

Health Transition Training session. You can listen to the full discussion here: <http://rly.pt/3qYNJxn>.

Women's Health Transition Training, Addressing Perceptions of VA: The next episode featuring Major Alea Nadeem and Halima Ahmadi-Montecalvo addresses some of the perceptions that service women and Veteran women have about VA. Listen to the interview here: <http://rly.pt/3nqdX9S>.

Participant shares her thoughts on the training

Women's Health Transition Training, a Participant's Experience: In the third Women's Health Transition Training episode, She Wears the Boots host interviews a past participant, Sarah Maples, who gives her thoughts about the training.

Maples is an Air Force Veteran, blogger, and advocate for transitioning service women and women Veterans. Tune into her interview here: <http://rly.pt/3mpx82i>.

The program has received positive feedback and glowing recommendations from training participants and partners. Participants were asked why they would recommend the training to other service women:

"Very helpful information on the amazing difference for women in the VHA as opposed to military medical," said one.

"As a person who has transitioned a few times, this is the first comprehensive explanation of what services a woman can receive," said another.

The training is conducted by women Veterans who know VA.

In December, each training is conducted virtually by a live, woman Veteran who has experience with VA services. Women Veterans program managers from various VA clinics and facilities around the country attend the sessions to answer questions about specific women's services.

They address the potential physical and mental health challenges women may face, such as depression, musculoskeletal conditions, chronic pain, obesity, infertility, prenatal care and military sexual trauma (MST).

Listen to the She Wears the Boots podcast here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/she-wears-the-boots-a-podcast-for-women-veterans/id1534312015>. Register today for one of the final sessions available this year at www.va.gov/womenvet/whtt/. Sessions are available twice per weekday.

In early 2021, all transitioning service women and women Veterans can take a self-paced version of the Women's Health Transition Training anytime, anyplace, online at www.TAPEvents.org/courses.

Happy Holidays and thank you for your service!

Wounds of War Must Be Considered For Veterans Discharged For Misconduct

LEILA FADEL, HOST:

The Pentagon requires that the wounds of war, including PTSD, be taken into account for veterans discharged for misconduct. But KPBS military reporter Steve Walsh has the story of one Marine who's fighting to stay in the corps. And a warning - this story talks about both violence and self-harm.

COOPER WILLIAMS: My name is Cooper Williams. I'm from Mississippi, originally. I'm an active-duty Marine, chief warrant officer. I've been in the Marine Corps for 17 1/2 years now.

STEVE WALSH, BYLINE: Williams may not be a Marine for much longer. He had a couple of tours in Iraq in the mid-2000s, followed by a tour in Afghanistan. He remembers being in a convoy when a roadside bomb exploded.

WILLIAMS: The whole front right side of the charter bus was blown off. I was the first one there. And...

WALSH: Williams stares into space for a moment.

WILLIAMS: You know, at the time, it was like mayhem - people screaming, people crying.

WALSH: It was one of several incidents that left him with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries. Williams says he ignored his problems for years as he pursued a career in military intelligence. His wife Andrea watched him change.

ANDREA: More reclusive, started being depressed, not being able to sleep - all those things. And again, life just went on.

WALSH: Violence in his personal life compounded problems that started on the battlefield. His parents died in a murder-suicide.

WILLIAMS: I'll never forget that day. It was December 23. It was two days prior to Christmas.

WALSH: It was 2016. His parents were getting a divorce when his father killed his mother, then himself, back in their hometown in Mississippi. His personal life was collapsing, but Williams' career as a Marine was at its height. He was made a warrant officer in the coveted military intelligence field. But he was falling apart.

WILLIAMS: The panic attacks became much more severe, like just the impact physiologically, physically, mentally.

WALSH: Williams started drinking heavily. In 2019, he applied for a transfer to a Wounded Warrior Battalion at Camp Pendleton, north of San Diego. He completed treatment for PTSD and alcoholism. It's also where he received two DUIs in less than a month. He says it was drinking combined with a change in medication.

WILLIAMS: I remember waking up and then - but what I was doing was just blacking out and then just doing things that were uncharacteristic to me.

WALSH: The DUIs are grounds for kicking Williams out of the corps. His 17-plus-year career is on the line. The Marines have started the process. That likely means a loss of pension, health care and GI Bill benefits.

WILLIAMS: This is the rest of my life. I have five children. I've been in the Marine Corps almost 18 years now. I'm retirement eligible. I was going to retire in October. And you're just going to take everything from me?

WALSH: Thousands of troops with PTSD have been discharged for misconduct. Starting in 2014, the Pentagon began requiring services to consider how much the wounds of war played a role in the troops' behavior. That reevaluation helps veterans trying to upgrade their discharges. That consideration doesn't always extend to active-duty troops.

Esther Leibfarth (ph) is an attorney with the National Veterans Legal Services Program in Washington, D.C. She says the rules need to change so the military looks more seriously at the wounds of war before kicking out a service member in the first place.

ESTHER LEIBFARTH: We need to stop the problem before it occurs. It's not enough to do it post-discharge. It's too late. The damage has already been done.

