

Veteran Mental Health: Using APA PsycTherapy as a Training Tool





Introduction

Access to mental health treatment remains a critical need for those serving and for those who have served in the military. Veterans are more prone than the average citizen to exhibit symptoms of clinical conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Depression. In spite of this, modern studies indicate that more than half of all veterans experiencing a mental health condition are not receiving timely treatment, due to a variety of reasons pertaining to mental health stigmas, a lack of understanding regarding treatment options and a lack of access to specialized care. APA PsycTherapy®, the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#)'s collection of streaming video demonstrations, offers insights for counselors into proven therapeutic methods across a range of psychotherapy topics.



Military Veterans & Mental Health

A significant number of military veterans across the country suffer through their own silent battles every day, fighting to combat a wide range of debilitating mental illnesses. According to the National Library of Medicine, the two most widely publicized mental health challenges that veterans and service members encounter are Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Depression. Research indicates that “approximately [14% to 16%](#) of the U.S. service members deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq have been affected by PTSD or Depression.” Moreover, according to findings obtained by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, about [7% of veterans](#) will experience PTSD at some point in their life, compared to 6% of civilians.

Under the overarching umbrella of mental health studies, Depression ranks as one of the most common mental health illnesses that citizens face in the modern 21st century. [Major Depression](#) manifests through various symptoms, such as experiencing a loss of interest in everyday activities, insomnia, fluctuations in weight, fatigue, reduced ability to concentrate, and harboring feelings of worthlessness. Enlisted military members and those who have seen active combat may be more likely than their neighbors to develop the symptoms associated with Depression and may experience further setbacks if their condition is left untreated.

In a similar manner, [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#) is often linked to individuals who have survived traumatic events such as assaults, disasters, terror attacks, and war. PTSD is characterized by “intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, and nightmares related to past trauma, leading to avoidance of reminders, hypervigilance, and sleep difficulties.” For several years, this particular disorder has been associated with the veteran community, and before the term PTSD was officially coined, the diagnosis was referred to by various military-related names, such as irritable heart and Da Costa’s Syndrome during the Civil War, shell shock and battle fatigue during World War I and World War II and the post-Vietnam syndrome after the war in Vietnam. In 1980, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders formally ascribed these symptoms to the condition which is now commonly known as PTSD.

As mental health conditions affect individuals in varying ways and to varying degrees, there is no one-size-fits-all solution but rather a plethora of therapeutic approaches that therapists utilize when diagnosing and treating clients like veterans. Two of the most common therapy treatments used to help veterans suffering from PTSD are [Cognitive Processing Therapy](#) and [Prolonged Exposure Therapy](#), while one popular, proven method for treating Depression is [Dialectical Behavior Therapy](#).

Barriers to Mental Health Services

Despite studies that indicate a strong correlation exists between service members and mental health concern, recent findings indicate that “[more than half](#) of all veterans experiencing a mental health condition are not receiving timely treatment.” This is due in part to factors pertaining to stigmas and negative stereotypes relating to mental health and therapy, as well as a general lack of understanding regarding the treatment options available to veterans. In some instances, service members seeking help struggle to find behavioral health clinicians and professional therapists who can provide specialized care and get to the root of their specific needs. [Therapists](#) themselves may also lack access to “train-the-trainer” (TTT) programs for their own educational benefit. Fortunately, [APA PsycTherapy](#) provides a solution, offering an unparalleled resource for those treating veterans.

About APA PsycTherapy

APA PsycTherapy is an exceptionally well-crafted database that offers visual access into authentic therapy sessions and dynamic tools for instructors, practitioners and therapists-in-training. The database provides clinicians, counselors, and mental health trainees with the opportunity to observe, first-hand, candid psychotherapy videos featuring well-known, respected therapists.

