



Caring4WomenVeterans App

User Manual

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Connected Care

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User Manual

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Overview

Whether you are a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or non-VA care team member, the Caring4WomenVeterans mobile application (app) gives you information to help you address the unique physical and mental health issues that affect women Veterans. Women Veterans have health care needs that differ from both male Veterans and the general female population. Because many women Veterans seek health care outside of the VA network, it is important that both their VA and non-VA care team members have the resources necessary to provide informed and comprehensive care. The Caring4WomenVeterans App offers facts and statistics about women Veterans' health, an overview of common issues, questions to guide your conversations with your patients, tips to help patients transition to civilian life and links to additional resources.

While the app is meant to provide you with comprehensive and targeted information regarding the specific health care needs of women Veterans, the information it contains is not a substitute for clinical judgment.

This app is available for iOS, Android and Windows operating systems, and is supported by these Internet browsers:

1. Internet Explorer 9 and higher
2. Safari 7 and higher
3. Firefox 24 and higher
4. Google Chrome 30 and higher

The following User Manual provides an in-depth, step-by-step guide for using the Caring4WomenVeterans App.

The Basics

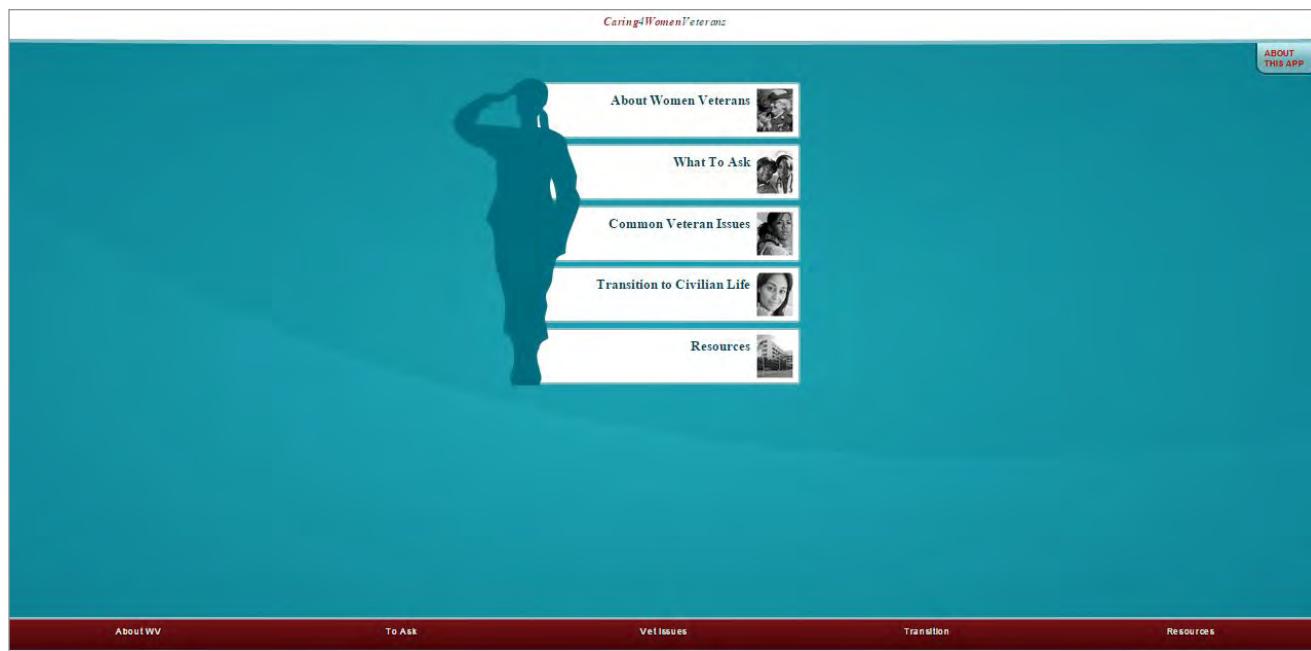
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Getting to know the screen

