

## 'Make the Connection' creates awareness for veterans

Make the Connection is a public awareness campaign by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that provides personal testimonials from other veterans and resources to help veterans discover ways to improve their lives. Many of our nation's veterans — from those who served in World War II to those involved in current conflicts — return not only with physical wounds but also mental health issues they may not recognize.

Whether you left the military decades ago or just recently transitioned to civilian life, all veterans share a common bond of duty, honor, and service. Some veterans served in combat overseas, others did not. Some responded to events or disasters within or outside the United States. No matter when, where, or how you served, and what you've experienced in civilian life, you may be dealing with issues that affect your well-being or get in the way of your relationships, work, or daily activities.

The Make the Connection campaign encourages veterans and their families to "make the connection" with information and resources, with the strength and resilience of veterans like themselves, with other people, and with available sources of

support including mental health treatments.

Central to this campaign is <http://maketheconnection.net/>, a one-stop online resource where veterans and their families and friends can privately explore information about physical and mental health symptoms, challenging life events, and mental health conditions. This site provides a wide variety of information about available resources and support, both inside the VA and out.

Powerful personal stories and testimonials are at the heart of Making the Connection, illustrating how our fellow veterans face and overcome mental health issues and life's challenges. These stories and testimonials come from veterans of all service eras, genders, and backgrounds and each of them provides a resounding and compelling example of the positive outcomes for treatment, recovery, and the many paths that lead to more fulfilling lives.

A unique aspect to this website is the many

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## TheLeafChronicle.com

Your connection to Clarksville, Tenn.

warning signs and symptoms it discusses in detail, offering some basic self-help options and referral information for those who need professional assistance. Some of the issues deal with veterans who feel constantly on edge (hypervigilance) or those who suffer from stress or anxiety on a regular basis. These are also great tools for friends and family members who are dealing with the veteran as he or she faces these issues, and might not otherwise know where to turn.

The website also provides resources for clinicians who are working with veterans, regardless of whether they are affiliated with the VA or not. This information is provided in order to ensure that the VA's knowledge base in behavioral health can reach the broadest possible audience. VA encourages all behavioral healthcare providers who work with veterans to utilize those resources.

The site also has topical information for veterans of all walks of life. It provides insight into many life experiences, such as transitioning from the military into civilian life, concerns about employment, dealing with the death of a friend or family member, financial problems, relationship issues, and more.

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The advertisement features a central image of a laptop with a vibrant, multi-colored floral skin. To the left is a smartphone with a purple and white floral skin. To the right is a small dog with a blue and white skin. The background is dark with a subtle reflection effect.

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