

SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS

*Part athlete, part confidante, part
"buddy who's always got my back."*

Our working dogs are smart, fit, and highly trained, like elite athletes prepared for the challenge. Through state-of-the-art research, cutting-edge genetics and breeding, innovative puppy education, positive home experiences, stellar canine fitness programs, and expert training, we're creating healthier, stronger, more intelligent dogs that love people, love to learn, and live to please. Through our advanced pedigrees of Labradors and goldadors, we're changing the world, one extraordinary dog at a time.

"Our dogs change lives, every day, all day."

Our guide dogs, service dogs, and skilled companion dogs provide freedom, confidence, and hope for people who cannot see, for veterans who have seen too much, and for children facing significant challenges.

Guide dogs offer independence and freedom to people with vision loss—including veterans and teens—restoring confidence and dignity.

Service dogs help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and other disabilities emerge from seclusion, overcome anxiety, and get their lives back.

Facility therapy dogs provide therapeutic comfort to veterans and families in military medical facilities and high-stress military bases around the nation.

Emotional support dogs offer therapeutic companionship to veterans, helping improve physical, social, and emotional wellbeing while restoring a more active lifestyle.

Gold Star Family dogs give the gift of comforting friendship and hope to children and families who have lost a loved one in service to the nation.

Kids Companion dogs enhance independence and confidence for children with vision loss, preparing the way for a future guide dog.

Please visit www.guidedogs.org for more information to support or start the application process.

"A dog can make the difference"



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Veterans and Dogs

Many brave soldiers return home with visible and invisible scars that make it challenging to transition back into civilian life. Simultaneously, millions of wonderful companion animals wait in shelters for a forever home.

When a Veteran is appropriately matched with the right dog, both of their lives change for the better. The Veteran saves the animal from their demise and welcomes them into a loving home. The pet provides the Veteran with support, and unconditional love, relieving stress, depression, loneliness, and anxiety.

While there are multiple options one could choose for treatment, nonprofit organizations like K9s for Warriors and Southeastern Guide Dogs have championed a treatment method that veterans can't receive directly from the VA: service dogs.

These trained animals can perform a range of tasks such as tactile stimulation to help the veteran cope with anxiety or panic attacks or standing directly in front of their handler in a crowd to give the veteran space from other people. The goal is to empower veterans who are living with PTSD.

"The dogs are never going to be a cure for it; they are simply going to be a tool to help them in their recovery with it," Suzy Wilburn, director of admissions and alumni, support at Southeastern Guide Dogs, told by the Military Times.

The VA is currently evaluating whether service dogs can benefit veterans diagnosed with PTSD. Although Congress first mandated a study on the topic in 2010, it has been put on the back burner twice.

Most recently, it was relaunched in 2015 and is still being conducted. According to the New York Times, the VA said in May it would unveil the study's results in 2020.

But K9s for Warriors, who matches post-9/11 veterans with service dogs, has pointed to research Purdue University released in 2018 that found veterans with service dogs experienced lower overall symptoms of PTSD, lower levels of depression, and a more remarkable ability to engage in social activities.

Purdue partnered with K9s for Warriors for the study and examined 141 veterans with PTSD: 75 who had graduated from the K9s for Warriors program, and 66 who were on the waitlist.

Under current policy, veterans cannot be matched with

a service dog through the VA. But the agency can recommend veterans work with nonprofits that are members of Assistance Dogs International or the International Guide Dog Federation, coalitions that provide accreditation to organizations who train and place service dogs, to start the process of adopting a service dog.

Military Times spoke with experts at K9s for Warriors and Southeastern Guide Dogs, accredited organizations with the agencies above, and here's what you need to know.

Service dog vs. emotional support animal

Service dogs and emotional support animals are not the same and do not perform the same functions. Although emotional support animals have attracted media attention in recent years, experts note there are several significant distinctions between the two.

"The big difference between a service dog and an emotional support animal is not the dog itself, but the handler," Rory Diamond, K9s for Warriors CEO, told Military Times. "For a service dog, the handler has a disability, and that dog is trained to help with that disability."

That differs from an emotional support animal that could help anyone "feel better," regardless of whether the handler has a disability or not, Diamond said.

Wilson expressed similar sentiments when asked about emotional support animals.

"Although it does the emotional part of it, it's not trained in any specific tasks to do that," Wilson said. "It's going to sit on your lap and let you pet it and love it, and you're going to feel better about yourself...but it's not going to help you mitigate anything disability-wise."