When you access the Caring4WomenVeterans App, you will first see the Home screen, which gives you an overview of the information available in the app. There are five tabs on the Home screen that also appear along the bottom of the screen with abbreviated names:

- **About Women Veterans (About WV)** – Statistics, trends and historical context about women Veterans.
- **What To Ask (To Ask)** – Details about the information you can obtain from asking specific questions about service history and a list of suggested topics.
- **Common Veteran Issues (Vet Issues)** – Conditions and challenges specific to service era, suicide, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST).
- **Transition to Civilian Life (Transition)** – Common challenges women Veterans face and resources that can help.
- **Resources** – Tools, links and information for you and your patients.

You can access these categories by tapping the tab either on the Home screen or at the bottom of the screen. You can get to any section of the app at any time by tapping the tabs along the bottom of the screen. You can also revisit the Home screen at any time by tapping the **Home** tab in the upper right corner of your screen, or return to the previous screen you were viewing by tapping **Back**.

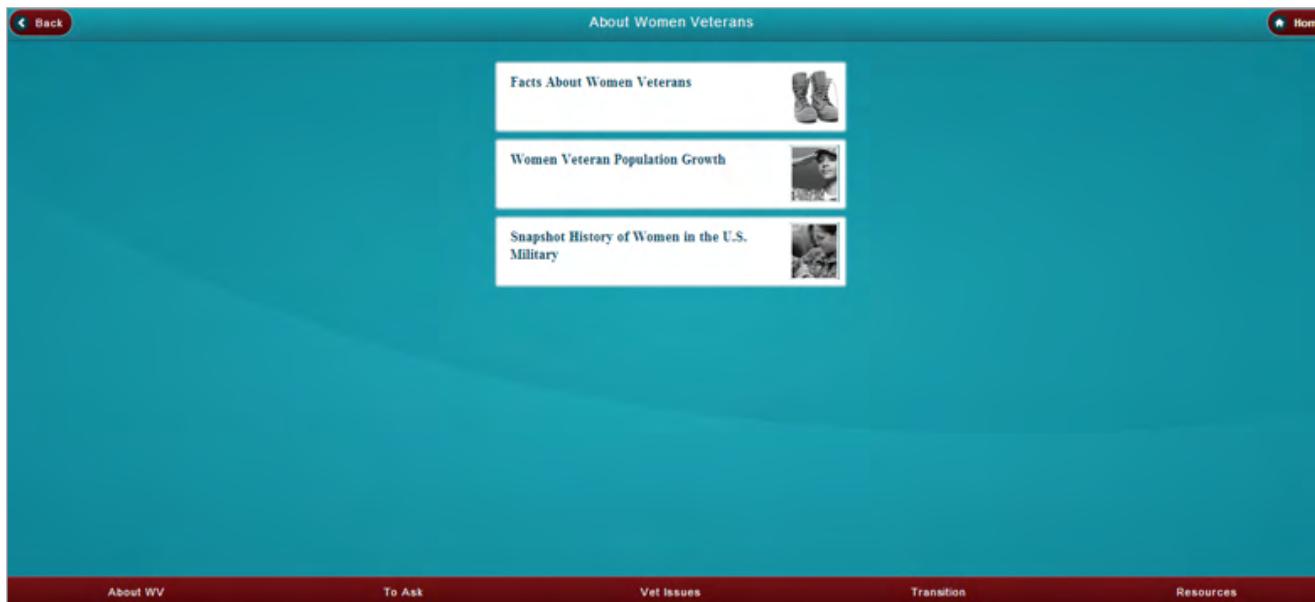


Finding more information about the app

Tap the **About This App** button in the upper right corner of the Home screen > You will be taken to the About screen, which gives you more details about the app > Tap the **Back** or **Home** buttons in the upper corners to go back to the Home screen.

About Women Veterans

Understanding the history and context of women's military service and how women Veterans and Servicemembers seek medical care can help you better serve your female Veteran patients.



