

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Help for Heroes

A Reintegration Handbook for Texas National
Guard and Reserve Members and Veterans

Updated: October 2013



Introduction

- ▶ The purpose of this handbook is to identify and describe services available to Texas National Guard and Reserve (NGR) members and veterans who have returned from combat deployments in Afghanistan (OEF) and Iraq (OIF). This is an effort to reduce and alleviate the effects of war on NGR members and veterans, and to facilitate the successful reintegration of this population as they transition from a combat military setting to a civilian environment.
- ▶ The handbook identifies resources to help combat four major post-deployment issues: PTSD, relationship distress, unemployment, and alcohol and substance abuse.
- ▶ The handbook provides a directory of public and private service providers and resources available throughout Texas. It offers program details, as well as contact information for agencies and resources. Many of these resources are accessible in almost every U.S. state and territory through the use of the Internet and toll-free phone numbers.
- ▶ For ease-of-access and convenience, each section of this handbook offers a “Quick List” of services, website addresses and toll-free numbers, if available.
- ▶ Service providers and military installations can use the handbook as a supplemental guide for clients/troops by: providing copies of the handbook to their clients/troops, displaying a master copy in waiting areas frequented by service members or veterans, or by providing a link to the handbook on their organization’s website.

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Major Government Service Providers

The following provides an overview of federal, Texas State, and private organizations that provide services to address post-deployment issues such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), family distress, unemployment, and alcohol and substance abuse.

- ▶ **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**
- ▶ **Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Reserve Affairs Post-Deployment Guide**
- ▶ **Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program**
- ▶ **Military OneSource**
- ▶ **National Resource Directory**
- ▶ **Texas Joint Family Support Services (Texas Military Forces)**
- ▶ **Texas Veterans Commission**
- ▶ **Texas 2-1-1 Help in Texas Information Program**
- ▶ **TexVet: Partners Across Texas**

▶ **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

The VA provides patient care and federal benefits to veterans and their dependents. Benefits include disability, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and employment, home loan guaranty, dependent and survivor benefits, medical and mental health treatment, life insurance and burial benefits. OEF/OIF combat veterans can receive free medical care for any condition related to their service in Iraq/Afghanistan for five years after the date of their discharge or release. The VA's website provides program information, instructions on how to apply for VA benefits, facility locators, and numerous links to veterans' programs and services. VA regional services can assist with filing the appropriate VA forms. Additionally, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) can also provide aid by answering questions or by petitioning on behalf of the service member, veteran or family member if they consider the individual qualified to receive benefits. For more information, visit <http://www.va.gov/> or call **1-800-827-1000**.

▶ **Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Reserve Affairs Guide**

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Reserve Affairs website features information on Reserve issues including demobilization, TRICARE¹ Health Insurance, education benefits, and family and employer programs and policy. Under mobilization, service members and their families can access a **Demobilization Guide** that outlines Reserve demobilization and transition benefits. For more information and to access this Demobilization Guide, visit <http://ra.defense.gov/programs/fepp/>.

¹ TRICARE is the health insurance program for service members, retirees and their dependents.

► Texas Joint Family Support Services (TJFSS)

TJFSS is a unit within the Texas Military Forces that provides services to promote resiliency and wellness for all Texas National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. TJFSS provides help for: mental health, retirement, transition assistance, TRICARE Health Insurance, education services, VA services, chaplain services, legal services, family support programs, and much more. Service members and their families can also download a **Family Readiness Smartbook** which provides information and contact numbers for each service. *This handbook is recommended for all Texas National Guard members and their families.* For more information and to download the TJFSS Family Readiness Smartbook, visit <http://www.txfss.com/> (call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**).

► Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a DoD-wide initiative to support the welfare of NGR members and their dependents, by connecting them with resources and services throughout the deployment cycle. Through Yellow Ribbon events, service members and their families are able to connect with local resources before, during, and after deployments. Reintegration after returning from deployment is a critical time for NGR members, as they often live far from military installations and other members of their units. At Yellow Ribbon events, NGR members and their families can access information on health care, education and training opportunities, financial, and legal benefits. For more information, visit <http://www.txfss.com/>, www.yellowribbon.mil, or call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**.

► Military OneSource

Military OneSource is a free service provided by the Department of Defense to military members, Wounded Warriors and their families to help with a wide range of concerns to include: military life and deployment, family and recreation (parenting and child care), health and relationships (mental health and addictions, emotional well-being), career and education, financial and legal, crisis and disasters, and other areas of need. Services are available 24/7—by telephone and online. Other services include personal counseling (face-to-face, telephone, online), financial advising, tax help, and career counseling. For more information, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil> or call toll-free **1-800-342-9647**.

► National Resource Directory (NRD)

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is a comprehensive web portal that connects members, veterans, and their families with resources to support them. The NRD has information on thousands of national and local programs, many in local communities that support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. NRD connects users with sources that provide military and veteran benefits and compensation; education and training; employment assistance; family and caregiver support; health care; homeless assistance; housing, transportation and travel; volunteer opportunities; as well as other services and

resources. Finally, the website features numerous links and phone numbers to other valuable services such as the Veterans Crisis Line, the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, the VA Caregiver Support Line, and the Wounded Warrior Resource Center. For more information, visit <https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>.

► **Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)**

TVC serves veterans and their family members in all matters pertaining to veterans' disability benefits and rights. It is the appointed agency of the State of Texas to represent the State and its veterans before the VA. The agency represents veterans in filing VA disability claims and during VA appeals processes, while also providing assistance to dependents with survivor benefits. Counselors also assist veterans and their families with filling out VA paperwork. TVC claims and benefits counselors are located in VA regional offices, VA medical facilities, VA clinics, and military installations throughout the State. For more information, visit <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/>.

► **Texas 2-1-1 Help in Texas Information Program**

2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number, connecting callers with health and human service providers in Texas, including PTSD treatment, family support services, employment services, education opportunities, and alcohol and substance abuse treatment. Callers can speak with a skilled resource specialist who can provide information and referrals 24/7 throughout the year. (An alternate toll-free number is **1-877-541-7905**.)

