



# VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

June 2023

## Securely Accessing Your VA Account Online

For the last several years, VA has been working to make it easier for Veterans to access their benefits and health care information online. At the same time, they have been ensuring that this accessibility does not come at the cost of security; their top priority is to keep your information safe.

Veterans have several no-cost options to choose from when logging in or creating an online account for VA.gov. Regardless of the option you choose, take a moment to ensure you're accessing your account securely. To do so, make sure you are on an official government website or an approved affiliate. Malicious parties will often use "phishing" to lure users to lookalike websites and encourage them to enter login or other sensitive information. Before entering any information, be sure the website is trustworthy and legitimate. Most government websites will end in ".gov" (for example, VA.gov) - this is a great way to tell a website is legitimate. An approved affiliate website like ID.me is one exception.

They also encourage you to set up an extra layer of security, called multi-or two-factor authentication, on your account. You'll use multi-factor authentication to verify you're you each time you sign into a VA website or app. This helps to make sure that only you can access your account - even if someone else gets your password. Here are some tips and resources to assist you with your login.

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**“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”**

**- Thomas A. Edison**

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## New Users: You should create a Login.gov account

### Login.Gov

Soon all VA websites will follow a new sign-in process through VA.gov with Login.gov as the recommended account. Login.gov is an account created, maintained and secured by the U.S. Government. It encrypts your stored information at two levels. Encryption translates your data into code that only you can access as the account holder. This means only you can access and change your information.

Login.gov provides full access to all digital VA services, health care and benefits information, including information traditionally found on My HealtheVet. Other federal agencies use this as well so you can log into other government accounts with just one username and password.

### ID.me

A privately-owned affiliate login service, ID.me uses bank-grade encryption to keep your personal information safe. It gives you control over which services can share your information. It provides full access to all digital VA services, health care and benefits information, including information traditionally found on My HealtheVet. Other federal agencies use this as well, so you can log into other government accounts with just one username and password.

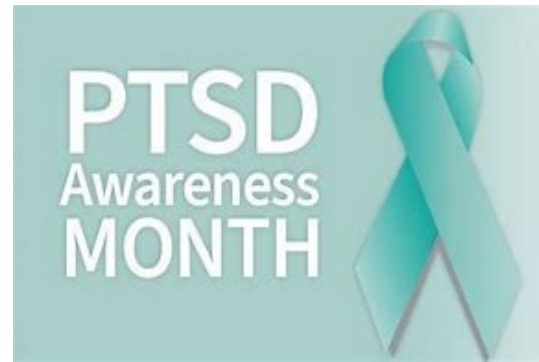
## Existing Users

### DS Logon or My HealtheVet

If you use DS Logon or My HealtheVet, you can continue to use these services. However, we recommend creating a Login.gov account for continued support and security.

## Resources to help you create and maintain a secure VA.gov online account

[Create An Account For VA.gov](#) and [Verify Your Identity On VA.gov](#)  
[Protect your information by enabling multi-or two-factor authentication](#)  
[Sign In to VA.gov](#)  
[Login.gov help](#)  
[ID.me Help Center](#)



### National PTSD Awareness Month

June has been recognized as PTSD Awareness Month since 2014. People can participate through spreading helpful information about PTSD, taking part in fundraisers or walks to spread awareness, or even simply taking time to learn more about PTSD themselves. Spreading awareness helps to counteract misinformation and reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues.

Though PTSD is often associated with Veterans of war and military service, PTSD can manifest after experiencing any kind of traumatic event, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, getting into a near-fatal care accident, or being aggressively harassed or bullied, among other causes. Signs of PTSD can include:

- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt or shame
- Irritability, aggressiveness
- Memory issues
- Having nightmares about the event
- Being easily startled
- Having flashbacks of the event
- Avoiding situations that remind you of the traumatic event
- Detachment from others
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- Trouble sleeping

If you think you might suffer from PTSD, consider talking to a mental health professional.

# PTSD Treatment

Whether you just returned from a deployment or have been home for 40 years, it's never too late to get help for PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder). Getting counseling or treatment can help you manage your symptoms and keep them from getting worse. The VA National Center for PTSD is the world leader in PTSD research, education, and treatment.

