

MENTAL HEALTH (ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, PTSD)

This provides suggestions as you engage in shared health care decision-making with Veterans. It is not intended to replace clinical judgement.

Anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been reported in 30 - 40% of COVID-19 survivors, similar to survivors of other pathogenic coronaviruses.³⁴ (Nalbandian A, 2021) These signs and symptoms may be exacerbated by specific COVID-19 related or pandemic-associated events such as loneliness, job loss, childcare issues, lack of typical recreational activities, and relationship strain.

Things to Keep in Mind

- Given the overall increase in suicides during the pandemic and the increased risk for mental health symptoms following COVID-19, consider assessment for suicidality
- Complete usual mental health screens and discern whether reported signs and symptoms are temporally related to Long COVID (increase in previous or new signs and symptoms)
- Normalize and validate signs and symptoms as appropriate
- Assess contribution from sleep disturbances, physical function changes, substance use, and other lifestyle changes that may affect mental health
- Consider the following:
 - Adjustment Disorder following change in health or role
 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder
 - Panic Disorder
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
 - Depression
 - Anxiety related to air hunger
 - Acute Stress Disorder
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Post Intensive Care Syndrome
 - Sleep Disorders to include insomnia
 - Substance Use Disorder
 - Coping with stigma
 - Survivor's guilt
 - Problems in relationship
- Assess pregnancy/lactation status, review teratogenic medications

Evaluation

Labs to Consider

- Routine labs for mental health evaluation

Tests to Consider

- None

PACT Management to Consider

- ICD-10 Code: U09.9, Post-COVID-19 condition, unspecified
- [Explore Veteran's hope to address signs and symptoms using Veteran's mission, aspiration, and purpose.](#)
- Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#) – contact options:
 - Dial 988 then Press 1
 - Dial 800-273-8255 then press 1
 - Text 838255
- [COVID-19 Coach App](#) – Stress management
- [Insomnia Coach App](#) - Path to better sleep
- [Diaphragmatic Breathing](#)
- [Guided Meditation](#) – Audio files
- Consider antidepressant
- Consider Fish oil – 1000mg (500mg DHA/EPA) capsule combined eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) daily with food (avoid if on blood thinners or experiencing gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD))

Consults to Consider

- Explore interest in Mental Health follow up
 - Mental Health consult for high complexity
- Long COVID Support Groups
- Nutrition
- Physical Therapy: titrated return to individualized activity program ([Appendix B](#))
- Peer Support Specialists
- Whole Health System approach: health coach, Tai Chi, yoga, acupuncture/battlefield acupuncture/national acupuncture detox
- Chaplain

³⁴ Nalbandian A. Post-acute COVID-19 syndrome. Nat Med. 2021 Apr;27(4):601-615. doi: 10.1038/s41591-021-01283-z