



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Alexandra Little, 202-991-0125, alittle@reingold.com

New program for women veterans in Los Angeles fills need for mental health services
Women Vets on Point will target the more than 20,000 women veterans in LA

LOS ANGELES (July 16, 2018) — Women Vets on Point (WVoP) has one goal: to connect women veterans in Los Angeles County with compassionate mental health care delivered by providers who understand their experiences and needs. Now, with the launch of its website, WVoP will begin helping women veterans access essential, in-demand services.

Los Angeles County is home to approximately [20,600 women veterans](#), the fourth-highest population of any U.S. county. Women veterans are more likely to die by suicide than women who did not serve in the military, and, in a 2011 survey (the most recent survey of this kind), 46 percent of women veterans in California reported a current mental health problem.

WVoP is led by women veterans, including Kristine Stanley, who served in the Air Force for 24 years. She recalls that she struggled in her first year after leaving the military and didn't know where to turn for help.

"I want my fellow women veterans to know they are not alone," said Stanley, program coordinator for WVoP at U.S.VETS. "I know they may feel invisible or forgotten, or that no one realizes they've served. That all changes with Women Vets on Point. If they have ever put on a uniform, this program is for them."

At www.womenvetsonpoint.org, women veterans can:

- Connect with a WVoP team member. Team members listen to women's stories and help them find mental health care providers who have experience working with women veterans on challenges related to post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, domestic violence, and more.
- Get referrals for services that can assist with legal, employment, housing, and child care needs.
- Hear stories of hope and recovery from other women veterans.
- Locate tools and resources to help them better understand their symptoms.

In creating WVoP, U.S.VETS partnered with Education Development Center (EDC), a nonprofit that advances innovative solutions to improve education and promote health. EDC was selected because of its experience in using technology tools to facilitate effective mental health treatment.

"There are very few programs tailored specifically for women who served," said EDC project director Erin Smith. "EDC's research enables us to recommend solutions for some of the challenges women veterans may face. The bottom line is that earlier access to treatment can mean higher quality of life. And we know how to help women engage with treatment in ways that work with all of the other responsibilities they are carrying."



Many of the challenges faced by women veterans are distinct from those faced by male veterans or other women, and these challenges may be poorly understood by the public. According to Stanley, some people assume that women veterans can't have experienced trauma if they didn't serve in a traditional combat role. Another common misconception is that women veterans' challenges are related only to military sexual trauma.

“Women Vets on Point knows what misconceptions are out there,” said Stanley. “And we know that the needs of women who served have not been sufficiently addressed. Women Vets on Point is going to make serious changes for women in this community and hopefully make the journeys of women veterans easier in the future.”

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Women Vets on Point is an independent, not-for-profit program designed and led by women for women to eliminate barriers to mental health care after military service. The program is funded by a consortium of Southern California foundations and brings together a team of program developers, service providers, and researchers from U.S.VETS and Education Development Center (EDC). For more information, visit www.womenvetsonpoint.org.