Viewing general information and statistics about women Veterans

Tap the **About Women Veterans** tab on the Home screen or the **About WV** tab along the bottom of the screen > You will see three categories within this section. Tap the tab that corresponds to the information you wish to view:

1. **Facts About Women Veterans** – Statistics and data points about women in the military, as well as a list of VA health care resources for women Veterans. To return to the About Women Veterans screen, tap the **Back** button in the upper left corner.
2. **Women Veteran Population Growth** – A graph showing the projected women Veteran population growth through 2020. To return to the About Women Veterans screen, tap the **Back** button in the upper left corner.
3. **Snapshot History of Women in the U.S. Military** – A series of slides showing the percentage of active-duty women Servicemembers from 1945 to the present. Tap the buttons along the bottom of the slideshow to navigate through the slides. To close the slideshow and return to the About Women Veterans screen, tap the **Back** button tab in the upper left corner.



What to Ask

Many women who have served do not identify as Veterans, so asking "Are you a Veteran?" may not be the best approach. Because issues related to military service can affect physical and mental health, it is important to learn what to ask and how to ask it.

A screenshot of the "What To Ask" section of the app. The title "What To Ask" is at the top center. On the left is a "Back" button and on the right is a "Home" button. The main content area has a teal background with a white header bar. The header bar contains the question "Have you ever served in the military?". Below the header are two sections: "Why Ask?" and "Questions to Ask", each with a small portrait photo to the right. At the bottom of the screen is a dark red footer bar with five links: "About WV", "To Ask", "Vet Issues", "Transition", and "Resources".

Learning about your patients' service history

To ensure you're asking your patients the appropriate questions about their service details, tap the **What To Ask** tab on the Home screen or the **To Ask** tab along the bottom of the screen > You will see two categories within this section. Tap the tab for the information you wish to view:

1. **Why Ask?** – An overview of why it is important to know your patients' military history and what health concerns this information may help you identify.
2. **Questions to Ask** – A list of specific questions that will help guide your conversation with your patient.

To return to the What to Ask screen from any of these sections, tap the **Back** button in the upper left corner.

Have you ever served in the military?

Location and Role

- What branch and what was your rank?
- When did you serve?
- What were your duties in the service?
- Were you deployed?
- Where were you deployed?

Experiences

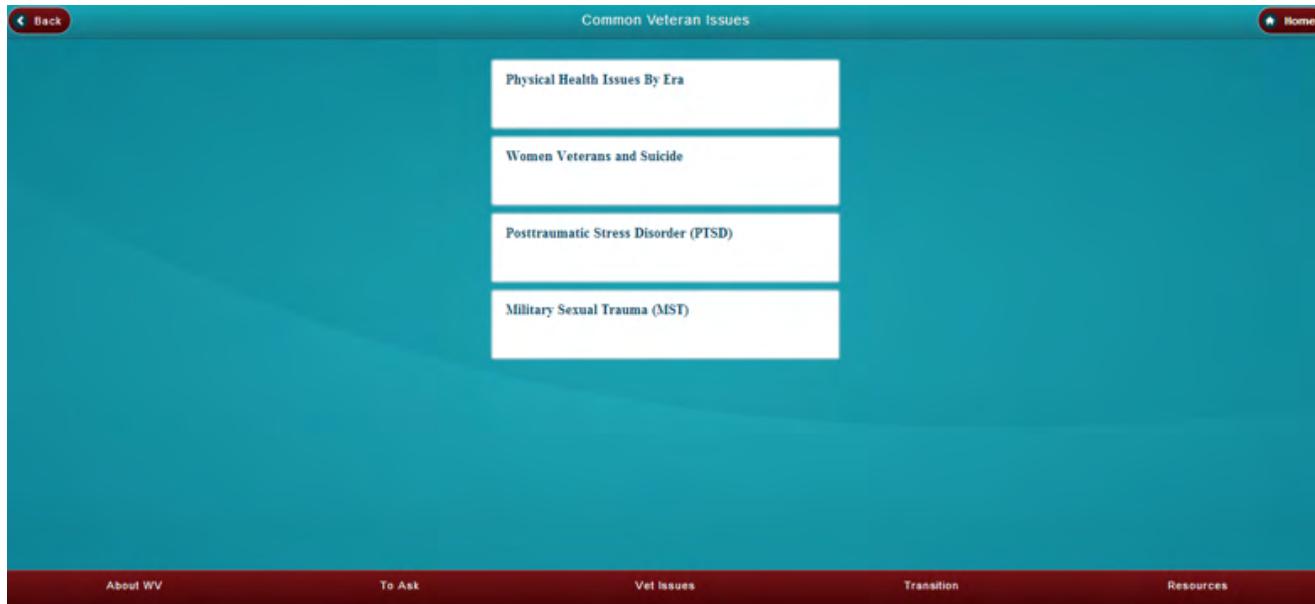
- Did you see combat, enemy fire, or casualties?
- Did you ever become ill while you were in the service?
- Did you seek help?
- What were you exposed to?
Examples: Chemical (pollution, solvents, etc.), Biological (infectious disease), Physical (radiation, heat, vibration, noise, etc.).
- Were you a prisoner of war?
- Ask about symptoms of PTSD, depression, or exposure to Military Sexual Trauma (MST). See this app's sections on PTSD and MST for more info.