WALSH: Meanwhile, Cooper Williams is appealing to the Marine Corps to at least give him an in-person hearing. At the moment, he can only wait. For NPR News, I'm Steve Wals

This article is one of several great resources you can find at [Veteransforchristinc.org](https://veteransforchristinc.org).

If you're looking for ideas on how to boost your mental health, check out these tips on preventing and coping with anxiety attacks.

Anxiety affects millions of Americans every year; in fact, about [40 million](#) adults experience it in some form at least once in their lifetime. Because anxiety can affect so many aspects of your daily routine, it's important to learn how to prevent attacks and what you can do to lessen those feelings when they come around. Fortunately, there are some simple techniques and activities you can try that will help you feel more in control, such as ensuring that your surroundings are comfortable and relaxing.

Freshen up your home

Your home is likely where you spend the most time, so it makes sense that it will have an effect on the way you feel. If the rooms are filled with clutter and you find that there's a feeling of tension in the air between family members, do a little cleaning. Get organized, clear away the dust, and open the windows on nice days. This is a great way to [lighten the mood](#) in a space and to make it a much more inviting, comfortable area to spend time in. You might also create a quiet place within your home where you can sit and meditate on the day's events, pray, and reflect on the things that caused you anxiety.



Veterans Can Prevent Anxiety Attacks With These Simple Activities

Get active for a mental health boost

Your home may be comforting, but it's important to get outside when you can and move around. Exercise has all sorts of physical benefits, of course, but it can also boost your mental health and lift your spirits, especially when it's done outdoors. An easy way to stay motivated and have fun while you exercise is to do it with a friend, so you might consider organizing a walking group with members of your church. Having this support system will also help in coping with anxiety attacks when they appear, especially if you can talk to other veterans who have had the same experience.

Another easy way to stay motivated is to invest in a smartwatch or fitness tracker. These devices can help you track your movements while keeping you safe; for instance, the Apple Watch Series 6 includes [advanced features](#) such as an electrocardiogram and blood oxygen sensors, so you'll have peace of mind about your health while you're on the go. You might also look for a pair of wireless earbuds so you can easily [stay connected](#) to your device.

Change up your diet

Once you find a workout routine you enjoy, it's time to think about what you're eating and drinking. Your diet may have a much [bigger effect](#) on your mood and ability to beat anxiety than you realize; eating protein and complex carbohydrates, drinking plenty of water, and avoiding sugar and alcohol in excess can help you feel better overall. This can be difficult if you are on a fixed income or have food sensitivities, so check with your local VA facility to see if they offer the services of a dietitian who can help you make [better choices](#).

Improve your sleep habits

Boosting your sleep quality and quantity can be [hugely beneficial](#) in fighting anxiety, and while diet and exercise can help you get on track where rest is concerned, your sleep habits might still benefit from some fine-tuning. Make sure your bedroom is comfortable and quiet, avoid eating or drinking too much [before bedtime](#), and try to limit your exposure to the television or your phone late at night, as they can keep you awake.

Living with anxiety can be emotionally and physically draining, so it's important to lean on your friends and loved ones when you need help. By making some small changes at home and staying connected with your family and church, you can prevent those feelings and improve your overall wellness.

Photo via [Pexels](#)

[Article: Kelli Brewer](#)

Need to contact VA?

[Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255](#) and press 1, [Chat](#), or Text 838255

[Homeless Veteran Resources: 1-877-424-3838](#) or [Chat](#)

[White House VA Hotline: 1-855-948-2311](#)

Don't know what number to call?

[1-800-MyVA411 \(800-698-2411\)](#) is never the wrong number



Verse of the Day

Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

Psalms 143:8 KJV

YOU TOO CAN BE A MEMBER OF THE VETERANS FOR CHRIST, INC.

Sign up online to become an associate member. The annual associate membership of \$120.00 which can be used as a tax deduction for supporters. Registration fees can be paid online through our PayPal account. You will get a free VFC T-shirt with your associate membership. Your tax deductible membership fee will support the VFC mission.

All Honorably Discharged Veterans are welcome to come and observe the VFC; feel free to ask questions and learn more. If we don't know the answer we know someone who does. Please browse our web site www.veteransforchristinc.org. There you'll find information on many subjects of interest to veterans. You'll also find a Newsletter for your branch of service and links to Social Security and many other links with an abundance of information.

Our monthly meetings are on hold until the pandemic is cleared and a vaccine is developed. No meetings are being held at the Wesley Chapel Library at 2861 Wesley Chapel Rd., Decatur, Ga. Our meetings are the fourth Thursday of every month and start at 6:30 (PM) for approximately one hour and a half, unless otherwise advertised. We will be respectful of your time. All Meetings are cancelled until further notice because of the corona virus pandemic.

Thank you for your interest in the VFC. We look forward to communicating and fellowshiping with you soon. We are looking for a corporate sponsor for our VFC Gerald Prince College Scholarship which is donated each September at our Anniversary Luncheon

"Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, being men of courage, be strong." 1Cor 16:13

Sincerely,

William A. Harris, Jr.

William A. Harris, Jr., USAF Retired
President, Veterans for Christ, Inc.

www.veteransforchristinc.org