
Phone: 920-426-8615 Website: www.mvmec.org



ALL DAY PRESENTATIONS and DISPLAYS

Doors open at 9:30 am

- 10:00 am Present Colors (Flag Raising)
- 10:45 am Naval History Presentation
- 11:30 am WWII Allied and Axis Reenactment Battle
- 12:30 pm Weapons Demo (see displays)
- 1:30 pm Vietnam War Reenactment Battle
- 2:15 pm Raffle Winners Announced

Win a 50/50 or gift basket raffle. Tickets also sold on day of event.



Food and Beverage available for purchase 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.

Cash or Credit Accepted.

Support Provided by Scout Troop 641.

CONTACT US

Winnebago County
Veterans Service Office

Oshkosh Location
220 Washington Ave.
Oshkosh, WI 54901
(920) 232-3400

Neenah Location
211 N. Commercial
Neenah, WI 54956
(920) 729-4820

Stay informed about benefits; join our e-mail list.
Send a request to:

CVSO@winnebagoountywi.gov

Visit us on the web at:

www.winnebagoountywi.gov/veterans



www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCVSO

For a list of more events,
check out our [calendar](#) !