

## New Video Doctor Program Makes House Calls

### Military Pathways® launches web-based program to help service members and their families safeguard their emotional well-being

**Military Pathways** is pleased to announce the launch of Video Doctor, an anonymous, web-based program that gives service members and their families the opportunity to consult with a video doctor from their computer about issues related to depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). By simulating a doctor/patient conversation, the Video Doctor program guides participants through a series of questions about their emotional well-being and their readiness to seek help. The program also provides self-care tips and recommendations on how and where to access mental health resources.

Before accessing Video Doctor, individuals are asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire assessing their risk for depression, PTSD and other related disorders. After completing the online self-assessment, individuals receive immediate results, the opportunity to learn more through Video Doctor and recommendations for next steps, including information about services provided through the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

“By increasing awareness and understanding about depression and PTSD, it is our hope that Video Doctor reduces stigma and increases motivation to develop help-seeking behaviors,” says Lt Col Hans Ritschard, USAF, BSC, PhD, Director of Psychological Health Strategic Operations, Force Health Protection and Readiness Programs. “The interactive nature of Video Doctor and the non-judgmental language is extremely helpful. It’s both non-threatening and completely anonymous, enabling service members and their families to get a better understanding of mental health services available.”

As part of the program, individuals watch a brief introduction in which the video doctor—who is portrayed by an actor—explains the signs and symptoms of depression or PTSD. The doctor then asks the viewer a series of questions about their symptoms and readiness to change. After the viewer types in their responses, the video doctor discusses treatment options and provides a list of resources for follow up care.

“The concept behind Video Doctor is based on 20 years of research and has been well-documented in helping to screen people who may be exhibiting high-risk behaviors,” says Barbara Gerbert, Ph.D., of the University of California San Francisco and the creator of Video Doctor. “In addition, our studies also indicate that this program results in getting more people to follow up by seeing a health care provider.”

To access the Video Doctor program, visit [www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org](http://www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org) and take a self-assessment for depression or PTSD. The program will appear after the screening with your results. Military Pathways will launch new video doctor components for generalized anxiety disorder and alcohol use disorders in the summer of 2011.

For more information on the program, contact [Katie FitzGerald](mailto:Katie.FitzGerald@defense.gov) at 781.591.5228.

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