

VA Social Workers
What We Do and How to
Reach Us



SOUTH TEXAS VETERANS

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
SERVING ONE VETERAN AT A TIME

Social Work Service
(210) 617-5113

How can social workers help you with problems and concerns?

The first step is to meet with you and your family. During this meeting, the social worker will ask you questions about your:

- health
- living situation
- family and other support systems
- military experience
- other concerns you may need help with

The information gathered can help you and your VA health care team decide on treatment plans that fit your needs.

Crisis Intervention

Social workers provide counseling services to help you get through a crisis situation. The social worker can help you apply for services and programs in your community and through the VA to meet your emergency needs.

Advocacy

Sometimes it can be hard for you to speak up for yourself or there is confusion about VA services. Social workers can help you get the healthcare you need by speaking up for you.

Education

Social workers can help you and your family learn about:

- your health care condition
- what services and programs are available to you
- how to live a healthier life
- how to deal with stress and loss
- how to find support groups and other self-help programs in your community

Psychotherapy

Clinical social workers address emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs through:

- individual counseling
- family therapy
- group therapy

High-Risk Screening

Social workers work closely with those Veterans who are at high risk, such as:

- homeless Veterans
- those who have been admitted to the hospital several times
- those who cannot care for themselves any longer

Discharge Planning

Planning your discharge from the hospital starts when you are admitted. A social worker can help you make plans for services you may need once you are discharged from the hospital.

Case Management

Social workers provide short and long term case management to Veterans who need help with:

- Coordinating care for complex medical problems
- Support services and resources
- Counseling for mood, problems or crisis situations
- Figuring out what you need and how to get it at the VA or in the community

Other Ways a Social Worker Can Help You

- Getting help from the VA or community agencies such as Meals on Wheels
- Applying for benefits from the VA, Social Security and other government and community programs
- Making sure your healthcare team knows your decisions about end of life issues such as advance directives
- Financial or housing assistance
- Arrange for respite care for your caregiver or family
- Make arrangements for assisted living, boarding homes or a nursing home
- If you need to talk to someone about:
 - Marriage or family problems
 - Loss of a loved one
 - Drinking or illegal drug use
 - Loved one's failing health
 - Managing stress
 - Feeling sad, depressed or anxious
 - Not sure what you need, but things don't feel right

Referrals to Social Workers

You **do not** need a referral to see a social worker. If you are inpatient, let your nurse know you would like to see a social worker. Most outpatient clinics have a social worker assigned to that area. Talk to your primary care team or call the social work office number at (210) 617-5113 Monday—Friday, 8:00 AM—4:30 PM except federal holidays.

VA Mission Statement

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise – **“To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan”** – by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.



Veterans Health Education Committee

Approved: November 2016