211Texas.org is a website provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that connects citizens with the information and services they need, including PTSD treatment, family support services, employment services, education opportunities, and alcohol and substance abuse treatment. The website serves as a database for over 60,000 state and local human services programs. Users can search for a service by entering a need and a location.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The following table lists services for NGR members and veterans experiencing PTSD; the federal, state and private organizations and programs that provide the identified services; and contact information for these resources.

PTSD	Federal, State and Non-Governmental Post-Deployment & Reintegration Services and Resources
Therapy & Medication	<p>US Veterans Affairs Mental Health Treatment http://www.va.gov/ (1-800-827-1000)</p> <p>Veterans Affairs PTSD Program Locator http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/PTSD_flsh.asp?isFlash=1</p> <p>Veterans Affairs Facility Locator http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1</p> <p>National Center for PTSD http://www.ptsd.va.gov/</p> <p>Mental Health Services Locator http://store.samhsa.gov/mhlocator (1-800-662-HELP (4357))</p> <p>Military OneSource http://www.militaryonesource.mil (1-800-342-9647)</p> <p>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/ (1-800-273-TALK (82550))</p> <p>Vet Combat Call Center http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/media/Call-Center-PSA.asp (1-877-WAR-VETS)</p> <p>Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program www.yellowribbon.mil (1-800-252-8032)</p> <p>Texas 211 Information Hotline https://www.211texas.org/211/ (2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905)</p> <p>211Texas.org https://www.211texas.org/211/</p> <p>PTSD Coach Mobile Application http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/ptsdcoach.asp</p>

Therapy and Medication

► U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

The VA provides therapy for PTSD including cognitive behavioral therapy, cognitive processing therapy, Prolonged Exposure Therapy, EMDR therapy, group therapy, counseling, and medication. Antidepressant medications, anti-anxiety medications, mood stabilizing medications, and other medications to ease nightmares, irritability, sleeplessness, depression, and anxiety are included as part of the PTSD treatments. The VA offers inpatient and outpatient care, and VA counseling is also available at local Vet Centers. For more information on the VA's PTSD treatment programs, visit <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/index.asp> or call the **Vet Combat Call Center** at **1-866-496-8838**. To locate a VA facility, visit <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1>.

► Veterans Affairs PTSD Program Locator

The Veterans Affairs PTSD Program Locator is an online search engine provided by the VA that allows users to locate specialized PTSD programs in all fifty states, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Philippine Islands. The search engine is simple to navigate, providing a drop-down menu that offers more concise search options, giving users the option to search for all programs or by specific type of PTSD program, as well as by zip code or by state or island territory. Each medical center within VA has PTSD specialists who provide treatment for veterans with PTSD. Additionally, the VA provides nearly 200 specialized treatment programs. A referral is usually needed to access the specialty programs. To access the program locator, visit http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/PTSD_flnsh.asp?isFlash=1.

► National Center for PTSD

The National Center for PTSD offers a vast amount of information on PTSD and where to get help for PTSD. The website allows access to a Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number, the Veterans Crisis Line phone number and a link to an online Veterans Confidential Live Chat. For those NGR service members and veterans who would like to seek treatment outside of the VA, there is a link available for "Finding and Choosing a Therapist" (<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/where-to-get-help.asp>). Here, a user has the option of locating a therapist either by telephone or online. Users can also search for specific therapies including age-specific therapies, individual, couple, family, group, primarily female, primarily male, and gay, lesbian and bisexual therapies. For more information, visit <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>.

► **Mental Health Services Locator**

The Mental Health Services Locator, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is an online search engine that locates local mental health services (including PTSD treatment) for NGR members and their families. *This database may be extremely helpful to those troops and veterans who do not want to seek PTSD treatment within the VA or federal system, as it is able to locate public services beyond the VA/federal government.* To access the locator, visit <http://store.samhsa.gov/mhlocator>.

► **Military OneSource**

Military OneSource provides free PTSD screening and short-term counseling for military members. Available 24 hours a day, by telephone and online, Military OneSource offers short-term, non-medical counseling, designed to provide help with short-term issues (that may be related to an individual suffering from PTSD) such as: adjustment to situational stressors, stress management, communication grief, as well as PTSD screening. Military OneSource can arrange for individuals to meet face-to-face with a professional counselor in the local community or provide telephone and online consultations. Each eligible military member may receive up to 12 sessions, per issue, per counselor at no cost. Those requiring counseling for long-term medical issues will be referred to TRICARE or a military treatment facility. To access Military OneSource services, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil> or call **1-800-342-9647**.

► **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), is a 24/7 telephone and online chat line service available to individuals who are experiencing or who know someone who is experiencing emotional distress or suicidal crisis. The **Veterans Crisis Line**, which works in conjunction with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat line, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, chat online, or send a **text message to 838255** to receive confidential support at anytime. To access the chat line, visit <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.

► **Vet Center Combat Call Center 1-877-WAR-VETS**

The Vet Center Combat Call Center 1-877-WAR-VETS, is a free 24/7 confidential call center where combat veterans, service members and their families can call to talk about their military experience, their struggle with PTSD, or any other issue they are facing during their readjustment to civilian life. The staff is comprised of combat veterans from several eras as well as family members of combat veterans. For more information, visit <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/media/Call-Center-PSA.asp>.

► Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program connects NGR members and their families with information on where to get PTSD treatment. Through Yellow Ribbon events, service members can also learn coping skills to manage anger, prevent suicide, and to handle stressful situations—problems that can be related to PTSD. For more information, visit <http://www.txfss.com/>, <http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/yellowribbon/process.asp>, www.yellowribbon.mil, or call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**.

► Texas 2-1-1 Help in Texas Information Program

2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number, connecting callers with health and human service providers in Texas, including PTSD therapy for service members and veterans. Callers can speak with a skilled resource specialist who can provide information and referrals 24/7. An alternate toll-free number is **1-877-541-7905**.

