

Barriers to Mental Health Care

The problem: Approximately **60-70%** of military personnel with mental health symptoms do not seek care.

Types of Barriers to Care

| Practical/Logistical | Personal | Institutional or Social |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling issues No time off work Financial concerns Transportation issues Awareness of services and locations  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal negative attitudes related to mental health Lack of confidence and trust in treatment effectiveness Lack of perception of need Confidentiality concerns Self-stigma  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional barriers related to DoD or service-specific policies and programs Institutional stigma related to military culture, rules, and experiences while in service Fear of public disclosure Social-stigma  |

Stigma is one of the **most frequently reported** barriers to care.

As reported by service members and veterans in stigma research:



Forms of Mental Health Stigma

| Type of Stigma | Definition | Example |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Self-stigma | Internalization of negative attitudes and stereotypes about mental health conditions | I am weak/unreliable |
| Public stigma | Public (mis)perceptions of individuals with mental health conditions | People will perceive me as being weak. |
| Institutional stigma | Institutional policies that intentionally or unintentionally restrict opportunities for people with mental health issues | Exclusion from certain roles or specialties. |

Unique Military Barriers to Seeking Treatment

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|--|--|
| Fear that seeking treatment will harm their career | Fear of losing support from their units |
| Culture of "toughing it out" can interfere with perception of need | Fear of being separated due to treatment |

Barriers to Care Impacts Service Members

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|---------------|--------------------|
| Readiness | Treatment-seeking |
| Reintegration | Overall well-being |

