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USO Helps Troops With PTSD Symptoms

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EL PASO, Texas -- Soldiers and post traumatic stress disorder. It's a problem that has only gotten worse as troops have been at war for much of the last decade, and now some of those soldiers could be getting help from the USO.

The USO has a unique relationship with troops, as they see many of them everyday, but not for training, combat or other daily duties. Many soldiers and their families told KFOX they are an extended family for soldiers, providing an array of services.

USO officials said it's that unique relationship that has opened the door for USO staffers and volunteers to help troops deal with their PTSD.

East El Paso resident Marie Parson's husband has been in the Army for two and a half years, and just recently moved to El Paso.

"This is a big culture shock for me," said Parsons.

So she went to the USO.

"Felt like home, a home away from home," she said.

And then two weeks ago, she decided to help others as a USO volunteer.

"So that I can give someone else a smile for the day or an ear to listen to them," Parsons told KFOX.

As part of her USO training, she now knows the warning signs of a soldier or a family member with PTSD or depression.

"They start giving out their personal objects, or they won't talk when they're usually talkative," she said.

Her training is part of a new partnership between the USO and the Triwest Healthcare Alliance.


"We want the family members and the service members to find the help that they need, so there doesn't become a bigger issue," said Roberto Medrano, with the USO in El Paso.

Help as simple as a website and a phone number to call a counselor if a soldier feels like they need to talk anonymously.

Parsons, in her short time as a volunteer, has already used her training.

"I personally know a couple of soldiers that I did reach out with this information," said Parsons. "They are doing a lot better today. They thought it was the end of their career, but it's not."

 **Website:** www.triwest.com/OnlineCare

 **Hotline:** 1-888-TRIWEST (874-9378)

The USO and Fort Bliss are sponsoring the Wounded Warrior Family and Caregiver Conference on Sept. 23 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Centennial Club at Biggs Airfield. Presenters will share their expertise in a number of sessions and covering a

variety of topics including PTSD, caregiver boundaries and intimacy, parenting, financial security and suicide prevention.

Those who attend the conference will receive free admission, lunch and a gift bag. The registration deadline is Sept. 1. To register, go to: [Operation Enduring Care](#)

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