



In Honor of Those Who Serve, 2010

By JOHN M GROHOL, PSYD



Today is Veteran's Day, and we'd like to take a moment to honor those men and women who have chosen to serve our country in military service. With an all-voluntary armed forces, our country is at the mercy of individuals who, for little reason other than a desire to serve their country, willingly risk their lives and put their entire ordinary lives on hold (especially those in the National Guard and reservists). For you and I.

We should do all that we can to ensure these folks come back to a country who welcomes them home, is thankful for their service, and provides them with all the necessary health and mental health care humanly possible. That's our duty, as ordinary citizens, to recognize the sacrifice these men and women have made.

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize a number of organizations that were present this year at the 26th annual Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy this year, who offer help and mental health services to returning veterans.

The first of these is [Give an Hour](#), an organization begun in 2005 to help connect returning soldiers with needed mental health care within their community. Mental health professionals commit to donating one hour per week to help see a vet, at no cost to the veteran. It's a simple idea that has made a very powerful impact.

[Care for the Troops](#) is dedicated to helping the mental health of returning soldiers and their families, through providing information and training to families and professionals about the unique issues and problems faced by military families.

The **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** has a whole host of [suicide prevention programs](#), including the [VA Ace card](#) (PDF, modeled after the Army's ACE card).

The purpose of ACE is to help Veterans, their family members and friends learn that they can take the necessary steps to get help. The acronym ACE (Ask, Care, Escort) summarizes the steps needed to take an active and valuable role in suicide prevention. The VA ACE Card is a pocket guide, supported by the VA ACE Brochure which provides more in depth information.

One of my favorite national organizations, the [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance \(DBSA\)](#), offers a [Peer Support Training](#) for Veterans program, which helps people understand the recovery process. They've collaborated with over 14 VA facilities to help educate vets and clinicians, and have trained hundreds of veteran peers who learn the skills necessary to run effective support groups and programs in their communities.

Last, I have to mention [Zero to Three](#), a nonprofit devoted to helping people understand the lives of infants and toddlers. They have some [great resources](#) focused on helping people understand the special needs of a military family in raising their very young children and infants.

Take a minute to learn more about each of these organizations, and support them in any way that you can.

Watch *Wartorn* on HBO Tonight

This Veterans Day, Thursday November 11, at 9:00 p.m., HBO will broadcast "Wartorn, 1861-2010," a documentary about combat and post-traumatic stress, from the Civil War to today. Executive produced by James Gandolfini, the film chronicles the lingering effects of battle and [PTSD](#) on military personnel and their families throughout American history, bringing urgent attention to the invisible wounds of war.

Dr. John Grohol is the CEO and founder of Psych Central. He has been writing about online behavior, mental health and psychology issues, and the intersection of technology and psychology since 1992.

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Last reviewed: By John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on 11 Nov 2010

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Site last updated: 11 Nov 2010