

Barriers to Mental Health Care

The problem: Approximately **60%** 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

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

Readiness	Treatment-seeking
Reintegration	Overall well-being