VA Care

About WV To Ask Vet Issues Transition Resources

Common Veteran Issues

Although every patient is unique, there are some common issues that tend to affect the Veteran population in general and that may affect women Veterans in specific or unique ways.



Learning about common issues that affect Veterans

To learn more about these issues and their particular impact on women Veterans, tap the **Common Veteran Issues** tab on the Home screen or the **Vet Issues** tab along the bottom of the screen > You will see four categories within this section. Tap the tab that corresponds to the information you wish to view:

1. **Physical Health Issues By Era**
2. **Women Veterans and Suicide**
3. **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**
4. **Military Sexual Trauma (MST)**

To return to the Common Veteran Issues screen from any of these sections, tap the **Back** button in the upper left corner.

Learning about physical health issues by era

Veterans may experience different health issues and conditions based on where and when they served. To learn about common issues specific to certain eras, tap **Physical Health Issues By Era** > Tap the era you wish to view:

- **Iraq War and Afghanistan War**
- **Gulf War**
- **Vietnam War**
- **Cold War**
- **Korean War**
- **World War II**

Details will appear about common health conditions, injuries, infections, etc. from the era you selected. Some details offer further information, which you can view by tapping the buttons with the arrows. To return to the Physical Health Issues By Era screen, tap the **Back** button.

Iraq War and Afghanistan War
Iraq War (OIF/OND) – (2003 – 2011) and
Afghanistan War (OEF) – (2001 - present)

Gulf War
(1990 –1991)

Vietnam War
(1965- 1975)

Cold War
(1945-1991)

Korean War
(1950- 1953)

World War II
(1939- 1945)

About WV To Ask Vet Issues Transition Resources

Learning about women Veterans and suicide

Women Veterans have an increased risk of suicide compared with women in the general population. To learn about factors that lead to suicide and resources that can help, tap **Women Veterans and Suicide** > Tap the information you wish to see:

- **Women Veterans at High Risk** – Information about factors, signs and symptoms of suicide.
- **Veterans Crisis Line** – A list of resources for at-risk patients.

To return to the Women Veterans and Suicide screen, tap the **Back** button.

Learning about Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of PTSD, and to provide and/or refer to appropriate care. Because Veterans may seek primary care outside VA, non-VA care team members may encounter patients with PTSD resulting from military service. To learn more about PTSD, PTSD screening and how to help your patients, tap **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) > Tap** the information you wish to see:

- **What is PTSD?**
- **How Many Women Veterans Have PTSD?**
- **Screening in the Non-VA Setting**
- **PTSD Screen Questions Used in the VA**
- **What if I think My Patient has PTSD?**

To return to the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) screen, tap the **Back** button.

