CMWR

NHS Foundation Trust

Researchers from the **Centre for Military Women's Research** set out to understand the challenges women veterans face in accessing mental healthcare support, and what works well. We interviewed women veterans and mental healthcare professionals to learn from their experiences as part of a National Institute for Health and Social Care Research-funded project.

This mnemonic has been created to help mental healthcare professionals remember the key takeaways for best supporting women veterans.

	Work together	Work collaboratively with women veterans to overcome barriers, embed user consultation into services, and promote peer support.
	Offer a safe space	Provide a safe space to talk openly. Spaces must be comfortable, accessible, and private.
	Maximise choice	Involve women veterans in decisions about their care, accommodate their preferences, and be flexible in the provision of support.
A	Acknowledge	Acknowledge women veterans as credible sources, listen to their stories, and validate their experiences. Review previous clinician notes and be mindful to avoid re-traumatisation.
	Understand Needs	Make use of training and resources to support your understanding of women veteran's military experiences and mental health support needs.
	Veteran identity	Remember that a veteran can be anyone, not just the stereotypical perception e.g., older, male, and serving in certain conflicts, such as World War 2, Iraq, or Afghanistan.
E	Empower	Empower women veterans and staff to play an active role in shaping and improving services.
	Trust	Previous negative experiences may impact trust in support services. Be clear about therapeutic boundaries and take time to build relationships.
NHS	Learn more about how to best support women veterans by checking out our guidance for professionals. To read about the research findings in more depth, <u>click here</u> , or scan the QR code.	

This project is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) under its Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme (Grant Reference Number NIHR202226). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.