Therapists with access to APA PsycTherapy who are treating military service members and want to narrow search results to display only the most applicable video records can do so with ease. The following list comprises a summary of the video records in APA PsycTherapy tagged with the “Military Veteran” subject term:

1. A Transtheoretical Transdiagnostic Framework for Trauma Work
2. An Emotion-Centered Problem-Solving Approach to Managing Stressful Life Transitions
3. Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD With Military Veterans: Using Challenging Questions to Work Through Stuck Points
4. Dialectical Behavior Therapy With a Female Military Veteran
5. Emotion-Focused Therapy With a Veteran
6. Healing Old Wounds: Working With a Vietnam Veteran With Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy

7. Intimate Partner Violence
8. Multicultural Therapy With a Retired Veteran
9. Multicultural Therapy With a World War II Veteran
10. Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Through the Strength at Home Program with Four Male Veterans
11. Prolonged Exposure Therapy for Client With Combat-Related Trauma
12. Taking Stock: Using Contextual Trauma Therapy to Reflect on Progress as a Veteran

Using APA PsycTherapy to Treat PTSD

APA PsycTherapy features more than 20 videos on the subject of PTSD.

The following two search results may be especially useful to clinicians and therapists treating veterans suffering from PTSD:

1. Name of Video Record: Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD With Military Veterans: Using Challenging Questions to Work Through Stuck Points

Therapist Featured: Dr. Patrica A. Resick

As previously noted, research has found that [Cognitive Processing Therapy](#) is one of the most effective approaches to follow when treating a veteran with PTSD. This type of therapy focuses on how an individual perceives and copes with trauma and emphasizes the significance of comprehending and challenging maladaptive beliefs related to distressing events.

Cognitive Processing Therapy was developed in the 1980s by Dr. Patrica A. Resick, the therapist featured in the video, as a means to address the complex cognitive and emotional needs of trauma survivors. Since 2006, Dr. Resick has been a leader of a national VA initiative to disseminate Cognitive Processing Therapy throughout the VA system. Her years of experience in psychiatry and behavioral sciences fuels APA PsycTherapy with an unparalleled wealth of knowledge and expertise, as evidenced by this video record.

In this session of Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Dr. Patricia A. Resick works with a military veteran who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of his experiences in the Vietnam War. Mental health practitioners and therapists working with

veterans with PTSD can use this video as a resource to learn more about the ins and outs of this therapeutic technique when honing their own skills.

2. Name of Video Record: Prolonged Exposure Therapy for Client with Combat-Related Trauma

Therapist Featured: Dr. Sheila A. M. Rauch

[Prolonged Exposure Therapy](#) is another proven method used by therapists to treat patients with PTSD. Prolonged Exposure Therapy encourages individuals to gradually approach the memories associated with their trauma so that fears can be confronted and conquered.

[Dr. Rauch](#), the therapist featured in this video record as found on APA PsycTherapy, has been developing programs, conducting research and providing PTSD-related treatment for more than 20 years. She has led several PTSD treatment outcome and mechanisms trials and has published more than 200 peer-reviewed materials on PTSD and anxiety disorders.

In this session, Dr. Rauch works with her patient using prolonged exposure (PE) therapy to help him process his trauma memories from a military incident in which he injured a child. Care providers treating veterans with PTSD can learn more about this therapeutic method and how it supports a more personalized approach to treatment right within the APA PsycTherapy database.

Using APA PsycTherapy to Treat Depression

The APA PsycTherapy database also contains more than 95 video records tagged with the topic “Major Depression”.

Therapists and clinical caretakers treating veterans suffering from Depression may find several videos in APA PsycTherapy useful for training purposes and for strengthening therapeutic skills, including the following:

1. Name of Video Record: Dialectical Behavior Therapy with a Female Military Veteran

Therapist Featured: Dr. Alexander L. Chapman

[Dialectical behavior therapy \(DBT\)](#) for Depression focuses on helping clients develop skills

to adopt self-supportive behaviors. The key elements of Dialectical Behavior Therapy include interpersonal effectiveness, emotional regulation, mindfulness, and distress tolerance.

[Alexander L. Chapman](#), the therapist featured in this video record, is the president and cofounder of the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Centre of Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada. For years, his research has focused on DBT, and he has consulted with and trained clinicians in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K.

The video presents Dr. Chapman conducting a single session of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy with a young woman who is a military veteran. Together with the client, Dr. Chapman creates strategies for coping with negative feelings before the session's end. Therapists studying the Dialectical Behavior Therapy technique as it relates to treating veterans with Depression may find the practices and exercises displayed in this video as helpful tools to learn from and adopt.