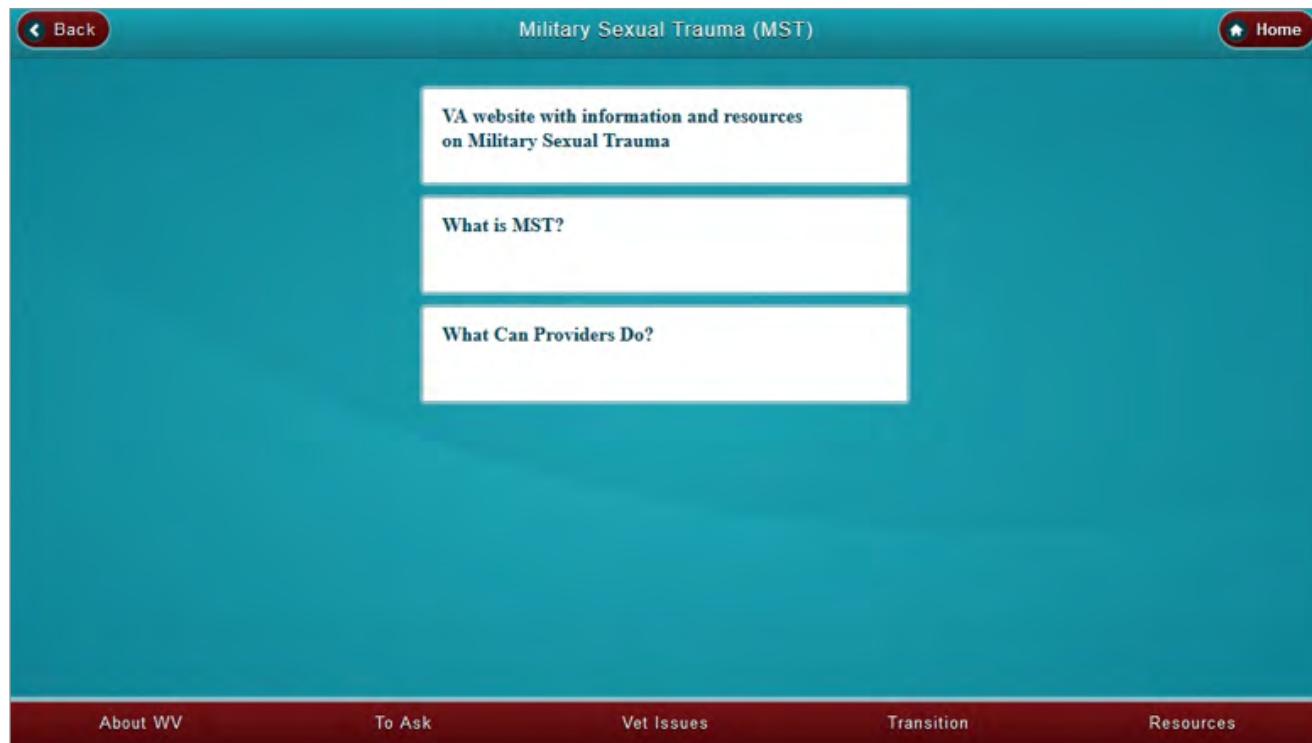
The screenshot shows a mobile application interface titled "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)". At the top, there are "Back" and "Home" buttons. Below the title, there are five menu items, each with a right-pointing arrow icon: "What Is PTSD?", "How Many Women Veterans Have PTSD?", "Screening in the Non-VA Setting", "PTSD Screening Questions Used in the VA", and "What If I Think My Patient Has PTSD?". At the bottom of the screen, there is a dark red footer bar with five links: "About WV", "To Ask", "Vet Issues", "Transition", and "Resources".

