

## eAppendix Patient Suggestions to Improve Care of Women Veterans

<b>There needs to be variety in therapies.</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals, puppets, bicycling, art, exercise</li>   <li>• EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing), CPT (cognitive processing therapy), PRRC (psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery center), phone-based, PET (prolonged exposure therapy), psychotherapy</li>   <li>• Sexual intimacy, VA orientation, self-defense classes</li>   <li>• Alternative therapies: yoga, acupuncture, tai chi</li> </ul>	<p>If it hadn't been for the animals I don't know where I would be right now.</p> <p>She got me through art therapy to be able to talk. I couldn't even identify an emotion. They'd be like, 'What are you feeling?' and I'd be like, 'I have no idea.' You know? Art therapy helped with all that.</p> <p>CPT I think could help, but you have to have that relationship. If somebody's going to have you write down your experience and write it down in so many different types of ways, and identify so many different types of things, then you have to have a relationship with that person.</p> <p>PRRC has been a wonderful resource for me, it's a psycho-social rehabilitation recovery center here at the VA hospital.</p> <p>I feel like the prolonged exposure therapy was helpful, I haven't done the other two. I think it would be helpful to do group therapy, but have it not be a very big group, and certainly not a mixed group, mixed gender group.</p> <p>A group therapy with just women, so we can affirm each other, validate each other. I need that in my life.</p> <p>I decided to actually take up kung fu with tai chi and kung fu, and I've noticed that it awakens some stuff in me, it is its own kind of therapy, where it's trying to bring the body and the mind together, where mine's been, like I've been out of my body for a long time.</p>
<b>Nonmental health aspects because of MST need to be addressed.</b>	<p>It's just hurtful. I can't even do what I'm trained to do because I'm so irritated and frustrated not just by the trauma of everything that happened,</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic pain</li> <li>• Weight gain</li> <li>• Sexual dysfunction</li> </ul>	<p>but it is compounded by the fact that my health still isn't being addressed.</p> <p>There's chronic pain. I think that that's a direct result because you carry all that stress and tension in your body. Everything is just so tight. I think it's a combination of that and also the physical demands of the military, too.</p> <p>And then there's weight. I've gained, since my MST, almost 100 pounds. I don't know if that's just from the depression.</p> <p>But after my MST, I went on this...I guess I was just being hateful to myself, but where I would just do whatever for validation. Like, okay, I'm okay, I can control this. And so I was, I guess you can say, loose. But then I got to the point where I'm like, this is just hurting me more. So I haven't had a relationship in...forever.</p> <p>I got divorced from my first husband because I didn't want to have sex with him anymore, because of everything that happened.</p>
<p><b>Other mental health disorders from MST need therapy not just PTSD.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addiction/substance abuse</li> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Anger</li> </ul>	<p>Because I have so much anxiety and I think maybe the alcohol was contributing to it, I don't know...</p> <p>I know that I will not heal in isolation and that's a struggle with me, because I realize now, I'm not going to heal in isolation.</p> <p>I didn't ask for a women's group. I need a group that deals with anger management.</p>
<p><b>The provider and I need to work together.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validation</li> <li>• Shared goals</li> </ul>	<p>They should have paid attention to what I needed and what I was asking them to do.</p> <p>I think that physicians need to understand and respect the fact that if you're not addressing the problem we're asking you to address, that problem's not going away because you did a thousand other things.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledgeable</li>          <li>• Supportive</li></ul>	<p>Having a provider that understands the issues was my biggest fear.</p> <p>I wish the doctors knew a little bit more about the regimentation of the troops, when you're out there, and you have to perform, whether you're dehydrated, whether...You just do it.</p> <p>Well, sh**. All this time I thought it was my fault that's why I don't talk about it. That's why I don't...I don't do this and I don't do that, but the providers, the first thing they tell you is, what we tell you...It's not your fault. That is the most important thing that they can tell anybody.</p>
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