211Texas.org is a database provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that can connect service members and veterans with organizations that provide PTSD therapy. The website serves as a database for over 60,000 state and local human services programs. Users can search for veterans' services by entering a need and a location. For example, if a service member/veteran is looking for PTSD counseling in Austin, simply click "Search" on the website's homepage and enter "PTSD" or "Veterans" under "Need" and "Austin" under "Location" to gain access to local PTSD treatment programs.

► PTSD Coach mobile app

The PTSD Coach mobile app is a convenient and helpful tool for NGR members with smart phones and other compatible portable electronic devices. The app is a self-management tool that can help users learn about and manage symptoms that commonly arise after experiencing a traumatic event. Created by the VA's National Center for PTSD and the DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology, the app provides information on PTSD and treatments that have been proven to work; tools for screening and tracking PTSD symptoms; uncomplicated skills to help users deal with stress symptoms; and direct links to other valuable resources. The questionnaire used in the app, the PTSD Checklist (PCL), is a reliable and valid self-report measure used across VA, DoD, and in the community. The app is not intended to replace professional care, but it is a tool for those who have or think they may have PTSD, as it provides facts and valuable self-help skills based on research. To download the app, visit <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/ptsdcoach.asp>.

Relationship Distress

The following table lists the services for NGR members and veterans experiencing relationship distress; the federal, state and private organizations and programs that provide the identified services; and contact information for these resources.

Relationship Distress	Federal, State and Non-Governmental Post-Deployment & Reintegration Services Resources
Counseling	<p>U.S. Veterans Affairs Individual, Couple & Family Counseling http://www.va.gov/ (1-800-827-1000)</p> <p>Veterans Affairs Facility Locator http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1</p> <p>Texas 211 Information Hotline https://www.211texas.org/211/ (2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905)</p> <p>211Texas.org https://www.211texas.org/211/</p> <p>TherapistLocator.net www.therapistlocator.net</p> <p>National Resource Directory https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/</p> <p>Military OneSource http://www.militaryonesource.mil (1-800-342-9647)</p> <p>Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program www.yellowribbon.mil (1-800-252-8032)</p> <p>Texas Joint Forces Support Services - Military Family Life Consultants http://www.txfss.com/ (1-800-252-8032)</p> <p>Chaplaincy of Texas Army National Guard http://www.txfss.com/ (1-866-822-7685 Option 8#)</p>
Parenting Intervention & Education	<p>Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program www.yellowribbon.mil (1-800-252-8032)</p> <p>Military OneSource http://www.militaryonesource.mil (1-800-342-9647)</p> <p>National Resource Directory https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/</p> <p>Texas 211 Information Hotline https://www.211texas.org/211/ (2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905)</p> <p>211Texas.org https://www.211texas.org/211/</p> <p>ChildHelp http://www.childhelp.org/ (1-800-4-A-CHILD (-800-422-4453))</p>
Child Support & Noncustodial Parent Support	<p>HEROES Program https://www.oag.state.tx.us/cs/ofii/index.shtml#heroes (512-460-640)</p>

Formal Family Support	<p>Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program www.yellowribbon.mil (1-800-252-8032)</p> <p>National Resource Directory https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov</p> <p>Military OneSource http://www.militaryonesource.mil (1-800-342-9647)</p> <p>National Guard and Reserve Reintegration Support http://ra.defense.gov/programs/fepp/</p> <p>Texas Joint Family Support Services http://www.txfss.com/ (1-800-252-8032)</p> <p>TexVet: Partners Across Texas https://www.texvet.org/support-services</p> <p>Texas Workforce Commission http://www.twc.state.tx.us/tvlp/tvlp_family.html (512-463-2222)</p> <p>American Red Cross www.redcross.org (877-272-7337)</p>
Informal Family Support	<p>Facebook http://www.facebook.com</p> <p>Skype www.skype.com</p>

Counseling

► U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

The VA provides individual, group, couple and family readjustment counseling for combat veterans and their families. VA family counseling is provided at community-based **Vet Centers** and is prepaid through military service. Veterans who served in a combat zone and received a campaign ribbon (OEF, OIF, etc.), as well as their families, are eligible for counseling at Vet Centers. For more information visit <http://www.va.gov/> or to locate a Vet Center visit <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1> (Call toll-free **1-800-827-1000**).

► Texas 2-1-1 Help in Texas Information Program

2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number, connecting callers with health and human service providers in Texas that provide marital and family counseling. Callers can speak with a skilled multilingual resource specialist who can provide information and referrals 24/7 throughout the year. (An alternate toll-free number is **1-877-541-7905**)

211Texas.org is a website provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that connects citizens with the information and/or services they need (including individual and family counseling). Users can search for family counseling services by entering a need and a location. For example, if a service member/veteran or family member is looking for

veterans' family counseling in Austin, simply click "Search" on the website's homepage and enter "veterans" or "family counseling" under "Need" and "Austin" under "Location" to gain access to local services.

▶ **TherapistLocator.net**

Sponsored by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), TherapistLocator.net is a database that lists more than 15,000 marriage and family therapists in the U.S. *This service is especially helpful for those service members and veterans who would like to seek marital or family counseling outside of the VA/governmental network.* All of the therapists are members of the AAMFT and must meet stringent education and training requirements established by the AAMFT. AAMFT therapists provide counseling for and information on domestic violence, PTSD, adolescent behavior, children and divorce, children's attachment, depression, anger, infidelity, marital distress, marriage preparation, and much more. The website also lists the specializations of each therapist.

▶ **National Resource Directory (NRD)**

The NRD is a comprehensive web portal that provides a listing of family counseling services in the United States. Users can search for family counseling services in their local area by entering key words (i.e. "family counseling") and a location. *This site is especially helpful for those service members and veterans who would like to seek counseling outside of the VA/governmental network.* For more information, visit <https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>.

▶ **Military OneSource**

Military OneSource provides short-term, non-medical family counseling options to NGR members and their families. Counseling services are designed to provide help with short-term issues such as adjustment to situational stressors, stress management, decision making, communication grief, family issues, and parenting skills issues. Military OneSource can arrange for individuals or family members to meet face-to-face with a professional counselor in the local community as well as telephone and online (instant-messaging) consultations. Each eligible service member or family member may receive up to twelve sessions, per issue, per counselor at no cost. For more information on Military OneSource services, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>.

