

## **Thank Veterans and Keep in Mind, Some Face the Challenges of Trauma and Addiction**

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For veterans, many of the toughest battles are fought after returning home from war.

This Veterans Day, [Mountainside](#) treatment center in Wilton, urges people to not only give thanks to veterans for their service but also keep in mind the challenges that some of America's heroes face in recovering from addiction and trauma.

— *an announcement from Mountainside Treatment Centers*

“Trauma and factors such as homelessness, divorce, chronic pain, and suicidal ideation can increase veterans' chances of developing substance use disorders,” says [Andrea Kreisz](#), Senior Family Wellness Clinician at Mountainside.

- **Editor's note:** *While some veterans experience mental health problems that can lead to addiction and other problems, keep in mind that the vast majority don't. The greater prevalence of these problems among veterans is a concern — but not because most vets experience them.*

“Veterans may have self-medicated with drugs or alcohol in the first place to numb their emotional pain, so addressing their substance use as well as the underlying trauma is critical during treatment.”

[More than ten percent of veterans](#) have been diagnosed with alcoholism or drug addiction, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Substance use disorders often co-occur with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which disproportionately impacts veterans and may further hinder their recovery from substance use disorders.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs indicates that [up to 20 percent of veterans](#) who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from PTSD — compared to [eight percent of the general population](#). Symptoms may include avoidance, hypervigilance, insomnia, recurring nightmares, and a sense of detachment from reality.

“When a person suffers from trauma, they’re always waiting for the other shoe to drop. A trauma-informed approach is key in helping veterans feel safe and supported, empowering them to regain a sense of control over their lives,” says Kreis.

“Talk therapy and mindfulness practices help form new pathways in the brain, allowing people who have suffered from addiction and other traumatic experiences to reshape negative thought patterns.”

While veterans face additional obstacles in recovery, they can take steps to address addiction as well as co-occurring mental health disorders.

Aside from consulting with a therapist, veterans can find assistance through nonprofits such as [Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing](#), which helps disabled veterans heal by providing them with an outlet for therapeutic outdoor recreation.

Veterans can also look into support groups, where they can meet others in similar situations and learn from their experiences.

For further help managing addiction and trauma, contact a local treatment center.

**About Mountainside Treatment Center**

Mountainside Treatment Centers provide drug and alcohol addiction treatment programs. Mountainside's Integrative Care Model is meant to provide a comprehensive set of treatment and care offerings coordinated by a multidisciplinary treatment team in order to best fit the unique needs and interests of each client.

Mountainside partners with each client and the client's family and healthcare professionals in developing and executing individualized treatment plans that promote long-term sobriety. Learn more about Mountainside at [mountainside.com](https://mountainside.com).