Learning about Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

Among women Veterans seen in VA for health care, one in five women report experiencing MST. To learn about MST and resources that can help, tap **Military Sexual Trauma (MST)** > Tap the category of information you wish to view:

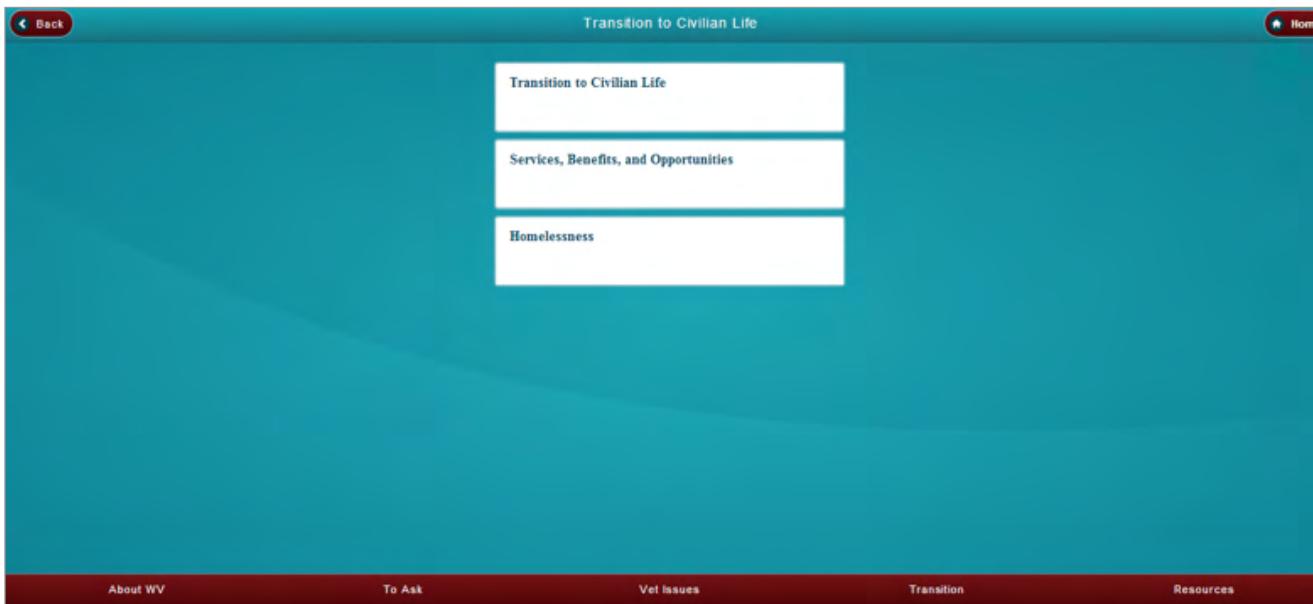
- **VA website with information and resources on Military Sexual Trauma** – By tapping this button, you will navigate to a site external from the app > Tap **Yes** to continue or **Cancel** to stay on the screen.
- **What is MST?** – General information about MST.
- **What Can Providers Do?** – Guidelines for screening and treating patients with MST.

To return to the Military Sexual Trauma (MST) screen, tap the **Back** button.



Transition to Civilian Life

Transitioning between military and civilian roles can be challenging for returning Veterans. The transition may affect women Veterans differently than male Veterans.