▶ **Texas Joint Forces Support Services**

The Texas Joint Forces Support Services unit provides Military Family Life Consultants (MFLCs) that offer family counseling to all National Guard (Army & Air) members and their families. MFLCs are able to assist individuals and families with deployment and reintegration issues; marriage and relationship issues; parenting/sibling & family issues; communication; stress and anxiety; and depression. Consultations are free and anonymous and no records are kept. After-hours and weekend appointments are available, and group or off-site meetings can be arranged. For more information, visit <http://www.txjss.com/> (or call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**).

► Chaplaincy of the Texas Army National Guard

The Chaplaincy of the Texas Army National Guard provides counseling for Army National Guard members and their families. This unit offers a Strong Bonds program which focuses on strengthening the family. Additionally, the Chaplaincy provides multiple training programs for suicide awareness/prevention, battlemind² (pre/post deployment), soldier and spouse modules, anger management, marriage enrichment events, and single soldier events. To contact chaplain services 24/7, call **1-866-822-7685 Option 8#** or e-mail TexasChaplain@ng.army.mil.

► Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program provides family counseling, briefings, workshops and seminars to assist members and their families throughout the deployment process. During Yellow Ribbon events, members receive briefings on: family separation, coping with deployment, the effects of combat operational stress, reintegration issues, marriage and single family workshops, and reconnecting with children. For more information, visit <http://www.txfss.com/>, <http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/yellowribbon/process.asp>, www.yellowribbon.mil, or call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**.

Parenting Intervention and Education

► Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program offers parenting support and education through its events, in an effort to support NGR members and their families throughout the deployment process. Yellow Ribbon events focus on helping members reconnect with their children. The program also provides youth programs for children. Childcare is provided for children ages 0-5 and the Texas National Guard Youth Program sponsors activities for children ages 6-17, focusing on the effects of the deployment cycle. For more information, visit <http://www.txfss.com/>, <http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/yellowribbon/process.asp>, www.yellowribbon.mil, or call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**.

► Military OneSource

Military OneSource provides online parenting education and support for all military members. Under the subcategory, “Family and Recreation,” there is a link to “Parenting and Child Care.” Here, parents can learn about the following topics: adoption, becoming a parent, child care, parenting skills, and stages of development. Each topic is subdivided into separate links for more detailed information. The parenting and child care page also provides links to other organizations that offer parenting education and support. In addition, Military OneSource features a link to the **Sittercity Childcare Program**, an online database funded by the DoD that can be used to find local sitters and military subsidized care providers. For more information on Military OneSource services, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>.

² “Battlemind” is a term that refers to being mentally prepared for military combat.

► National Resource Directory (NRD)

The NRD is a comprehensive web portal that connects service members, veterans and their families with local parenting intervention, education and childcare services. Under Family and Caregiver Support, users can search for resources in their community that provide parenting intervention and education. The website also organizes searches based on parenting topics such as child care, talking to children, and children with special needs. For more information, visit <https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>.

► Texas 2-1-1 Help in Texas Information Program

2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number, connecting callers with child care and parenting intervention services in Texas. Callers can speak with a skilled multilingual resource specialist who can provide information and referrals 24/7. An alternate toll-free number is **1-877-541-7905**.

211Texas.org is a database that can connect citizens with child care and parenting education/intervention services. Users can search for child care and parenting education services by entering a need and a location. For example, if a service member/veteran or family member is looking for parenting classes in Austin, simply click “Search” on the website’s homepage and enter “parenting classes” under “Need” and “Austin” under “Location” to gain access to local parenting classes.

► ChildHelp

ChildHelp provides a toll free, anonymous and confidential 24/7 hotline for parents who need assistance or parenting advice. The hotline is staffed with professional crisis counselors who offer crisis intervention and information on thousands of support services. When calling **1-800-4-A-CHILD (-800-422-4453)**, a qualified counselor can assist veterans/service members or family members if they need help and want to talk to a counselor, are in physical or emotional crisis and need support, or would like literature or access to child care or parenting services.

Child Support and Noncustodial Parent Support

► HEROES

In Texas, the Help Establishing Responsible Orders and Ensuring Support (HEROES) for Children in Military Families Program is a pilot program of the Texas Office of the Attorney General intended to address child support issues among current service members, veterans and their dependents. The goal of HEROES is to offer personalized assistance in dealing with paternity establishment, child support and parenting time (custody visitation) matters; grant suitable relief in Texas child support cases where military service/combat related injuries have attributed to non-compliance with court orders; and to encourage positive co-parenting solutions. For more information, visit <https://www.oag.state.tx.us/cs/ofc/index.shtml#heroes>.

Formal Family Support

► Texas Joint Family Support Services (TJFSS)

TJFSS is a unit within the Texas Military Forces that provides family support services for all Texas National Guard members and their families. TJFSS offers resources for family support, including Family Readiness Teams, Family Readiness Support Assistants, Family Assistance Specialists, Family Readiness Groups, the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, and the Strong Bonds Program. **Family Readiness Groups (FRG)** are guard members, civilians, family members, volunteers, and unit commanders that come together to provide mutual social and emotional support within units, as well as outreach services and information. FRGs are vital to the military as they often provide firsthand information to families about their Soldiers/Airmen, including deployment updates when their Soldiers/Airmen cannot be contacted directly.³ Family members can join a FRG at any time. Service members and their families can also download a **Family Readiness Smartbook** which provides information and contact numbers for each service. *This handbook is recommended for all Texas National Guard members and their families.* For more information and to download the TJFSS Family Readiness Smartbook, visit <http://www.txfss.com/> (call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**).

► Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a DoD-wide initiative to support and strengthen NGR members and their families by connecting them with resources and services throughout the deployment cycle. Through Yellow Ribbon events, NGR members and their families are able to engage in family-strengthening activities, including seminars focusing on topics such as family separation, coping with deployment, member and spouse employment, reintegration issues, marriage, single soldiers, reconnecting with children, assistance with personnel issues, and financial counseling for families. The 2-day post-deployment events are held at hotels, resorts, and conference centers. These events are designed for the service member and his or her family to relax, reconnect and receive information together. Childcare is provided for children ages 0-5 and the Texas National Guard Youth program sponsors activities for children ages 6-17, focusing on the effects of the deployment cycle. For more information, visit <http://www.txfss.com/>, <http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/yellowribbon/process.asp>, or www.yellowribbon.mil.

► National Resource Directory (NRD)

The NRD is a comprehensive web portal that connects service members, veterans and their families with local and national family support services. Users can search for family support programs throughout the nation. Under the folder “Family & Caregiver Support,” users

³ During combat deployment, direct communication between a Soldier/Airman and his or her family may be limited.

can search for information on family support services including service member and veteran support organizations, branch-specific resources, organizations that help families cope with deployment, family recreation services, caregiver support resources, and domestic violence and sexual assault resources. Additionally, the database offers information on organizations that give financial information and assistance to families. To search for local family support services, visit <https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>.

► **Military OneSource**

Military OneSource is a free online service, sponsored by the DoD, that provides booklets, articles, recordings, and other resources to help support military families. Under “Family and Recreation,” NGR families can search for family support information on elder care, recreation, parenting, child care, home maintenance, and money management. Under “Recreation,” the site features free online libraries and audio books, as well as tools to help plan a vacation. To access family support resources provided by Military OneSource, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>.

► **Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Reserve Affairs website**

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense Reserve Affairs website is a site that provides information on Reserve family support services and resources. Under “Family Readiness,” there is information on family and employer programs and policy, a family toolkit (handbook for Reserve families), a soldier’s parent guide, and numerous links to other resources including the Army Family Liaison Office and Military Homefront, a DoD website for official military community and family policy. Under “Mobilization,” service members and their families can access a Demobilization Guide that outlines Reserve demobilization and transition benefits. For more information, visit <http://ra.defense.gov/programs/fepp/>.

► **TexVet: Partners Across Texas**

The TexVet: Partners Across Texas website is a hub for network and event-based activities for military members, veterans and their families. The community calendar provides information on local family services and activities, including workshops and peer-to-peer support groups. The website also provides information on specialized support groups including military mothers, spouses, children, and homeless veterans’ support groups. For more information, visit <https://www.texvet.org/>.

► **American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross connects military members with their families during an emergency or crisis. For NGR members, the Red Cross offers: emergency communication, access to emergency financial assistance, counseling, and veterans services. Financial assistance is available for emergency travel, burial of a loved one, assistance to avoid privation, etc. Assistance includes funding for roundtrip airfare, lodging costs, food and incidentals. For

example, if a service member is deployed and a family member has an emergency back home (e.g., spouse, child or parent is severely injured, sick or dies), a family member can call Red Cross to notify the deployed Soldier/Airman. Likewise, if a member is not deployed and a crisis occurs away from his or her current location, he or she can contact Red Cross for assistance. Call the Military Call Center at **(877) 272-7337** or visit <http://www.redcross.org/where> to locate a local Red Cross Chapter.

► **Texas Workforce Commission**

The Texas Workforce Commission website provides numerous links to military family support groups and services. Some of these groups include Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., Marine Moms Online, Military Connections, Veterans' Families United, and other military family support organizations. For more information, visit http://www.twc.state.tx.us/tvlp/tvlp_family.html.

Informal Family Support

► **Facebook**

Facebook is a social networking service and website that connects more than 845 million active users. Here, service members, veterans and their families can connect with other military members and families. The website allows users to connect with and to create military family and veterans support groups and pages. NGR families can locate open groups or public pages to establish connections with military support groups. For example, the Fort Hood Area Events⁴ page allows users to post questions on a streaming wall and other members can respond to inquiries. So, if a military spouse near Fort Hood would like information on where she could access child care in the Fort Hood/Killeen area, all she would have to do is post the question and members of the page would respond. Likewise, the Chamorro⁵ Military Families Group allows Chamorro military families to communicate and connect at military installations all over the world. The group's description states: "It is hard enough being away from the island, but then you start to miss the music, culture, language and people. Use this group to find other locals (Chamorros) in your area who can relate to being away from home and being a part of military life." To start a Facebook account and to locate similar groups, visit <http://www.facebook.com>.

⁴ See www.facebook.com/FHWWE.

⁵ Chamorro refers to a native of the island of Guam, a U.S. territory in the Pacific.

► **Skype**

Skype is an Internet service that allows users to communicate with friends and family by voice, video and instant messaging. Videoconferencing allows military families to see and hear their loved ones in real-time. For example, a Soldier can witness the birth of his baby while deployed, and a Marine can see and hear her mother located thousands of miles away in real-time. This service allows military members and their families to visually interact with their families and friends, no matter how far away they may be. To utilize videoconferencing, all that is required is Internet service⁶ and a web camera. To download Skype, visit www.skype.com.

⁶ See www.skype.com to see system requirements.

Unemployment

The following table lists services for NGR members and veterans experiencing unemployment; the federal, state and private organizations and programs that provide the identified services; and contact information for these resources.