Wilburn also pointed out service dogs have public access rights covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, which only recognizes dogs and miniature horses as animals specifically trained to perform tasks for those with disabilities.

In contrast, emotional support animals do not have public access rights at all.

What's the process like?

To apply for a service dog, veterans typically must submit documentation that they have been diagnosed with PTSD from their military service, participate in a training course.

Complete article is on [The Veteran Doctor Blog](http://TheVeteranDoctor.com). Please go to www.theveteransdoctor.com for this article and more.

CHALLENGES VETERANS FACE WHEN LEAVING THE MILITARY.

The Veterans Administration is here to help people transition to life after the military. However, many veterans still find it difficult to adjust. There are many challenges that veterans face after they leave the military.

Unemployment

Many veterans struggle to find work after they return home. People often join the military right out of high school. That is why they may not have the education that is necessary for many jobs. Fortunately, the Veterans Administration can help people who are struggling to find employment.

Relationship with Themselves

Veterans do a noble thing by serving their country. However, many of them struggle with a sense of purpose and identity. They may have self-esteem issues because they no longer have the noted title that they used to have.

Homelessness

It is estimated that 30 percent of homeless people are veterans. The reason that so many veterans are at risk for homelessness is that many of them suffer from drug addiction and mental illness. Other veterans are unable to make enough money to pay for their housing.

Physical Handicaps

Many veterans sustain injuries while they are in combat. Amputation, scars and disfigurement are some of the physical injuries that people may get while they are in combat. These physical handicaps can make it even more difficult to get a job. They can also cause self-esteem issues.

Poor Mental Health

Depression and suicide rates are higher among people who have served in the military. The reason people do not get the help that they need is that there is a social stigma attached to it. The cost can also be a barrier that stops people from getting mental health treatment.

If you need services for veterans, then you can contact your local Veterans Administration for more information.



Stress: The Intense Effects on Mind and Body

Life throws up challenges all the time. Some of us are happy, while others get a little stressed and anxious. Stress is very powerful. We all have experienced different forms of stress throughout our lives. We should be experts, but this stress is dealt with differently. So, we all can relate to this situation; we are sitting in traffic, late for an appointment, watching the time tick away. Your brain releases stress hormones! These hormones trigger your body's "fight or flight" response. Your heart races, you rapidly breathe, and your muscles tense to ready your body for action. This response protects your body in case of emergencies; however, if this response occurs daily, it could cause severe risks to your health.

Stress is a very natural reaction to many different experiences. Everyone experiences and handles stress differently. Anything from work or family to serious life events can trigger stress. For short-term stress situations, it can be beneficial by helping us cope. Although, if stress responses do not reset and stay elevated, it can affect your health. Chronic stress can affect your well-being, with symptoms like irritability, anxiety, depression, headaches, and insomnia.

Central Nervous and Endocrine Systems

The central nervous system is responsible for your "fight or flight" response. The hypothalamus initiates your brain's response by communicating to your adrenal glands to discharge adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones increase your heartbeat, rushing blood rushing to vital organs of the body. When the perceived fear is gone, the central nervous system should return the body to normal; however, if the stress does not disappear, the response will continue causing chronic stress. Chronic stress is also a factor in overeating, drug and alcohol abuse, and social withdrawal.

Cardio and Respiratory Systems

Stress hormones affect every aspect of our respiratory and cardiovascular systems. During a stress response, you breathe faster to distribute oxygen-rich blood to your body quicker. If you have prior breathing issues like asthma or emphysema, stress is going to make it worse. Stress hormones cause your heart to pump faster, constricting your blood vessels and diverting more oxygen to your muscles, so you will have more strength to react. This process also raises blood pressure.

As a result, chronic stress will make your heart work too hard, too long. When your blood pressure rises, so does your risk of having a stroke or heart attack.

Digestive System

Under stress, the liver will produce extra blood sugar (glucose) to give you a boost of energy. If you are under chronic stress, your body cannot break down this excess glucose. Chronic stress can potentially increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The body's

potentially increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The body's increased hormones, heart rate, and rapid breathing can additionally upset your digestive system causing heartburn or acid reflux. Stress also affects how food moves through your body, leading to nausea, vomiting, stomachache, diarrhea, or constipation.

Muscular System

During stressful moments, muscles tense up to protect the body from injury. Once your muscles release, they will relax; however, if constantly under stress, your muscles never get a chance to relax. Over time, tense muscles cause back pain, headaches, and body aches, which can cause secondary unhealthy issues, cycle-stopping exercise, and turning to pain medication for relief.

