



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) / Deployment Health Assessments

"It's time we made everyone in uniform aware that the act of reaching out for help is, in fact, one of the most courageous acts and one of the first big steps to reclaiming your career, your life and your future."

-Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event in which grave physical harm occurred, was threatened or witnessed. Traumatic events that may trigger PTSD include combat action, violent personal assaults, natural or human-caused disasters or accidents.
- Symptoms range from irritability to sleep difficulties, trouble concentrating, extreme vigilance, an exaggerated startle response or outbursts of anger. All of these can impact an individual's long-term health and ultimately readiness.
- PTSD is treatable, but it starts with a command climate that is supportive and that's a leadership function. The negative stigma of this disorder must be eliminated at all levels, so those suffering feel free to admit their struggle and seek assistance.
- Peers and leaders must take an active role in understanding what their shipmates have experienced; be alert to symptoms of stress, and be ready to support their needs.
- Without treatment, people with the condition can relive the traumatic events that initially induced the sense of horror or helplessness, sustaining their symptoms.
- Security Clearance Question 21 – Security clearance forms no longer require disclosure of treatment for PTSD. This change highlights top leadership's belief that coming forward for treatment is a sign of strength and maturity. In the past, troops may have avoided seeking help fearing it would affect their security clearances and harm their careers.

Deployment Health Assessments (DHA)

- Deployment Health Assessments afford us the necessary data to identify when our Sailors are facing challenges so we can get them the critical resources needed to manage issues before they fully develop into problems.
- The Medical Readiness Reporting System (MRRS) is the tool leaders use to track Sailors completion of the DHA. A critical point commanders must be aware of is the post deployment DHA. This is completed four to six months after return and is key to helping identify any post deployment health issues.
- Commanders must ensure Sailors complete the post deployment DHA and that the information is recorded in MRRS.

National Intrepid Center of Excellence

- The [National Intrepid Center of Excellence](#) at National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda is scheduled to open in late 2009 in support of psychological health issues and traumatic brain injury (TBI) to provide intensive outpatient evaluation, advanced diagnostics, treatment plans/modalities, and long term follow-up for patients.

Key Messages	Facts & Figures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders are responsible for ensuring a command culture where seeking help for PTSD and stress management is encouraged and accessible. • Effective treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder are available, and research is yielding new, improved therapies that can help most people with PTSD and other anxiety disorders lead productive, fulfilling lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For help for any health issue 24 hours-a-day, 7 days a week call Military OneSource Hotline at 1-800-342-9647 or visit www.militaryonesource.com. • Military Treatment Facilities and Fleet and Family Support Centers have more information and training on PTSD and stress management.