



# VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

April 2020

## Stress & Coping During Coronavirus Outbreak

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- Children and teens
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Taking care of yourself, your friends and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

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**“ The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”**

**- William James**

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Older adults, especially in isolation and those with cognitive decline/dementia, may become more anxious, angry, stressed, agitated and withdrawn during the outbreak or while in quarantine. Provide practical and emotional support through informal networks (families) and health professionals. Share simple facts about what is going on and give clear information about how to reduce risk of infection in words older people with/without cognitive impairment can understand and repeat the information whenever necessary.

People in isolation should stay connected and maintain their social networks. Try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines or create new routines if circumstances change. During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings.

Things you can do to support yourself:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

[Sharing the facts](#) about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. When you share accurate information about COVID-19 you can help make people feel less stressed and allow you to connect with them. Learn more about [taking care of your emotional health](#).

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call 911 or contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 to talk to someone.



## National Former Prisoner Of War Recognition Day

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day is observed annually on April 9.

This day was introduced to honor American veterans of any war that returned home after being released from prisons. The date of April 9 was chosen to commemorate the same day in 1942 when United States forces were surrendered by the Imperial Japanese Army on the Bataan Peninsula, beginning the Bataan Death March. All survivors were loaded to a box train and brought to Camp O'Donnell. During the march prisoners were physically abused which caused their death. The actions of the Japanese Army were later judged to be a Japanese war crime.

National Former POW Recognition Day had been observed from 1942 to 1976 on a national level, but later only some states held commemorative services. Memorial marches took place in New Mexico and Minnesota, memorial service was held at the National memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. Due to President Barack Obama's initiatives, and continuation by President Trump, this day is observed on a federal level.

## VA Expands Services To Support Veterans Due to COVID-19

Veterans continue to receive benefits and services after VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) temporarily closed its 56 regional offices to the public March 19 in response to COVID-19.

The decision to close our offices to the general public is part of the VA's effort to limit exposure to vulnerable populations like our older Veterans and those with underlying medical conditions, as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention" said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VA is expanding existing technologies to remain accessible to Veterans, service members and their families."

### Changes

Many in-person services are already available via the phone or online through virtual options like [VA Video Connect](#). VBA has and continues to adjust to ensure the safety and well-being of its clients and staff. The changes include:

- [Uninterrupted GI Bill payments](#) so students continue to receive their benefits unaffected by any change from in-person to online learning.
- Supporting students for educational counseling through online and telephone services.
- Connecting Veterans to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services through teleconferencing; providing case management and general counseling virtually through VA Video Connect.
- Informal conference hearings by telephone or video conferencing when needed.
- Collecting information to process fiduciary claims by telephone. When necessary other accommodations will be arranged.
- Collecting information remotely via phone or teleconference when possible to process grant requests for special adaptive housing.
- Conducting examinations for disability benefits using tele-compensation and pension or "tele-C&P" exams. If an in-person examination is required, Veterans will be notified for scheduling.

Veterans with specific questions can call 1-800-827-1000 or go to [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov) for additional details. Veterans can continue to get information about benefits, file a claim online or can call for claim-specific questions.

The VA has also began deploying Mobile Vet Center units the week of March 16 to expand direct counseling, outreach and care coordination to Veterans in communities affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first of the mobile units was dispatched to various cities to include boroughs in New York City, a second unit was sent to San Francisco, followed by mobile centers going to New Orleans and Los Angeles. These mobile units help VA reach those who may not otherwise seek VA services for counseling and mental health support. Veterans, active duty service members and their families are encouraged to find their nearest Vet Center and call to get connected to counseling services or reach out to the 24/7 Vet Center Call Center at 1-877-927-8387. Many Vet Centers are currently utilizing telehealth services through VA Video Connect and can also speak to individuals via phone to reduce any barriers to seeking necessary help.

National Cemeteries are stepping up to the challenge of providing service through the pandemic. While they are observant of social distancing and realize the challenges in this environment, they still have a vital service to provide. The NCA staff members continue their mission to provide an honorable burial service for Veterans and other eligible members. They will have limited services to direct interments to keep families and staff members safe. The family is still able to view but there is no committal service or military honors. Those services will be provided for families who wish to proceed after the emergency. If you have questions about what services are provided please visit their website at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov).

Please feel free to contact our office at 920-232-3400 with any questions you may have. We are here to help you.

# Upcoming Events

## MVMEC & Open House

### WWII Allied & Axis re-enactment

Free Admission  
Sunday May 3, 2020  
10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Food and beverages available for purchase  
All Day Displays and Presentations



10:00 a.m. Flag Raising  
11:00 a.m. Machine Gun Demo  
1:00 p.m. Vehicle Parade  
2:00 p.m. WW II Allied and Axis re-enactment  
3:00 p.m. Harley Davidson Motorcycle Raffle Drawing

**4300 Poberezny Rd, Oshkosh, WI**

## CONTACT US

Winnebago County  
Veterans Service Office

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112 Otter St.  
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(920) 729-4820

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

[CVSO@co.winnebago.wi.us](mailto:CVSO@co.winnebago.wi.us)

Visit us on the web at:

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veterans](http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans)



[www.facebook.com/  
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For a list of more events,  
check out our calendar!

**MVMEC  
4th Annual  
Golf Tournament  
May 27, 2020  
12:00 p.m.  
Oshkosh  
Country Club**



12:00 p.m. Shotgun Start/ Scramble  
\$85.00/Golfer- Includes:  
Greens fees, Cart and Meals



Sign-up as a Foursome or  
as an individual

**Wednesday  
May 27, 2020  
Oshkosh Country  
Club  
11 W Ripple Ave  
Oshkosh, WI**

Box lunch & dinner  
Hole Events  
Hole Prizes  
Raffle Tickets  
Silent Auctions

RSVP by May 26th  
Jason: 920 -230-2652  
[jason.lowe@thrivent.com](mailto:jason.lowe@thrivent.com)  
Tom: 920 420-2030  
[tsonny4058@aol.com](mailto:tsonny4058@aol.com)

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