

Writing A Letter To Congress

An effective letter to Congress needs three things:

1. **Put your name and address at the end of your letter AND on the envelope**, so your members of Congress know that you are one of the people they represent.
2. **Ask for specific action**, using the sentence below or your own words:

Active Duty Military Personnel and Veterans are being denied a top-line therapy for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), through restrictions and exclusions by TRICARE, The Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Defense. Please stop this atrocity.

3. **Give examples/more information (for example):**

- Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) is widely accepted as an Evidence-based treatment for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- In 2004, the VA and DOD listed EMDR as one of four top “Evidence-based treatments” for PTSD in their Clinical Practice Guidelines.
- TRICARE has banned the use of EMDR for treatment of PTSD, despite the approving guidelines. The DOD has not led a single study on the use of EMDR with PTSD.
- According to the Rand Corporation Report published in April 2008, *Invisible Wounds of War*, “One in five Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffers from PTSD or major depression.” *Invisible Wounds of War* also reports that only “about half (53 percent) of those who met the criteria for current PTSD or major depression had sought help . . . in the past year.” Their families also need our help.
- Give your own case example evidencing how EMDR has worked for active duty soldiers and/or veterans and their families.

Send your letter to Congress.

Put each letter in a separate envelope and address it. Send your letter to:

Sen. _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sample Letter

Date

Dear Rep. _____ or Dear Sen. _____,

Active Duty Military Personnel and Veterans are being denied a top-line, highly efficient therapy for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), through restrictions and exclusions by TRICARE, The Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Defense. Please stop this injustice.

EMDR is widely accepted as an Evidence-based treatment for PTSD. The International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies in its recently published Practice Guidelines for PTSD treatment ranked “EMDR as an evidence-based, Level A treatment for PTSD in adults”. In 2004, The Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense Joint Clinical Practice Guidelines approved EMDR as one of the four top “evidence-based treatments” for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a disorder from which an increasing number of our military personnel and veterans suffer. For a review of EMDR research, please visit www.emdria.org.

In spite of the Department of Defense endorsement of EMDR, TRICARE continues to deny EMDR therapy to war veterans and family members despite the approving 2004 guidelines. Additionally, the DOD has not led a single study on the use of EMDR with PTSD.

According to the Rand Corporation Report published in April 2008, *Invisible Wounds of War*, “One in five Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffers from PTSD or major depression.” The decision to exclude EMDR from research and treatment results in denial of a fast-acting, efficient treatment for active duty military personnel and veterans. As we face the Global War on Terror, it is clearly more financially and strategically advantageous to the government to have service members experience expeditious periods of recovery and return to full functioning.

Please allow veterans and their families the option to choose for themselves if they want to pursue EMDR. Support the continued inclusion of EMDR in VA and DOD Clinical Practice Guidelines, encourage funding of EMDR research which will aid our military personnel in recovering from PTSD, and lift TRICARE’s ban on EMDR therapy for PTSD.

Sincerely,
Your name
Your address

PLEASE NOTE: Your letter may take 2-4 weeks to get to Congress, but that's okay. It will make an important difference for military personnel who have served our country and now need your help.