## What services does VA provide for PTSD?

The VA has almost 200 PTSD treatment programs across the country that offer:

- 1-to-1 mental health assessment and testing to figure out if you have PTSD
- Medicine proven to work for treating PTSD
- 1-to-1 psychotherapy (also called talk therapy). This includes proven methods like Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
- 1-to-1 family therapy
- Group therapy for special needs, like anger or stress management, or combat support
- Group therapy for Veterans who served in certain combat zones or who've been through similar traumas

They also offer other forms of treatment and support:

- PTSD specialists provide regular outpatient care to Veterans with PTSD in each VA medical center across the US.
- Special residential (live-in) or inpatient care programs - found in each region of the US - help Veterans with severe PTSD symptoms who have trouble doing normal daily activities (like going to work).
- Providers offer added PTSD care in some of our large community-based outpatient clinics.

**Note:** If you don't live near a VA medical center or clinic, our mental health providers can counsel you over the phone (telemental health care). Or, they can refer you to a Vet Center or health care provider near you.

## How do I access VA services for PTSD?

The VA health care program covers PTSD health services. If you have a VA primary care provider, talk to them about your concerns. Your provider can help you figure out if you have PTSD - and can offer treatment and support as needed. If you don't have a VA primary care provider or have never been seen in a VA hospital or clinic, then call the general information hotline at 800-827-1000 (Monday - Friday from 8 am to 9pm ET), or [contact your local VA medical center](#), or [contact a VA PTSD program near you](#).

If you don't have VA health benefits you may still be able to get care. If you've served in a combat zone, get free private counseling, alcohol and drug assessment, and other support at one of the 300 community Vet Centers. [Find a Vet Center near you](#). If you're homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, call or visit your local VA Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC). [Find your local CRRC](#).

## Can I get disability compensation if I think I have PTSD linked to military service?

If you have symptoms of PTSD and suffered a serious injury, personal trauma, sexual trauma, or were threatened with injury, sexual assault, or death while serving in the military, you may be able to get disability compensation or benefits. [Find out if you can get disability benefits](#). If you qualify for benefits please contact our office and we can assist you with filing a claim.

For more information about PTSD treatment and support go to the [National Center for PTSD](#) website.

# Upcoming Event

*Sunday, July 2, 2023* ★ *9:30 am - 5 pm*

## MILITARY & VETERANS FAMILY DAY

*Milwaukee County Zoo*

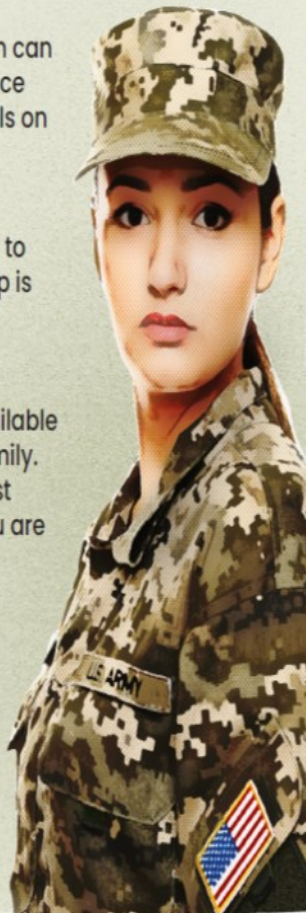
**Enjoy free Zoo admission and parking**

*Tickets available May 30 - June 30*

- ★ Active military and veterans residing in Wisconsin can pick up tickets at their local County Veteran Service Office (CVSO). Contact your local CVSO for details on ticket pick up.
- ★ Don't miss the Veterans Benefit Expo from **9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.** where veterans can learn how to get the benefits they deserve. This one-stop-shop is presented by the Milwaukee County Veteran Service Office.
- ★ **Important:** Tickets are required for entry and available for immediate family only. Limit 10 tickets per family. Tickets are limited and will be distributed on a first come first service basis. Only obtain tickets if you are sure you will be visiting the Zoo on July 2.



Milwaukee County Zoo  
10001 W. Bluemound Rd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53226



### CONTACT US

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Veterans Service Office

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

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Visit us on the web at:

[www.winnebagocountywi.gov/veterans](http://www.winnebagocountywi.gov/veterans)



[www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCVSO](https://www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCVSO)

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