

## How to be a Mental Healthcare Advocate

Courses for Military Veteran Caregivers and Families

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### Tips: Important Strategies

- Educate yourself on the medical and behavioral health needs of your Veteran care recipient. Your case manager or the VA patient advocacy office can assist you.
- Establish Power of Attorney through a living will or a durable power of attorney for health care. These documents combined are known as an Advanced Directive.
- Have the following information in a binder: DD214, VA disability letter, copies of VA, DoD, Social Security and Tricare cards, Living Will, Release of Information, Advanced Directive, medication list, appointment calendar, and MyHealthyVet username and password.
- Contact Case Management Society of America (CMSA) for additional support and assistance beyond VA case management.
- Connect with National Transition of Care Coalition (NTOCC) to ensure your Veteran's transition of care is maintained and communicated with all practitioners involved.

### Takeaways: Things to Remember

- The mental health care system can be challenging and hard to navigate. Being an advocate for the Veteran in your life is vital to ensure the care he or she deserves is provided.
- Important needs for the Veteran in your life include a case manager and an advocacy plan. Case Managers provide assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation and advocacy to meet the needs of both the individual and the family.
- Parity rights ensure that mental health care gets treated in the same way as physical and surgical health care. Remember you and your Veteran have the right to appeal any adverse determination.
- The Kennedy Forum has tools kits and interactive features for caregivers and their Veterans on how to navigate mental health care.

### Next Recommended PsychArmor Courses:

- Understanding the VA for Caregivers
- Caring for Veterans, Children, and Yourself

### Personal Reflection

What do I need to effectively advocate for mental healthcare for the Veteran in my life? What would help me do this best? Who can I ask for help?

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### Resources:

Case Management Society of America <http://www.cmsa.org/>

National Transition of Care Coalition <http://www.ntocc.org/>

The Kennedy Forum <https://www.thekennedyforum.org/>

VA Caregiver Support <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/>

Hidden Heroes <https://hiddenheroes.org/>

