WHAT IS PTSD?
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) occurs in about 25% of people following exposure to a traumatic event, such as combat, assault, serious accidents, and sexual assault. Symptoms of PTSD include reliving traumatic events through nightmares and intrusive disturbing memories, avoiding situations that stir up memories of traumatic events, and experiencing troubles with sleep and irritability. These symptoms may interfere with your happiness and well-being.

PTSD symptoms usually start soon after the traumatic event, but sometimes are not apparent until months or even years later. The passage of time alone does not heal the wounds of trauma. The natural desire to withdraw from others and not talk about problems related to traumatic experiences may actually make symptoms worse for Veterans with PTSD. Symptoms of PTSD, however, can be successfully treated by meeting with a mental health care professional.

If you are experiencing any of the following, contact us:
• Anger and irritability (road rage, arguing with others)
• Trouble falling or staying asleep
• Drinking more or using drugs
• Feeling “on edge” or “keyed up”
• Nightmares & distressing memories
• Loss of interest in usual activities
• Working hard to not think about or be reminded of a traumatic event
• Staying away from crowded places
• Feeling depressed and anxious
• Trouble being social
• Difficulty being emotionally close with others
• Increased concerns about safety/security
• Feeling hopeless or having thoughts that life is not worth living

TREATMENT CAN HELP
Many effective treatments for PTSD are available that will reduce or eliminate your symptoms and increase your happiness and success in life. These treatments include individual, group, and family counseling, medications, and assistance with finances, employment, and housing. Treatment can help you:
• Improve communication and relationships with family members and others
• Improve control over anger
• Improve quality of sleep
• Reduce or eliminate painful memories and nightmares
• Reduce harmful drinking and drug use
• Increase involvement in pleasurable and productive activities
• Learn effective relaxation strategies
• Gain greater self awareness and direction in life
**PTSD TREATMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE**

The PTSD Program at the American Lake and Seattle divisions of VA Puget Sound Health Care System offers a variety of specialized services for veterans with PTSD related to their military service. Programs are available for male and female veterans and serve veterans from all periods of service. Our treatment programs include:

**PTSD Inpatient Program--Seattle Division.** The PTSD Inpatient Program provides an intensive inpatient experience that addresses severe PTSD symptoms that interfere with Veterans’ safety or ability to function in everyday life. Veterans admitted to the program generally stay 1-2 weeks and receive medical care, medications for PTSD, group psychotherapy, and help with financial and housing problems.

**PTSD Outpatient Clinic--American Lake and Seattle Divisions.** Treatment in the outpatient PTSD program may include participation in weekly group, individual, and/or couples therapy sessions. We also offer medication management and specialized treatment for substance abuse, anxiety, depression and anger. In the course of therapy, Veterans learn coping skills to reduce and manage symptoms, they engage in wellness programs to improve their physical health, and they have an opportunity to process their traumatic experiences.

Specialized services for women Veterans exposed to military trauma, including sexual assault, are available at both divisions. These services are designed to meet the needs of women Veterans and are provided by female staff members.

**PTSD Domiciliary--American Lake Division**

The PTSD Domiciliary is a residential facility for Veterans with PTSD who require a more intensive and supportive environment than can be provided on an outpatient basis. Veterans who live in a community where access to PTSD treatment is limited may also benefit from a PTSD Domiciliary stay. Veterans in the PTSD Domiciliary attend daily classes and therapy groups and may be prescribed medications. They are also encouraged to participate in the recreation/leisure activities and vocational services available at American Lake.

**HOW TO ENROLL IN THE PTSD PROGRAM**

If you are interested in enrolling in any of these PTSD programs you can simply present to the American Lake or Seattle division Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) or request an evaluation from a mental health provider in your primary care clinic. For questions about treatment services and how to enroll please call (253) 583-1793 for American Lake and (206) 764-2007 or (206) 277-4369 for Seattle.

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**VA Puget Sound Health Care System**

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**SEATTLE DIVISION**
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