



How to Decide If a PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP) Is Right for You

As a Veteran receiving health care services in VA, you have access to different levels of care for PTSD. In most cases, outpatient treatment offers the best fit for PTSD care and is readily available. For some Veterans, residential care is the best option. **The purpose of this worksheet is to help you talk about the different levels of PTSD treatment with your care team to decide if residential care is right for you.**

What are the different levels of PTSD care in VA?

Every VA Medical Center has PTSD providers who offer treatment in an **outpatient** setting. Outpatient treatment is typically time-limited, meaning there is an end-point to treatment, usually 3-4 months. PTSD outpatient care typically takes place once a week for about an hour. Outpatient care may also include telemental health, where you use technology (such as video or telephone) to talk with your provider.

Most Veterans find that outpatient is the best level of care for them. Veterans are offered the same evidence-based PTSD treatments in outpatient and residential care settings. (Watch a short animated video: "Evidence-based" Treatment: What Does It Mean? <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/materials/videos/whiteboards.asp>.) Outpatient care allows you to continue with daily work, school and home activities while getting treatment that is strong enough to be effective.

Each geographical region of the country also offers **residential treatment programs**. PTSD residential settings provide a structured environment for Veterans to receive evidence-based treatment for PTSD and co-occurring disorders (other common problems). Veterans are admitted to the program and stay at the facility over a period of weeks. Daily treatment activities focus on evidence-based treatments for PTSD and supportive services (such as housing and employment). The goal is to help you safely transition back to the community after completing treatment.

Please visit **PTSD Treatment Programs in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** for an overview of the types of PTSD residential programs: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/treatment/therapy-med/va-ptsd-treatment-programs.asp>. There are some specialized programs that provide treatment for Veterans who have experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

Is residential PTSD care best for me?

Receiving treatment in a residential setting will allow you to remain in one location and focus on what you need to change to recover. This can be an understandable reason for preferring this higher level of care. The factors below may help you decide if residential treatment is a good fit for you.

Check all that apply to you:

- You need a higher level of treatment because of the severity of your PTSD symptoms.
- You have tried outpatient treatment and struggled to meet your treatment goals.
- You have struggled with daily stressors during treatment and believe you would benefit from increased structure and supervision.
- You benefitted from residential treatment in the past but have noticed a return of PTSD symptoms that have not responded to outpatient treatment.
- You had another trauma and want a higher level of care to rebuild your skills.
- You can't easily get to an outpatient clinic on a regular basis.
- You live in a home environment that is not supportive to your recovery.

You should work with your VA clinician and your family or close friends to consider what matters most to you and come to a decision about the right level of treatment for you now. If you decide that residential treatment is what you want, you will still have to go through a formal evaluation to see if you are eligible.

If I am eligible for PTSD residential care, how can I find the best program for me?

Although the residential treatment programs are similar, there may be small differences across programs. The chart on the next page can help you identify program differences and your preferences among some RRTP features. For each of the items in the chart, you can mark it as: important to you, not important to you, or not acceptable to you. Then you can decide if the item is a top priority to you. For example, you may feel more than one feature on the list is important to you. Checking your top priorities will help you choose among programs that only have some of the features you want. Or, you may feel that a feature that is unacceptable to you is more important than things that you want. In this case, marking a feature that is unacceptable to you as a top priority means you will not consider any programs with this feature, no matter what else is offered in the program.

The goal is to find an RRTP that meets most of your wants while still being flexible. There is also a column to check if you'd like more information about a listed RRTP feature.

PTSD treatment offered:	Check one response			Yes or No	Yes or No
	This is important to me.	This is <i>not</i> important to me.	I would not accept this program.	This is a top priority.	I need more information about this.
Effective PTSD talk therapy (psychotherapy) such as Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), or Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Talk therapies often require you to focus on the traumatic event that is impacting your daily functioning.					
Effective medications for PTSD such as antidepressants or prazosin (for nightmares).					
Additional treatment services:					
Military sexual trauma (MST) services					
Couples or family therapy					
Substance use disorder (SUD) treatment					
Traumatic brain injury (TBI) treatment					
Talk therapies specific to pain or sleep problems					
Skills-based services (such as problem-solving training, anger management, or coping skills therapy)					
Additional groups and services for health and recovery:					
Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM; such as yoga, meditation, tai chi, acupuncture)					
Recreation therapy (such as exercise, biking, swimming)					
Services to address other needs such as nutrition or diet					
Vocational support, which may offer opportunities to be assisted in job searches					
Access to community-based support services such as Alcoholics Anonymous					

Below are some more things to consider before making a decision about which PTSD residential program is best for you. You should always feel free to ask about the policies and eligibility criteria of a particular program.

Use this chart to rate your preferences in regard to some policy aspects of residential care. Check whether or not an item is important to you, which items are top priorities for you, and which items you'd like more information about.

<i>Aspects of the program:</i>	<i>Check one response</i>		<i>Yes or No</i>	<i>Yes or No</i>
	This is important to me.	This is <i>not</i> important to me.	This is a top priority.	I need more information about this.
Quick admission to the program.				
Close distance to my home (for example, driving distance).				
Unrestricted cell phone use.				
Access to staff-approved passes for leave, day passes, etc.				
Access to my car.				
Having a roommate or sharing a bathroom (same-gender).				
Separate living space for men and women.				
Same-gender treatment classes.				

Talking about your preferences with your provider

This worksheet will help you think about the best level of PTSD care for you right now. If you are still not sure, talk it through with a family member or close friend. Then write down any additional questions you may have and bring them along with this worksheet when you go to talk with your provider about your preferences.

The most important thing for you to know is that PTSD treatment is your road to recovery.