Using APA PsycTherapy to Treat Multiple Mental Health Conditions

Military service members may experience the symptoms of multiple mental health conditions and may find that certain therapeutic approaches are not effective means of treatment nor adequately address all of their pain points. Fortunately, the APA PsycTherapy database features more than 900 videos on a wide range of psychotherapy topics, covering more than 150 approaches in total. Clinicians, counselors and trainees working with veterans suffering from both PTSD and depression, or treating service members experiencing a wide array of symptoms, might find videos like the below extremely helpful to observe.

1. Name of Video Record: A Transtheoretical Transdiagnostic Framework for Trauma Work

Therapist Featured: Dr. Julian D. Ford

[Dr. Ford](#), the therapist featured in this video record, has published more than 250 articles and book chapters and is the author or editor of 10 books, including Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, 2nd Edition, Treating Complex Trauma: A Sequenced, Relationship-Based Approach and Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorders in Children and Adolescents: Scientific foundations and therapeutic models.

In this video, Dr. Ford uses a transtheoretical transdiagnostic psychotherapeutic approach to treat a client presenting symptoms of PTSD, Anxiety and Depression. Dr. Ford also looks at the client's symptoms through a variety of lenses, connecting biopsychological, cognitive and affective perspectives. Videos like this may be an especially useful training resource for those seeking to take a more holistic approach to therapy when treating veterans.

Additional Content Benefits of APA PsycTherapy

Beyond PTSD, Depression and the therapeutic techniques associated with treating these conditions, the APA PsycTherapy database covers a wide range of topics under the broader umbrella of psychology and behavioral sciences. At a quick glance, the below listed topics each appear in more than 50 video records on the APA PsycTherapy database, and are covered extensively by dozens of trained, well-renowned professionals in their respective fields.

Topic	Number of Video Records Tagged with Topic	Number of Therapists Who Touch Upon Topic
Anger	75+	50+
Anxiety	120+	90+
Cognitive Behavior Therapy	170+	50+
Coping Behavior	85+	45+
Couples Therapy	50+	30+
Divorce	50+	30+
Emotion Focused Therapy	55+	15+
Family Relations	80+	50+
Homework	65+	30+
Integrative Psychotherapy	120+	50+
Interpersonal Relationships	60+	45+
Major Depression	95+	40+
Psychodynamic Psychotherapy	65+	30+

Psychoeducation	55+	40+
Psychotherapeutic Processes	245+	100+
Psychotherapeutic Techniques	60+	35+
Stress	50+	45+
Therapeutic Alliance	70+	40+

Additional Key Benefits and Features of APA PsycTherapy include:

- Unscripted therapy demonstrations that were taped within the past ten years
- Synchronized transcripts which allow users to search for precise moments in therapy
- Helpful tools that allow users to create playlists and share video clips
- Expertly tagged metadata for easy navigation to specific therapeutic techniques
- APA PsycTherapy's Teaching Guide, which provides step-by-step exercises and suggested videos for the classroom and other training settings

Conclusion

As we look ahead to the coming months and beyond, stay abreast of developments in psychotherapy. Subscribers to APA PsycTherapy will have the benefit of setting up search alerts on a variety of timely subjects to view new and updated content, including video therapy demonstrations relevant to the issues that most affect veterans. Please visit: <https://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/apa-psychtherapy>



References

APA

- <https://www.apa.org/>
- <https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/treatments/prolonged-exposure>

BioMed Central, <https://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13012-024-01388-2>

Charlie Health, <https://www.charliehealth.com/post/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-treatment-for-veterans>

Choosing Therapy, <https://www.choosingtherapy.com/dbt-for-depression/>

Corner Canyon Health Centers, <https://cornercanyonhc.com/blog/cbt-vs-cpt/>

DBT Centre of Vancouver, <https://dbtvancouver.com/our-people/alexander-l-chapman/>

Duke Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, <https://psychiatry.duke.edu/profile/patricia-resick>

EBSCO, <https://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases/apa-psyctherapy>

National Library of Medicine, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK572092/>

Oceans Healthcare, <https://oceanshealthcare.com/veterans-and-mental-health/>

UConn Health, <https://facultydirectory.uchc.edu/profile?profileId=Ford-Julian>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

- https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing_ed/presenters/sheila_rauch_phd.asp
- https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_veterans.asp

Virginia Tech, <https://news.vt.edu/articles/2023/10/science-veteran-mental-health.html>