

HOW TO CREATE

a therapeutic alliance with veterans and service members

ALLOW EXTRA TIME FOR TRUST TO BUILD

Honor mistrust - this is a survival tool for those in the military. Small ways to build trust are to offer seating or lighting adjustments. Increase trust by allowing opportunities for questions and clarification.



KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECT

Service members show respect in the field by following orders to avoid danger and fulfill a mission safely. Demonstrate respect in therapy by understanding this commitment to mission, the role of honor and sacrifice, and the military language and culture.



ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Convey a commitment to help not only verbally, but through action. Offer a practical skill early on to instill hope (e.g., self-regulation strategy). Advocate by connecting the client to resources. Be straightforward in your communication.



DON'T SCARE EASILY

Veterans and service members are sensitive about their difficult experiences. Expressions of shock could damage the relationship and reinforce negative self-judgment.



AFFIRM CLIENT CONTROL

Emphasize that the veteran or service member has control in the therapy process as well as in EMDR reprocessing. Treatment goals and a treatment plan should be set collaboratively at the client's pace.