Sexuality and Reproductive System

Stress is highly draining both physically and mentally. Short-term stress may cause men to increase the male hormone testosterone, although this effect is not long-lasting; if stressed for extended periods, a man's testosterone levels can drop. This can interfere with sperm production, causing erectile dysfunction or even impotence.

Immune System

Stress rouses the immune system. This stimulus helps in avoiding infections and healing wounds. But excessive stress hormones can deteriorate your immune system and reduce your body's ability to fight foreign invaders. People experiencing chronic stress become more susceptible to viral illnesses like the flu, the common cold, and other infections. Stress can drastically increase recovery time from a disease or injury.

Managing Your Stress Levels

We have recognized that chronic stress is awful for us, but what is more important is how to manage it properly realistically.

Reorganize and refocus. When stress increases, we focus on an event or situation that could or has gone wrong. Instead of focusing on the negative sides of these stressful events, fade back and

refocus. Train your mind to think of things that can go positively. Each situation is only as stressful as our mind perceives it. By reorganizing our thoughts, we can focus on what we can control. This helps us to be less likely to become stressed.

Assign reasonable goals. It is common to take on more than you can handle. We think we can do it all. Ultimately, everyone has limitations. Assess what amount is manageable for you and recognize when you feel overwhelmed. It is OK to say "no." If you think you cannot take on additional responsibilities, just say so! This helps to eliminate unnecessary stress and allows some time to relax!

Make and create time for yourself. Create and enjoy at least one relaxing activity every day. This means making time and listening to music, reading, or sitting in a quiet room. These 20 to 30 minutes can help lower stress levels, focus, and think clearly.

Get some perspective. Easier said than done! Especially when something negative has happened. However, a more critical question is: is this truly worth my attention? Try to focus on the positives and move on. You need to focus your time on things that are important to you.

Exercise. Research has proven the benefits of managing stress with exercise. Try working out 30 to 60 minutes daily by performing activities like weight training, yoga, Pilates, cardio, etc. If this amount of time is too unrealistic, try these other options: (1) Park your car farther away in the parking lot to initiate longer walks. (2) Walk the stairs instead of taking the elevator, or (3) Bring in groceries into the house by carrying one bag at a time.





VETERANS RESOURCE & TRANSITION GUIDE - CHAPTER 6 – TRANSITION DIFFICULTIES / MISTAKES / OBSTACLES

Individual and Social Difficulties

During a veteran's transitional experience, over 47 percent reported difficulty. Veterans and their families encountered a wide range of transition-related difficulties during their reintegration into civilian life. Here are some of those difficulties;

Loss of Connection

A loss of connection to the military community was the fundamental transition difficulty for the veteran and their spouses. The military environment is often considered a "family" by providing support, valued friendships, bonds, structure, and security. So, the separation from the military can be experienced as a separation from "family" connections. Also, veterans may experience symptoms of grief and stress in response to a perceived "loss of the military self."

These difficulties from these changes become exacerbated when veterans and their families feel they do not "fit in" with civilian society or when civilians do not understand or value them.

These feelings are prevalent as eighty-two percent of veteran families felt that the general public does not understand any of the challenges that they face while

transitioning out of the military, and sixty percent thought that the general public does not understand what value veterans bring to their communities.

These negative transitional experiences are generally associated with decreased feelings of connectedness and belonging. This can be attributed to the extended time it took for veterans to locate employment after transitioning, the lower their feelings of connectedness were to their communities.

Loss of Purpose

During the transition, loss of purpose is also closely tied to the loss of connection. A thirty-nine percent loss in the sense of purpose was the next top transitional challenge for veteran families to the military community. Nearly half of the veterans did not have a sense of purpose after the military.

Locating employment or education after transitioning from the military helps veterans find purpose and achieve a greater sense of connection and belonging. Veterans who pursued higher education after separating report that their education provided them with direction and purpose.

Stress, Depression & Suicidal Thoughts

Veteran arduous transitional experiences have been associated with higher stress levels and a greater incidence of depressive symptoms and thoughts of suicide. Most of this is due to inadequate transitional preparation for veterans and their families.

Nearly seventy percent of veteran families prepare for transition less than a year before separating, yet sixty-four percent of veterans reported that they "need time to figure out what to do with their lives during their transition." Many veterans and their families have improved transition experiences and outcomes when they have more time to formulate their post-service plans.

Obstacles

Upon transitioning out of the military, many veterans begin to realize just how little they know about career possibilities and the workforce. Here are five common themes that the veteran fails to recognize when they transition.

Please go to www.theveteransdoctor.com for information on how to order Veterans Resource and Transition Guide.

