

Tomah VA Residential Combat PTSD Program-Tomah, Wisconsin



Greetings Vet Center staff, Transition patient Advocates, DOD staff members, Veteran service organization representatives, Community program staff, State program staff, VA staff, Clinicians, Providers, and other representatives:

I would like to just take a brief moment of your time to remind you or tell you about the residential Combat PTSD program in Tomah, Wisconsin for combat veterans. Some of you are already familiar with our program; however, you may not know some of the details below as some things have changed in the program over time.

We offer a warm and small treatment setting that has an intensive and direct focus on treating Combat-related trauma. Lacrosse is 45 minutes away and the Twin Cities and Milwaukee are less than 3 hours away.



Some information that was shared in the News about our program (click links below to news station's story/video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMR-D42gvYE>

<https://wxow.com/news/health/2018/09/20/ptsd-exposure-therapy-treatment-highlighted-at-mental-health-summit/>

<https://www.news8000.com/news/tomah-va-mental-health-summit-focuses-on-exposure-therapy-for-veterans/797744082>

Some comments by veterans whom have graduated from the program & their family members:

- “The Staff, content, and support of this program helped save my life, my family, and my future. It gave me the knowledge and skills to combat PTSD and live a more balanced, healthy and normal life every day! The exposure therapy at Fort McCoy was great! It was tough at first but well worth it!” ~ J. OEF/OIF Combat Veteran

- “This program will work if you are doing it for yourself and are willing to put in the hard work needed to recover. The staff is always there to help you through the tough times. DON’T EVER GIVE UP!” ~Gene, Gulf War/OIF Combat Vet
- “The program helped me. I learned to like myself again and feel proud of my service” ~Jim, Viet Nam Combat Vet 68-69
- “I’m so grateful for the VA for what they did for my husband and his PTSD recovery” ~ Mary, Spouse of Vietnam Combat Vet
- “Nam shattered my life. Put it into pieces. The program helped me to start to put it back together. I’ve still got work to do but I’m moving forward instead of fading away”-Vietnam Veteran 68-69
- “The program, it was the best thing I’ve ever done. It really helped me.” ~Keith-OIF Veteran
- “I truly think the program was the best thing to ever happen to him” ~Angela-Spouse of Keith-OIF Veteran

Just some of what we offer:

- We provide typically 9 weeks of voluntary treatment of PTSD for men & women Combat Veterans of all theaters (for example: Korea, Viet Nam, Desert Storm, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.). See admissions section below regarding Veterans whom have difficulties due to Peacekeeping/Support deployments.
- Service members/Veterans from all branches & from all over the United States come here for treatment.
- Intensive Group Psychotherapy (e.g., Recovery Skills, Exposure interventions, SS, ACT, Emotion regulation, Trauma Recovery, Trauma processing, Trauma Sensitive Yoga, Sleep Skills, etc) & Substance Use Disorder (SUD) meetings & Fellowship groups (e.g. AA, NA, SMART) for those who need supportive services on and off the VA campus.
- Intensive (up to x2 weekly) Individual Counseling or Evidence-based Psychotherapies (e.g., CPT, PE, ACT, STAIR, CR, EMDR, & more).
- Re-adjustment & Re-integration (e.g. school, work, relationships, etc.)
- Monthly Combat & Non-Combat related exposures as well as recreation outings in the community (*lower frequency of this in winter*)
- Participating Allied Health departments on the PTSD group schedule: OT, PT, Recreation Therapy, etc.
- Access to these on the VA Campus: Fishing pond, Weight room/gym, Computer lab, Bowling alley, Library, canteen, etc.
- 24/7 Supportive environment with Nursing staff, Peer support staff, Student interns
- Supportive Combat Veteran Culture
- Relaxed and low density treatment setting in the Heartland of rural Wisconsin near Fort McCoy
- Monthly educational/informational opportunities for Family & Support system that the veteran may want involved in his/her treatment

Some but not all of the common difficulties Combat Veterans get help with in the Program:

- PTSD Symptoms, Trust issues, Intense Power & Control difficulties
- Survivors Guilt
- Moral Injury, Soul wound, Wounds of War, Effects of witnessing/participating in Combat-related ethical struggles

- Civilian Life Readjustment, Community Re-integration (e.g. school problems/academic probation, work difficulties, relationship issues, etc.) , & PTSD-related Depression/Anxiety
- Traumatic loss & grief
- Exposure activities to successfully navigate & elicit mastery of triggers related to the above

Off Treatment time Recreation/Attractions:

- Small local town of Tomah is surrounded by numerous activities
- Multiple Golf Courses (5 min to 50 min away) & local small auto race track
- Wisconsin Dells only 60 minutes away (multiple waterpark, family attractions, and more)
- Fort McCoy-Winter snow activities, Military museum, and more
- LaCrosse Attractions only 45 minutes away (LaCrosse Center venues-multiple, Theaters, Hockey, Race Track, and more)
- Outdoor Activities (local and within driving distance): Camping, boating, fishing, hiking, etc.)
- Madison only 1.5 hours away (military museum, attractions, culture, universities, and more)
- Multiple local and state activities throughout the year (cranberry festival, Westby international ski jump, apple orchards, dairy festivals, western days, winter festivals, and more)



Admissions:

- Service member/veteran whom is eligible for VA care
- Veteran has tried an outpatient/community level of care (e.g. Outpatient Psychotherapy, Vet Center Counseling, college counseling) , made some gains there, but may require a more structured residential environment for continued treatment.
- Veteran has desire to do intensive treatment and do this around other combat veterans
- Veteran whom can tolerate and participate in the group therapy experience with others
- Veteran has been deployed to theater of war (does not have to necessarily veteran with an infantry MOS or been exposed to combat continuously through their deployment). Peacekeeping/Support deployments involving hostile contact/engagements may be considered. If you are not sure if this criteria is met, feel free to call us.
- Veteran is Medically & Psychiatrically stable
- Veteran can ambulate and transfer independently in residential setting
- Veteran can independently maintain ADLs (e.g., does not have any major conditions preventing them from walking, feeding, or caring for themselves independently in a residential setting)
- DD-214

Referrals:

- We just want to say thank you again to the Vet Center staff, Transition patient Advocates, DOD staff members, Veteran service organization representatives, Community program staff, State program staff, VA staff, Clinicians, Providers, and other representatives whom have already sent us referrals. We appreciate you sharing information about the program with your service members and veterans
- Referrals can be initiated by you (with Veteran's consent) or by the Veteran via self-referral
- Contact our Admissions Coordinator@ 608-372-1758

**For additional information including a virtual tour, please follow the this link:

<http://www.tomah.va.gov/services/mentalhealth.asp>

**We also have outreach brochures available. These brochures have comments/testimonials from successful graduates of the program as well as speak directly to the veteran. We can send some of these to you if requested.

**These emails will be sent out periodically (at a rate between monthly to quarterly) throughout the year. If you wish to be removed from the list, please send me an email me directly/back channel to request this.