

KANSAS VFW AUXILIARY HOSPITAL PROGRAM

Kelle Brewer-Brown, Chairman – October 2025, Special Edition

NOT JUST FOR WOMEN VETERANS....

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) is a national campaign dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence. Every October, organizations and individuals unite across the country for a national effort to uplift the needs, voices, and experiences of survivors. Congress declared the month of October to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month in 1989. For DVAM 2025, the Domestic Violence Awareness Project is proud to introduce the theme **With Survivors, Always**. This theme allows us to explore what it means to be in partnership with survivors toward *safety, support, and solidarity*. It is both a love letter and a call to action for those committed to advocating for survivors' needs and rights. Survivors deserve safety. Survivors deserve support. Survivors deserve solidarity.



White Ribbon VA is a national call to action to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence across the Department of Veterans Affairs by promoting a positive change in culture so that the actions outlined in the pledge become the organizational norm. White Ribbon VA is an awareness movement where **ALL**—regardless of their sex—can participate. You are invited to make a pledge to stop violence against others and to symbolically wear the white ribbon. **White Ribbon VA Pledge:**

I, (your name), pledge to never commit, excuse or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault or domestic violence against others.

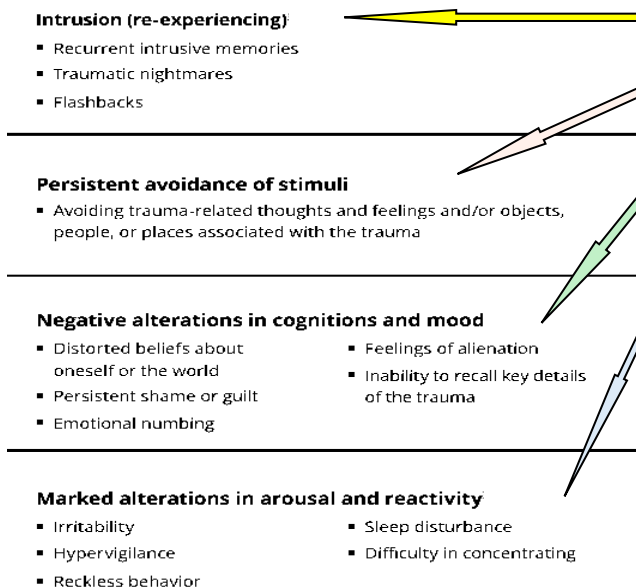
Background: White Ribbon VA was inspired by the White Ribbon organization which is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls, and to promote healthy relationships.

Military sexual trauma (MST) refers to sexual assault or threatening sexual harassment experienced during military service. MST includes any sexual activity during military service in which you are involved against your will or when unable to say no. Anyone can experience MST, regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic background, or branch of service. Like other types of trauma, MST can negatively affect a person's mental and physical health, even many years later. For questions about treatment and health care options related to MST, talk with a VHA MST Coordinator at a VA Health care facility. **OR**



The Beyond MST mobile app can also help. This free, secure and private self-help mobile app was created specifically to support the health and well-being of survivors of MST. The app has over 30 specialized tools and other features to help MST survivors cope with challenges, manage symptoms, improve their quality of life and find hope. Users do not need to create an account or be in treatment to use the app. Any personal information entered in the app is not shared with anyone, including the VA.

PTSD SYMPTOM CLUSTERS



PTSD is difficult to diagnose because it is considered an invisible disability, which means it can be difficult to determine if someone has PTSD just by looking at them, since they have no visible symptoms.

Diagnosis of PTSD can be challenging due to the variable onset of symptoms and the similarities between PTSD and other mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse disorders.

It is common for individuals with PTSD to have co-occurring mental health conditions, which can further complicate the diagnosis process.

Patients often seek care for physical symptoms without mentioning psychiatric symptoms or trauma histories.