Unemployment	Federal, State and Non-Governmental Post-Deployment & Reintegration Services and Resources
Employment Counseling	<p>Texas Veterans Commission http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Home.aspx (1-800-VETS (8387))</p> <p>FedsHire Vets http://www.fedshirevets.gov/</p> <p>Texas Workforce Commission http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ (512-463-2222)</p> <p>TexVet: Partners Across Texas https://www.texvet.org/support-services</p> <p>Texas 211 Information Hotline https://www.211texas.org/211/ (2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905)</p> <p>211Texas.org https://www.211texas.org/211/</p> <p>National Resource Directory https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/</p> <p>National Guard Job Connection Program (JCEP) http://www.jcep.info</p> <p>DoD Transition Assistance Program (TAP) www.turbotap.org</p>
Education Assistance	<p>G.I. Bill http://www.gibill.va.gov/ (1-866-496-8838)</p> <p>Hazlewood Act http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Hazlewood-Act.aspx (1-800-VETS (8387))</p> <p>Texas Veterans Commission http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Home.aspx (1-800-VETS (8387))</p> <p>Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program www.yellowribbon.mil (1-800-252-8032)</p> <p>National Resource Directory https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/</p> <p>Military OneSource http://www.militaryonesource.mil (1-800-342-9647)</p> <p>National Guard and Reserve Reintegration Support http://ra.defense.gov/programs/fepp/</p>

Employment Counseling

► Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)

TVC offers employment counseling services to Texas veterans and aids employers in finding qualified veteran job applicants. TVC offers one-on-one assistance to veterans with job applications, résumé preparation, as well as job matching and searches. The agency has staff in workforce centers who offer intensive employment counseling services to disabled veterans, economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans, and veterans with other barriers to employment, particularly homeless veterans. TVC also has staff assigned to VA facilities to help disabled veterans with intensive vocational rehabilitation and employment. The agency provides online information to assist veterans and service members with finding a job, drafting résumés, completing employment applications, finding information on how to translate their military occupational skills into civilian occupational skills, and information on job fairs and active duty transition assistance programs. The website features a job board, information on veterans' preference, reemployment, on-the-job training, employment for spouses and caregivers, as well as multiple job search links. For more information, visit <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/> or call **1-800-VETS (8387)**.

► FedshireVets

FedshireVets website is a one-stop resource for federal veteran employment information, transitioning service members, and their families. A goal of the organization is to provide reliable and accurate information and valuable training in an approach that will benefit both the applicant and hiring agency. The site features information on topics such as veterans' preference, special hiring authorities for veterans, federal hiring practices, education and training resources, and other pertinent information for veterans and transitioning service members who would like to work for the federal government. Additionally, the site has a direct link to **USAJOBS**, a one-stop source for federal jobs and employment information and is the primary website for those seeking federal employment. For more information, visit <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/>.

► Texas Workforce Commission

TWC offers priority service for veterans at all Workforce Solutions Offices. TWC provides services such as career counseling, job placement, job search resources, training programs, résumé and application assistance, career development assistance, and unemployment benefits. Many TWC offices also have Veterans Representatives. Additionally, TWC provides a **Veterans Leadership Program**, a referral service that links veterans with federal and local services to help facilitate a successful transition to civilian life. The program connects veterans to employers for potential hiring. Furthermore, the TWC website features the state's largest online job matching system, **WorkinTexas.com**, as well as information on how to apply for **Unemployment Benefits**. *Many service members are eligible for Unemployment Benefits.*⁷

⁷ Eligibility may vary; contact the Unemployment Benefits Line to apply for benefits.

To apply for Unemployment Benefits, visit the TWC website or call **1-800-939-6631**. TWC provides computers, Internet access, telephones, copiers, job workshops and seminars. For more information and to locate a TWC office, visit <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/>.

► **TexVet Partner Across Texas**

The TexVet Partner Across Texas website is a vast networking and referral services database for Texas veterans and transitioning service members searching for employment. By collecting federal, state, and local VSO information, TexVet has created an online Veterans Services Provider Network (VSPN). The employment section of the website features information on job preparation, transitioning, job leads, financial assistance, and other resources. For example, under “Job Preparation,” job fairs, career advising events, training opportunities, and other employment preparation events throughout Texas are listed. For more information, visit <https://www.texvet.org/>.

► **Texas 2-1-1 Help in Texas Information Program**

2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number, connecting callers with health and human service providers in Texas, including employment counseling services for veterans and their families. Callers can speak with a skilled resource specialist who can provide information and referrals 24/7 throughout the year. An alternate toll-free number is **1-877-541-7905**.

211Texas.org is a website provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that connects citizens with employment support services, including agencies and programs that provide employment counseling. The website serves as a database for over 60,000 state and local human services programs. Users can search for employment services by entering a need and a location. For example, if a veteran is looking for a job in Austin, he can simply click on “Search” on the website’s homepage and enter “employment” under “Need” and “Austin” under “Location” to gain access to local services.

► **National Resource Directory (NRD)**

The NRD is a comprehensive database that connects veterans with helpful employment support tools, resources and programs, including organizations that provide employment counseling to transitioning service members and veterans. The database features career exploration tools, transition assistance, information on working for the government, self-employment and business ownership, military to civilian skill translators, job listings, placement assistance, mentoring, employment laws and veterans preference, unemployment benefits, and employment support programs. The NRD is also home to the **Veterans Job Bank**, a central database that allows veterans access to jobs specifically for them. A veteran can search for employment by entering key words (e.g., job title), their military occupation specialty (MOS or AFSC), and a location. To access the NRD, visit <https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>.

► National Guard Job Connection Education Program (JCEP)

JCEP is an employment partnership initiative designed to provide one-on-one employment counseling and job-placement assistance for NGR service members, veterans and their spouses. The program helps participants identify skills honed in the military and creates a plan for transferring them to a civilian job setting. Program training and career counseling are provided at multiple National Guard Armories and community facilities. JCEP also provides education assistance for service members who are interested in earning their degrees or trade certifications, résumé review and mock interviews, applicable workforce training, online job search training, and personal assistance from a business advisor working with local employers to hire JCEP participants. JCEP works with local businesses and explains to these companies the program and the benefits of hiring a service member/veteran. For more information, visit <http://www.jcep.info>.

► DoD Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

TAP was developed to assist in the transitioning of military personnel and family members leaving active duty service. After serving 180 or more days of continuous active duty, and prior to a member's separation or release from active duty, NGR members are required to receive transition counseling from a member of a military installation Transition Assistance Staff, Command Career Counselor (Navy), or Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) staff. During the transition counseling session, the member will be given an overview of all the topics contained in DD Form 2468-1, "Pre-separation Counseling Checklist for Reserve Component Service Members Released from Active Duty." NGR members are entitled to receive transition assistance for up to six months after they have been released from active duty and return home. To access this help, the member must contact the nearest military installation or Command Career Counselor where he or she lives. Personnel office staff, relocation specialists, education counselors, and many others can help. Professional guidance and counseling are available at local Transition Assistance Offices, in addition to workshops, publications, information resources, automated resources, and government programs.

