



Access to Mental Health & Opportunities for Telehealth

Only half of survey respondents felt satisfied with their ability to access mental health care appointments.

With the new normal of physical distancing, forced isolation, and unemployment rates skyrocketing, the mental health of our military and veteran families is at an increased risk. Telehealth offers a viable, and necessary, option for mental health treatment during this global pandemic.

Even before COVID-19, only half of military and veteran family respondents felt satisfied with their ability to access mental health care appointments. The top obstacle to obtaining mental health care, across all demographics, was the lack of available appointments.



Graphic Data

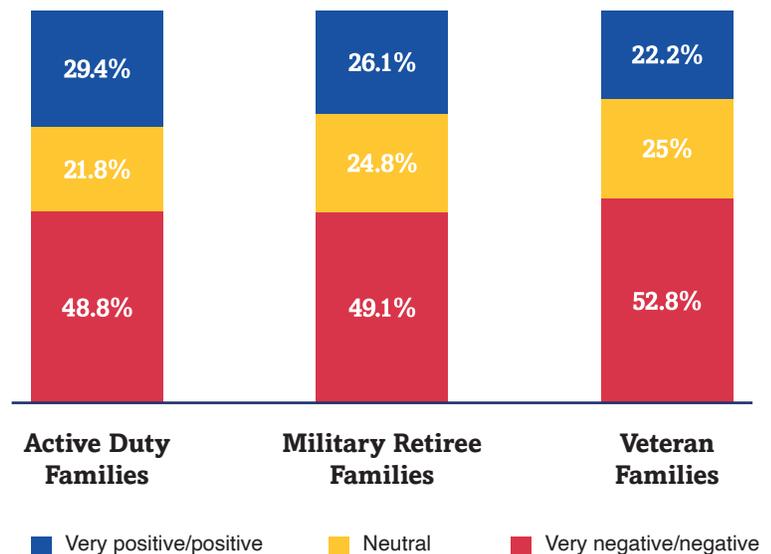


Top obstacles to obtaining mental health care:

Currently serving families	
1	Lack of available appointments
2	Time to attend appointments
3	Negative career implications

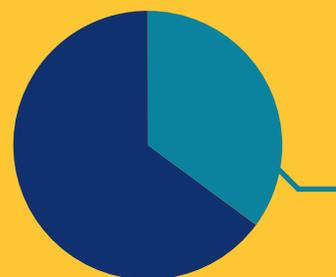
Veteran, retiree families	
1	Lack of available appointments
2	Transportation to appointments
3	Cost for care

Satisfaction with ability to access mental health care appointments



The majority of respondents, **82.6%**, said they had not accessed mental health crisis resources. Those who had sought crisis resources, the remaining **14.6%**, were slightly more likely to be spouses of veterans or retirees.

When asked if participants had thoughts of suicide in the past two years, more than **80%** said they had not, **12.5%** said they had thoughts about suicide, and **6.1%** said they preferred not to answer.



While most families have never used telehealth, more than **one-third (35.1%)** of active duty family respondents said they would be likely or very likely to use it.

Quotes

What are your perceptions of telehealth?

“ I would love to use it especially for mental health appointments, ”
said an **Army military retiree**.

“ It could be helpful since we never can get an appointment, ”
said the spouse of an **Air Force active duty service member**.

“ If I had the option to use it, I would. If it meant not waiting 6+ months to see a doctor, I would gladly use it, ”
said the spouse of a **Navy active duty service member**.

What are obstacles to accessing mental health care?

“ My spouse had been trying to schedule a mental health appointment because they have really been struggling lately. It took them over 4 weeks to actually be able to see someone in person (which I think is extremely unacceptable). Not to mention, once they were finally able to, the appointment was only available at a hospital over an hour away, ”
said the spouse of an **Air Force active duty service member**.

“ My obstacle is working full time and being a single mother. I need to keep my job and not take too much time off work for appointments, ”
said an **Army veteran**.

“ No mental health providers in our area take Tricare and are accepting new patients. Therefore, this service is not available to us, even though we've attempted to access these services, ”
said the spouse of a **Marine Corps active duty member**.

Calls to Action

Increase the number of mental health providers available through Tricare and VA Medical Centers.

Explore telehealth as an option for providing increased access to mental health care.



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With support from:

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