

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), is a psychiatric disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events. Most survivors of trauma return to normal given a little time. However, some people will have stress reactions that do not go away on their own, or may get worse over time. People who suffer from PTSD often relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping, and feel detached or estranged. These symptoms can be severe and last long enough to significantly impair the person's daily life.

PTSD is marked by clear biological changes as well as psychological symptoms. PTSD is complicated by the fact that it frequently occurs in conjunction with related disorders such as depression, substance abuse, problems of memory and cognition, and other problems of physical and mental health. The disorder is also associated with impairment of the person's ability to function in social or family life, including occupational instability, marital problems and divorces, family discord, and difficulties in parenting. For more information visit www.ncptsd.va.gov

Traumatic Brain Injury

Veterans returning from combat may have sustained a **traumatic brain injury** (TBI) caused by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), other explosives, or fall. TBI is often called an "Invisible Wound" because serious injury can occur without visually obvious physical injury. TBI sometimes goes unrecognized until long after the injury.

Helping Our Returning Troops

It is difficult to return home from an intensive combat environment. It takes a lot of understanding and patience on the home front as our troops adjust back to their previous lives. In many cases, they may never be completely the same. It is even tougher for those who sustained an "Invisible Wound." It is critical that their family members, close friends and co-workers understand and watch for TBI and PTSD symptoms.

God's purpose for the Southeast Michigan Synod is to Rise Up:

...Bear Burdens
...Build Bridges
...Break Chains
...Bring Hope!

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The Veterans Task Force of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks justice for all returning troops, veterans and their families, irrespective of religious affiliation or beliefs.

It is not surprising that after participating in combat, members of the military struggle when they return home, as they try to reconcile their faith with the requirements of combat. The Task Force seeks to help bear the burdens of these unseen wounds that affect service members and their families.

We welcome and encourage participation by lay and clergy members from all denominations and faiths, and members of other organizations who already serve veterans.

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For more information or to find out how you can help, contact:

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Permission to use photos granted by Brain Injury Association of Michigan

Guide to the **VETERANS TASK FORCE**



Photographer Unknown

**A Faith-Based Initiative Supporting
Service Members and their Families**



Southeast Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

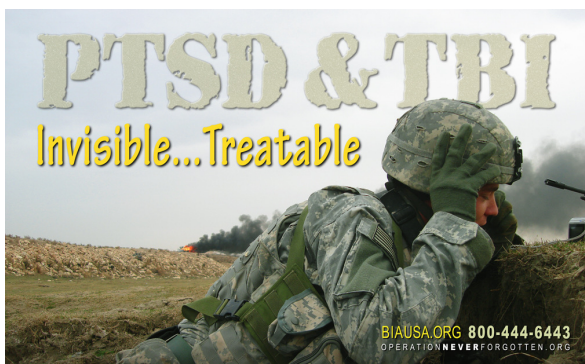
CALL TO ACTION

The **Veterans Task Force (VTF)** of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the ELCA is a growing network of community agencies, houses of faith, caring individuals and members of the military working and praying together to respond to the needs of returning troops, veterans and their families.

These houses of faith and agencies include:

- Church of the Nazarene
- Grace Moravian Church
- The Brain Injury Association of Michigan Vet Programs

The VTF goals are to mobilize local faith centers and communities to provide assistance to returning troops and their families as they transition from combat duty to civilian life.



The three-tiered approach of VTF includes the following:

(1) CONNECTING WITH TROOPS AND WITH MILITARY FAMILIES. The VTF serves as a model to build bridges between military and civilian cultures: veterans, veterans' family members and civilians alike serve on the task force. We are continually engaged in building communication between military personnel and civilian groups.

(2) EQUIPPING LOCAL CHURCHES. VTF understands that *informing*, *identifying*, and *training* are all required to equip local houses of faith and communities to effectively serve soldiers and family members.

- *Informing* includes raising awareness of the emotional and spiritual needs of returning troops;
- *Identifying* means to recognize the potential resources of each house of faith in ministry;
- *Training* includes providing programs/ referrals so that congregations are able to assist and minister to returning troops/ military families.

(3) COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES. As a faith-based initiative, it is our fervent desire to bring hope to those in need by complementing the wide-range of services offered by other distinguished agencies and groups.



"I will never leave you or forsake you"
Hebrews 13:5

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Suicide Prevention Hotline
800-273-TALK, Vets Press 1

Brain Injury Association of MI
800-772-4323 or www.biami.org

Defense & Veterans Brain Injury Center
800-870-9244 www.dvbic.org

Veterans Administration www.va.gov
VA Benefits 800-827-1000
Health Care Benefits 877-222-8387

MI Dept. of Military & Veterans Affairs
517-335-6523 www.michigan.gov/dmva

Joint Veterans Council of Michigan
800-455-5228 www.michigan.gov

County Veteran Service Counselors
910-592-2862 www.nacvso.org

STATE & FEDERAL SUPPORT

MI Protection and Advocacy	800-288-5923
Social Security Disability	800-772-1213
MI Works!	800-285-9675
MI Resource Center	800-626-4636
MI Rehabilitation Services	800-605-6722