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PTSD: How Veterans Can Cope With and Manage the Condition

PTSD is a condition that affects millions of Americans every year, but many people are unaware of the role it plays in mental health, especially for veterans. Participating in combat or going through the traumatic events of war can change a person forever, and post traumatic stress syndrome is something that often comes with the territory. Figuring out the best ways to cope with the feelings involved—stress, anxiety, depression, anger, and fear, most commonly—is essential, but it's not always easy to do.

If you are living with PTSD or suspect you are showing signs of it, it's important to think about how to handle those feelings in a way that works for you. Everyone is different, after all. For some, medication is the answer. For others, therapy helps best. Mayo Clinic points out that it's crucial that you keep communication open with your doctor so that the two of you can find [treatment options](#) that get you to where you want to be emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Courtesy of [Long Island State Veterans Home](#), here are a few important things to think about when it comes to living with PTSD.

Build a support team

There are [many warning signs](#) of PTSD—including loss of concentration or interest in things the person used to enjoy, abuse of drugs or alcohol, and unpredictable emotional outbursts—as well as ways to help. Ultimately, it comes down to acknowledging the problem and building a support team.

A support team can help you get through life with PTSD more smoothly, offering therapy, advice, tips on how to cope with feelings of anxiety, and counseling that will assist in feelings of anger or grief. Learning more about your team will help to create a bond, so get to know everyone in your circle, and find out about their background.

For instance, a licensed social worker will have completed a Master of Social Work program at one of many accredited universities around the country, while, as the American Psychological Association explains, a [therapist](#) undergoes rigorous training in order to learn how to de-escalate tense situations and provide guidance for individuals going through a variety of life issues. The more you know about your caregivers and their backgrounds, the easier it will be to build trust.

Learn to cope in the moment

It's never easy to learn how to cope with feelings of anxiety or stress in the moment, especially if you aren't currently on medication that helps you stay calm. However, there are some things you can do to make those moments easier to get through, such as [learning meditation](#) or breathing exercises. You can also think about preventative methods like [art therapy](#), [yoga](#), or any other calming activity that allows you to focus on something within your control.

Stay social

Individuals who are living with PTSD often have trouble remaining social. Veterans can find it especially difficult to socialize with civilians who don't understand what they've been through. Making it a point to [maintain communication](#) with friends and loved ones can help you get through hard times because you'll have support, and it will prevent isolation, which is a major contributor to depression.

Take care of yourself

One of the best ways to prevent overwhelming symptoms of PTSD and cope with anxiety or stress is to take care of your mind and body. Getting enough sleep, reducing activities that bring you [stress](#), and focusing on a [diet and exercise](#) routine that helps you feel your best are all important ways of maintaining your overall wellness, which can pay off immensely when it comes to your mental health.

PTSD affects many people, so know that you are not alone. Remember that it's imperative to reach out if you are having thoughts of self-harm or if you have uncontrollable anger. There are people waiting to help you, and there is no shame in asking for it. By creating a solid plan for your physical and mental health, you'll be taking control of your needs, which will help you feel strong and ready to tackle anything life throws your way.