



# YELLOW RIBBON FUND

## Yellow Ribbon Fund Nonprofit Encourages PTSD Education In Honor Of Veterans Day

*Yellow Ribbon Fund Urges All to Honor Veterans Through Education This Veterans Day*

BETHESDA, Md. (October 21, 2022) – [Yellow Ribbon Fund](#), a nonprofit organization that supports wounded veterans, their caregivers and their families, wants to highlight how holidays such as Veterans Day affect veterans. Wounded, injured and ill active-duty service members and veterans across the country face unique challenges and hardships daily— holidays are no exception. While these special days can provide a welcome distraction from day-to-day living, they can also be hard on veterans and families because they can be emotional triggers that initiate stress, depression and even flashbacks.

Veterans day is a time to honor and thank the men and women who have served in the United States armed forces. However, this day can be very difficult for service members who have experienced trauma. According to the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#), 11 to 20 of every 100 military members who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan are diagnosed with PTSD. Holidays or other dates that bring back memories of a traumatic event or the death of a friend can act as a strong trigger. These triggers can cause stress and flashbacks, especially for someone with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"PTSD is a difficult battle for many wounded veterans. I encourage everyone to educate themselves and offer help whenever possible," says Gina Harrow, executive director at Yellow Ribbon Fund. "Our goal at Yellow Ribbon Fund is to encourage and support wounded, ill and injured veterans, caregivers and military families as they work through PTSD and other mental health issues."

### Pete's Story

From 1986 to 2013, Retired Army Major Pete Way served his country with honor, but after two seemingly minor injuries in 2002, he faced a dangerous combination of PTSD and prescribed pain medications. He took medical retirement in 2013 and came to know [Yellow Ribbon Fund](#) shortly thereafter. Through the assistance and support of his wife and caregiver, Ann, organizations such as Yellow Ribbon Fund, and others, Pete made it through the difficult times. He continues to work daily to live with his physical and mental wounds.

### What is PTSD?

After a traumatic event, people can develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), an anxiety disorder characterized by anxiety, flashbacks, nightmares, headaches, stomach pain and trouble sleeping.

Approximately [36% of post-9/11 veterans](#) have PTSD or other mental health issues as a result of their service, which is a considerably higher percentage than the average military cohort.

The [symptoms of PTSD](#) can be grouped into four types:

1. **Re-experiencing symptoms:** Flashbacks, memories or dreams, distressing thoughts or physical reactions.
2. **Avoidance symptoms:** An urge to stay away from places, events or objects that remind sufferers of the event.
3. **Arousal and reactivity symptoms:** Irritation, being easily startled, feeling tense, having difficulty falling asleep or difficulty concentrating.
4. **Cognition or mood problems:** Experiencing memory issues, negative thoughts, depression, anxiety, distorted thoughts, feelings of blame and social isolation.

Each person will experience different symptoms, and the severity of their symptoms will vary from person to person. The amount of trauma experienced, how close one was to the event and existing coping skills at the time all play a role in how severe PTSD symptoms may be.

## **Challenges For Military Caregivers And Families**

[Military caregivers](#) and families face many challenges when their loved one suffers from PTSD. Many military caregivers are dealing with the physical and emotional effects of their loved one's injuries and PTSD while also facing the additional responsibilities associated with being a military caregiver.

Military families are also at risk for long-term financial challenges. They have higher rates of unemployment and lower incomes than the general population. In addition, military caregivers often face obstacles to accessing health care due to the stress of caring for a loved one with PTSD or other invisible wounds. As a result, they may feel alone and isolated.

## **How to Help**

If you're a friend, caregiver or family member of a service member who has PTSD, it can be challenging to know [how to help](#). Here are some ways you can provide support:

- Ask about their triggers and how to avoid them
- Be patient
- Educate yourself
- Be there for them
- Encourage them to get help

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Yellow Ribbon Fund relies solely on the generosity of donors and corporate sponsors. Proudly, the organization can claim that \$0.88 of every dollar donated goes directly to fund programs and resources for wounded, ill and injured service members, caregivers and military families. For more information on who Yellow Ribbon Fund serves and how you can help, visit [yellowribbonfund.org](http://yellowribbonfund.org). To make a tax-deductible donation benefitting the veteran support organization, go to the [donation page](#) or email [donate@yellowribbonfund.org](mailto:donate@yellowribbonfund.org). In addition, Yellow Ribbon Fund offers multiple resources that can be found [here](#). If you are in immediate crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.

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## **About Yellow Ribbon Fund:**

Yellow Ribbon Fund is a national nonprofit veteran service organization dedicated to serving severely ill and injured post-9/11 wounded service members and their families from every branch of the United States military following unexpected medical crises. With the help of donors, Yellow Ribbon Fund's Crossroads and Keystone programs enable them to have a significant impact on helping service members and their families navigate their life-long recovery journey. The [Crossroads Program](#) provides families with hotel stays for acute stays at Walter Reed National Medical Center. Fully furnished apartments local to the hospital for long-term stays and car rentals for families to have full access to transportation without restriction. The [Keystone Program](#) steps in and takes care of the family unit that experiences the long-term effects of injury and recovery. The Yellow Ribbon Fund's top priority is to keep families together during the recovery process. They accomplish this by providing housing and transportation along with caregiver support when and where it's needed. For more information on the Yellow Ribbon Fund, go to [YellowRibbonFund.org](http://YellowRibbonFund.org) or call 240-223-1180 or email at [email@YellowRibbonFund.org](mailto:email@YellowRibbonFund.org).

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