

Comprehensive Military PTSD Treatment Programs

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So far, there are four comprehensive posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and combat stress treatment programs in the U.S. Army that have incorporated different CAM approaches in their treatment programs. Many of these comprehensive programs started as a result of the [Ft. Bliss Restoration and Resilience Center](#), near El Paso, Texas. This integrative approach treats many of the symptoms of PTSD that are not addressed through the standard mental health protocols that included cognitive-behavioral therapy and pharmacotherapy. The Ft. Bliss program incorporated medical massage, meditation, yoga, acupuncture, marital/family therapy and Reiki with standard treatment protocols. Additionally, soldiers go through a daily 45-minute "power walk" and play water polo three times a week.

Public relations exposure at Ft. Bliss has built support for the integration of CAM into standard treatment programs. This support has been generated through scheduled visits to the facility by top military personnel, including Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen.

At the [Warrior Combat Stress Reset Program](#) at Ft. Hood (near Killeen, Texas), their intensive, combat-stress three-week program focuses on the reduction of hyperarousal and reactivity. Reducing these core symptoms of combat stress and posttraumatic stress disorder allows other treatments to be more effective. The program includes group counseling, biofeedback, individual counseling and alternative therapies (massage, acupuncture, yoga and Reiki).

[The Deployment Health Clinical Center](#) at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (in Washington, D.C.) uses evidence-based therapies in a comprehensive three-week program. Soldiers learn coping skills to reduce intrusive symptoms such as hyperarousal and avoidance. The program also provides a therapeutic group process for mutual support and re-integration into family and community. Additionally, soldiers are taught stress management and practice various forms of relaxation (guided imagery, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation and deep abdominal breathing).

The [Landstuhl Regional Medical Center](#) (near Landstuhl, Germany) uses an intensive, eight-week, therapeutic day-treatment program that includes a holistic approach. During the eight-hour days, patients will participate in multiple disciplines and interests, including art therapy, yoga and meditation classes, substance-abuse groups, anger and grief management, tobacco cessation, pain management and multiple posttraumatic stress disorder treatment protocols. The evidence-based protocols include eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), cognitive processing therapy, and prolonged-exposure therapy.

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