The first step in this process is to access the TAP website created for NGR members: www.TurboTAP.org. Once there, members should review the *Transition Guide for Guard and Reserve*. Listed below are the names of each service's TAP:

- **Army:** Army Career and Alumni Program - The Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) is a military personnel function and the Centers are found under the Director of Human Resources (DHR) or the Military Personnel Office (MILPO). <http://www.acap.army.mil/>
- **Army National Guard:** The National Guard has placed a transition assistance advisor (TAAs) at each of the State Joint Forces Headquarters to serve as the statewide point of contact and coordinator for easy access to Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and to provide assistance in access to entitlements through the Military Health System (TRICARE). A directory of state offices can be found at: <http://www.ngb.army.mil/resources/states.aspx>. For more information on TAAs, visit: www.taapmo.com.
- **Navy:** Fleet and Family Support Center. Navy personnel should make an appointment with their Command Career Counselor for a Pre-separation counseling interview and the Navy CONSEP (Career Options and Skills Evaluation Program) self-assessment at least 180 days prior to separation. <https://www.nffsp.org/>
- **Marines:** Career Resource Management Center (CRMC)/Transition & Employment Assistance Program Center. <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/tamp/index.cfm>

- **Air Force:** Airman and Family Readiness Center. Members can find the nearest office using the military installation finder at: www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil
- **Coast Guard:** Worklife Division – Transition Assistance. Coast Guard Worklife staffs can be found at your nearest Integrated Support Command. <http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/>

► **TurboTAP.org**

TurboTAP.org is a website for NGR members that contains information on NGR-specific reintegration assistance, to include information on employment assistance, entrepreneurship, education and training, veterans benefits, disabled veterans, retirees, employment restrictions, and leaving the service. The site features an Online Career Decision Toolkit which consists of online career transition courses to help members transition to the civilian workforce. The website also provides access to online learning events and webinars (live online seminars) for demobilizing NGR members and their families. Through these live webinars, members have the opportunity to learn how to translate their military experience into civilian terms, to create a new financial plan and to understand the federal employment system. Members are also able to connect with those who are going through similar experiences and to learn from one another. Live trainers facilitate these highly interactive sessions, which are designed to give the member practical information that can be put to use immediately. These live webinars are accessible from any location where broadband Internet and phone are available. To access the site, visit www.turbotap.org.

Education Assistance

► **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

The VA administers a variety of education benefit programs. Many veterans and service members can qualify for more than one education benefits program. The education benefits programs administered by the VA include:

- Post-9/11 GI Bill
- Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD)
- Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)
- Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)
- Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
- Educational Assistance Test Program (Section 901)
- Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)
- National Call to Service Program
- Veterans Retraining Program

The VA website provides an easy-to-navigate portal for veterans and service members to apply for benefits (available through the Veterans Online Application [VONAPP]) and to choose a school (<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>). To apply for free education and vocational counseling services, members and veterans should complete the application available on the VA website (<http://www.gibill.va.gov/support/counseling-services/>).

► Hazlewood Act

The Hazlewood Act provides qualified veterans, spouses, and their children with an education benefit of up to 150 hours of tuition and fee exemptions at state-supported colleges or universities. Effective Fall 2009 term/semester, in order to be eligible to receive a Hazlewood Act Exemption, a veteran must:

- Have been a Texas resident upon entry into the military, entered into active federal duty in the State of Texas, or declared Texas as his or her home of record at the time of entry into the armed forces as documented on his or her DD Form 214;
- Have a military discharge of honorable or general, under honorable conditions;
- Served at least 181 days of active duty service (excluding training);
- Not be in default on an education loan made or guaranteed by the State of Texas and not in default on a federal loan if that default is the reason the student cannot use his or her federal veterans' benefits.

The Hazlewood Act benefit is also extended to the *dependent children and spouses of eligible veterans* who died in the line of duty or as a result of injury or illness directly related to military service, are missing in action, or who became totally disabled for purposes of employability as a result of a service-related injury or illness. This benefit also applies to the dependent children and spouses of members of Texas National Guard or Air National Guard units who were killed while on active duty while serving either the State of Texas or the United States or are totally disabled for purposes of employability.⁸ To find out if a veteran or family member is eligible for this exemption, visit <http://texas-veterans.com/education/hazlewood>.

► Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)

TVC provides education assistance to all veterans in Texas. A goal of the organization is to ensure that every veteran and family member eligible for federal or state veterans' education benefits has the opportunity to pursue whatever educational endeavor they choose. TVC provides education counseling to veterans and investigates VA educational and benefit complaints from veterans and other eligible family members. The agency has more than 75 claims counselors throughout the state, accredited by the VA, to provide assistance with filing claims for VA and state education benefits, including the G.I. Bill and Hazlewood Act. The TVC directory provides contact information to every TVC site in Texas. For more information, visit <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/>.

⁸ Make note that service in the Texas National Guard *alone* does not qualify an individual for Hazlewood Act benefits. The Hazlewood Act benefit is for veterans who served in the armed forces of the United States. The National Guard is a state unit. However, an individual in the National Guard who is called into active duty by a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces who served at least 181 days (excluding training) and meets all other program requirements may qualify for Hazlewood Act benefits.

► Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program provides reintegration events exclusively for National Guard and Reserve members that feature information on federal and state education benefits. NGR service members and their families have the opportunity to attend seminars that discuss education benefits such as the G.I. Bill and Hazlewood Act. For more information, visit <http://www.txfss.com/>, <http://www.afrc.af.mil/library/yellowribbon/process.asp>, www.yellowribbon.mil, or call toll-free **1-800-252-8032**.

