



While increased national attention regarding the psychological effect of war has highlighted the widespread need for increased mental health services for U.S. military families, the significant need for psychological support of National Guard and Reserve members has been largely overlooked. As most service personnel living in Central Nebraska are Guard and Reserve members, this oversight greatly impacts military families living in the region.

At Ease - Grand Island *Fast Facts*

The following facts demonstrate the need for additional support for these families:

- Nebraska has 8,894 Reservists and National Guard Members, with an additional 16 individuals in the Coast Guard Reserve.
- 32 out of the 50 Nebraska National Guard companies are stationed outside of the Omaha and Lincoln areas; **Grand Island houses seven companies, with an additional seven Reserve and Guard units in surrounding communities.**
- 20% of households in Grand Island have a veteran present.
- 22% of households in the Region 3 Behavioral Health Services area have a veteran present (which encompasses Grand Island and its surrounding counties – see map)
- According to the VA website, the only VA-sponsored PTSD support programs in Nebraska are located in Lincoln and Omaha.
- A RAND study found one in five Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD or major depression.
- Nationally, Reservists and National Guard members make up 45% of military deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. 335,000 Reservists have deployed in response to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom..
- Reservists and National Guard members comprise 18.4% of total casualties in the Middle East, as well as 20.5% of those wounded in action.
- Nebraska has dependent children of military personnel in each of its 93 counties; **686** of these children reside within the Region 3 service area
- The number of dependent children of military personnel accessing outpatient mental-health services rose 57% between 2003 and 2008.



At Ease

What makes At Ease different?

- ***At Ease* is not “the military.”** Well-founded or not, there is a documented belief among service members that seeking behavioral health therapy or treatment could adversely affect their military careers or reputation. As a result, the General Accounting Office estimates that only 40 percent of veterans entitled to PTSD services through the VA ever pursue treatment.
- **The *At Ease* program, disconnected from the official “military,”** is positioned to overcome the strong stigma which exists among military service members against receiving treatment from official sources – both because getting help is considered “unmilitary,” even cowardly, and because mental health disorders themselves can be very difficult to face. This stigma is a primary obstacle to accessing treatment, and with the program’s commitment to confidentiality and its independent status, *At Ease* circumvents it. *At Ease* can also help facilitate connections with those who seek VA services.
- ***At Ease* serves loved ones, as well as service members.** *At Ease* recognizes that the country’s current state of military affairs, with multiple long-term deployments, stop-loss orders and the subsequent fears and hardships they create, are taxing on loved ones. *At Ease* provides confidential treatment to a broad scope of these loved ones, while the traditional resources offer only limited programming to individuals who do not fall within the immediate family unit. *At Ease* recognizes the need for suitable treatment options for our military members’ entire network of support, and serves any individual impacted by having a loved one in the military.
- ***At Ease* serves military members regardless of their service status.** This includes individuals who have been dishonorably discharged. While these veterans may have made choices that ended their military careers, many of them are facing the same trauma issues as other veterans. *At Ease* provides confidential treatment to these veterans, many of whom may have been discharged, instead of treated, due to actions symptomatic of PTSD.
- ***At Ease* offers an open door policy.** Service members, veterans and loved ones who ask for help are able to receive services expeditiously. In addition to the strong stigma that prevents many individuals from seeking treatment from the military healthcare system, lengthy admissions processes and required documentation of service-connected injury regularly act as additional barriers to treatment. *At Ease* aims to provide easy access to treatment, and does not require extensive documentation as a result.
- ***At Ease* provides services to Reservists and Guardsmen.** As Reservists and Guardsmen are eligible for only minimal VA benefits, and often reside in rural areas where access to care is limited, *At Ease* will play a crucial role in serving these new veterans.

At Ease recognizes that significant gaps exist in access to behavioral health care within Nebraska’s military population. Whether stigma, status or financial struggle, these gaps contribute to the insufficient mental health services available to military families. Expanding *At Ease* to offer in-person services in Central Nebraska positions *At Ease* to fill the treatment gap for this population.