EYE ON IT

Veteran Suicide – A Very Real and Serious Issue

For nearly a decade, the veteran community has called for action by our nation's leaders to respond to the 20 veterans a day suicidal rate. The issue of veteran suicide is now its conversation in media coverage, national conversation, and a surge of government support.

Yet, the problem of suicide continues. According to recent VA data, post-9/11 veterans between ages 18 to 34 have the highest rate of suicide. Though not always an indicator of suicide, mental health injuries continue to impact the post-9/11 generation. Surprisingly, 65% reported PTSD, and 58% anxiety, and 56% depression. The nation and VA continue struggling with mental health care and providers' demands, two of the top VA staffing shortages.

Over the past few years, increased progress has been made in the realm of suicide prevention and mental health.



Resource Monthly Picks

22 Warriors Foundation

22warriors.org

22 Warriors Foundation is a Veteran Founded, Operated, and Governed Veteran's Nonprofit that is dedicated to eliminating Veteran Suicides. This is a Nonprofit organization founded to help Veterans not to build a fortune.

The Board of Directors and Staff are ALL either Veterans or family members of Veterans this the focus of this organization will always be to benefit the Veterans Community first and foremost.

The Board of Directors and ALL Volunteer members and dedicated to the 22 Warrior Foundation being operated according to the organizations bylaws as well as all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

22 Warrior Foundation, a Nevada Nonprofit Corporation that is approved by the IRS as an IRS 501 (C) 3 tax code exempt status organization.

This Month's Q&A Veteran Tips

Q: MYTH: I do not deserve disability pay. Other Veterans need compensation because they are worse off.

A: FACT: Filing a VA disability claim allows the VA to know you have a health condition resulting from your service in the military. The Department of Veterans Affairs gives you a rating decision on one or more conditions, depending on the evidence's strength.

Q: MYTH: I left active-duty years ago, and now it's too late to file a claim.

A: FACT: You can file your disability claim at any time after your service. People wait to file their claims for various reasons, but there is no deadline for submitting a claim. Typically, it is easier to file a claim shortly after your time in the military has ended. However, certain conditions may not occur until years after leaving military service. Therefore, it is never too late to file a claim or seek an increase in your rating.

Q: MYTH: VA Disability compensation will reduce my retirement pay.

A: FACT: This is true for a retiree with a VA disability rating of forty percent or lower. The VA will reduce a military retiree's retirement dollar-by-dollar based on the disability compensation they receive from the VA. Wonder why? Veterans "waive" their retirement pay to receive VA compensation. Retirees with a rating of fifty percent or higher are eligible to receive Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP). CRDP awards Veterans their full military retirement pay and full VA Disability compensation.

Q: MYTH: If I receive a ZERO percent disability rating for a condition, I will not receive payment.

A: FACT: There are specific conditions where a Veteran may receive special compensation with a zero percent rating. For example, erectile dysfunction. When a zero percent disability rating occurs, the VA recognizes that the condition was connected to your military service. Certain conditions, such as erectile dysfunction, sometimes max out at zero percent. It is important to realize if the condition worsens and you have new medical evidence to prove it, you can file a new claim to potentially get an increase.



Positive Thinking Brings Positive Outcomes.

“Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices.” — Harry Truman

“America without her Soldiers would be like God without His angels.” — Claudia Pemberton

“The willingness of America’s veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them our lasting gratitude.” — Jeff Miller

“While we can never do enough to show gratitude to our nation’s defenders, we can always do a little more.” — Gary Sinise

Upcoming Local Events

- Vintage Military Rifle Silhouette - BRPC Training 2700 Utah St, Boulder City, NV – Sunday, January 1, 8am to 2pm
- Henderson Veteran Job Fair - 670 S Green Valley Pkwy, Henderson, NV - Thursday, January 5, @ 11 AM – 2 PM
- 2023 Veterans Legislative Summit – Dula Community Center – Saturday, January 14, 2023, @ 8am-8pm
- Veterans Social Club – Leatherneck – Saturday, January 14, 2023, @ 5pm
- Army Navy Military Expo (ANME) Winter 2023 – Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino – Sunday, January 15, 2023, 8am to January 14, 2023, 5pm
- Targeting a Solution – 3355 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, NV – Wednesday, January 18, @ 16:30pm to 10pm
- Armed Forces Chamber Business Mixer - Nevada State Business Center- Department of Business and Industry 3300 W Sahara Ave, Las Vegas, NV - Thursday, January 19, @ 6pm – 8pm

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