► National Resource Directory (NRD)

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is a comprehensive web portal that connects service members and veterans with education and training support services. The web portal provides information on education benefits and programs including Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, other VA education programs (including the Montgomery GI Bill), as well as other DoD programs. Users can search for scholarships and grants for service members, veterans, spouses, and dependents, as well as other general scholarships. The NRD also offers guidance on how to get federal and state financial aid, how to choose a career path, assistance with finding programs and applying to schools, as well as guidance on apprenticeship, licensing and credentials. For more information, visit <https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>.

► Military OneSource

Military OneSource provides online education support to service members and veterans by connecting them with career and education information and resources. The website features information on preparing for, applying to, and paying for college as well as a wide array of materials and resources to help plan a career. Military OneSource also offers Spouse Education and Career Opportunities, a network of comprehensive spouse education and career opportunity resources, including portable careers. For more information on Military OneSource education support sources, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

The following table lists services for NGR members and veterans suffering from alcohol and/or substance abuse; the federal, state and private organizations and programs that provide the identified services; and contact information for these resources.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse	Federal, State and Non-Governmental Post-Deployment & Reintegration Services and Resources
Traditional Substance Abuse and Mental Health Programs	<p>Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx</p> <p>U.S. Veterans Affairs Substance Abuse Treatment http://www.va.gov/ (1-800-827-1000)</p> <p>Veterans Affairs Facility Locator http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1</p> <p>Texas 211 Information Hotline https://www.211texas.org/211/ (2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905)</p> <p>211Texas.org https://www.211texas.org/211/</p> <p>Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) www.aa.org/en_find_meeting.cfm?PageID=29 (E-mail: SouthwestRegion@aa.org)</p> <p>Narcotics Anonymous (NA) www.na.org/?!D=phoneline</p>
Integrated PTSD and SUD Treatment Programs	<p>U.S. Veterans Affairs Substance Abuse Treatment http://www.va.gov/ (1-800-827-1000)</p> <p>Veterans Affairs Facility Locator http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1</p> <p>Veterans Affairs PTSD Program Locator http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/PTSD_flash.asp?isFlash=1</p>

Traditional Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment Programs

► Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator

The Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is an online search engine that provides users with information on substance abuse and mental health services useful to military members, veterans, and their families. *This database may be extremely helpful to those troops and veterans who do not want to seek substance abuse treatment within the VA or federal system, as it locates public services beyond the VA/federal system.* To access the locator, visit <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx>.

► U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

The VA provides effective, scientifically proven substance abuse treatment for all eligible veterans. Different treatment options include individual, couple, family and group therapies, as well as medications to assist veterans in reducing their use of alcohol, tobacco and drug use. A patient coming to the VA can expect to find the following types of care: first-time screening for alcohol or tobacco use in all care facilities, short outpatient therapy, intensive outpatient treatment, residential (live-in) care, medically managed detoxification (stopping substance use safely), continuing care and relapse prevention, marriage and family counseling, self-help groups, drug substitution therapies, and newer medicines to reduce craving. To access these services, veterans and service members should speak with an existing VA health care provider or contact a local VA medical center or Vet Center. For more information, service members and veterans can call toll free **1-800-827-1000** or visit <http://www.va.gov>. Also, to locate the nearest VA facility, visit <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1>.

► Texas 2-1-1 Help in Texas Information Program

2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number, connecting callers with health and human service providers in Texas, including substance abuse treatment services and programs. Callers can speak with a skilled resource specialist who can provide information and referrals 24/7 throughout the year. An alternate toll-free number is **1-877-541-7905**.

211Texas.org is a website provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that connects citizens with the information and/or services they need (including substance abuse treatment). The website serves as a database for over 60,000 state and local human services programs. Users can search for substance abuse treatment by entering a need and a location. For example, if a service member/veteran or family member is looking for substance abuse treatment in Austin, simply click “Search” on the website’s homepage and enter “substance abuse treatment facilities” under “Need” and “Austin” under “Location” to gain access to local substance abuse treatment programs.

▶ **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a voluntary fellowship of men and women who come together with the shared intent of attaining and maintaining sobriety. The only requirement for membership is a desire to quit drinking. There are no membership fees or dues to join AA. The philosophy behind AA is total abstinence—members simply stay away from one drink, one day at a time. Sobriety is maintained through sharing experiences, strength and hope at group meetings and through the suggested Twelve Steps for recovery from alcoholism. For more information, visit www.aa.org/en_information_aa.cfm?PageID=11. To find a local meeting, visit www.aa.org/en_find_meeting.cfm?PageID=29.

▶ **Narcotics Anonymous (NA)**

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is a non-profit voluntary fellowship of men and women who come together with the shared intent of attaining and maintaining sobriety. Membership is open to all drug addicts, regardless of the type of drug or combination of drugs used. Founded in the same philosophy of the Alcoholics Anonymous program, sobriety is maintained through sharing successes and challenges in overcoming drug addiction and living drug-free lives through the application of the principles contained within the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of NA. For more information or to find a local meeting, call **1-818-773-9999** extension 771 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. or visit www.na.org/?ID=phonenumber.

Integrated PTSD and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs

▶ **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

The VA provides effective integrative PTSD and substance abuse treatment for all eligible veterans, including National Guard members and Reservists who have completed a federal deployment to a combat zone. Substance Use PTSD Teams (SUPTs) treat the combined problems of PTSD and substance abuse in outpatient clinics and can meet with patients on a regular basis. Every VA Medical Center has providers that have been trained to offer PTSD treatment. Note that while not all VA Medical Centers offer *integrative* PTSD and substance abuse treatment services, service members and veterans can still get effective PTSD and substance abuse treatment through traditional programs. A doctor can refer you to a mental health provider who is a PTSD specialist. To access these services, speak with an existing VA health care provider or contact a local VA Medical Center or Vet Center. A referral is usually needed to access specialty programs. To locate a VA facility, search the **Veterans Affairs Facility Locator** at <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1> or the **Veterans Affairs PTSD Program Locator** at http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/PTSD_flash.asp?isFlash=1. Also, service members and veterans can call the VA general hotline at **1-800-827-1000**.