Learning about resources for transitioning to civilian life

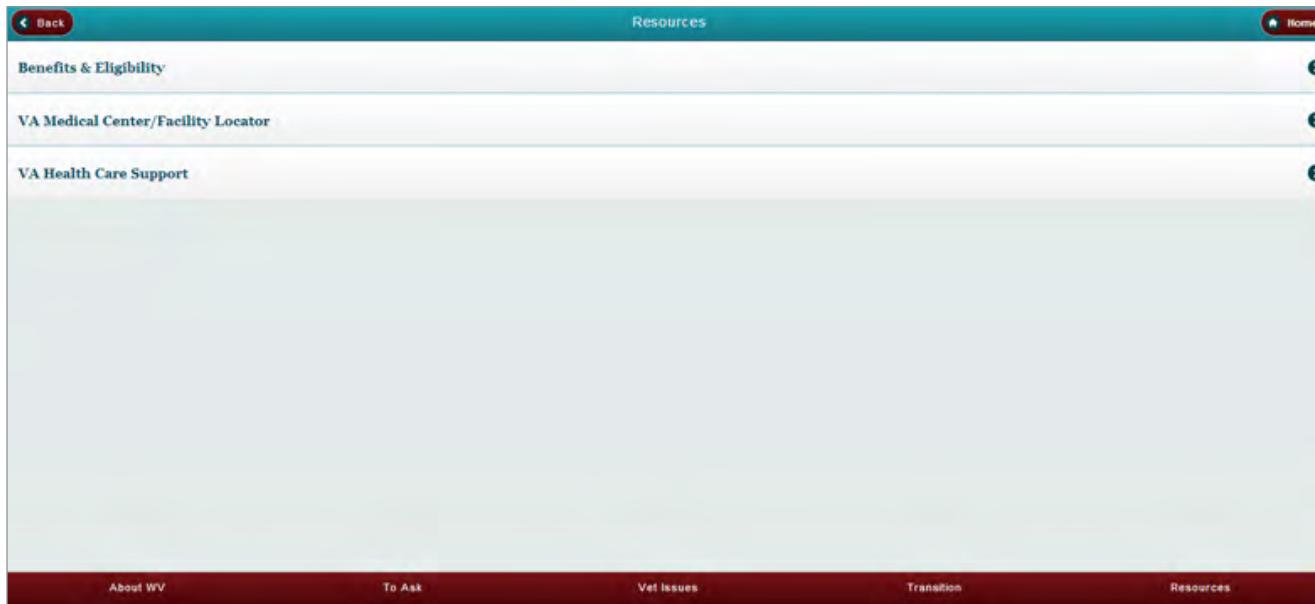
Tap the **Transition to Civilian Life** tab on the Home screen or the **Transition** tab along the bottom of your screen > You will see three categories within this section > Tap the button for the information you would like to view:

1. **Transition to Civilian Life** – Resources to help women Veterans with the transition process.
2. **Services, Benefits and Opportunities** – An overview of additional resources to help women Veterans with employment and health care services.
3. **Homelessness** – An overview of the ways that homelessness affects women Veterans.

To return to the Transition to Civilian Life screen from any of these sections, tap the **Back** button in the upper left corner.

Resources

For additional information about topics covered in the Caring4WomenVeterans App, the app provides you with reliable resources to share with your patients.



Accessing resources

Tap the **Resources** tab either on the Home screen or the **Resources** tab along the bottom of the screen > You will be taken to the Resources screen > You will see three categories within this section > Tap the button for the information you wish to view:

1. **Benefits & Eligibility**
2. **VA Medical Center/Facility Locator**
3. **VA Health Care Support**

The screenshot shows the 'VA Support' screen of the Caring4Women Veterans App. The top navigation bar includes a 'Back' button, a 'VA Support' title, and a 'Home' button. Below the title is a list of resources, each with a small circular arrow icon to its right. The resources listed are: Coaching into Care, Homeless Veterans, Mental Health, Military Sexual Trauma, National Center for PTSD, Returning OEF/OIF/OND (Iraq/Afghanistan) Veterans, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), VA Center for Women Veterans, VA Public Health, VA War Related Illness & Injury Study Center (WRIISC), Vet Centers, Veterans Crisis Line, and Women's Health Services. At the bottom of the screen, there is a dark red footer bar with five tabs: 'About WV', 'To Ask', 'Vet Issues', 'Transition', and 'Resources'. A small 'x' icon is located at the bottom left of the footer bar.

These categories will provide you with links to additional resources and information that you can provide to your patients. In some cases, when you click on a resource or a link, you will be asked if you want to navigate to an external site > Tap **Yes** to open the link in a new tab in your browser, or tap **Cancel** to stay on the screen. To return to the Resources screen, tap the **Back** button in the upper left corner.

Help and Additional Information

Additional Training Materials for the Caring4WomenVeterans App

More resources, such as a Quick Start Guide, Slideshow and FAQs, can be found on mobile.va.gov/appstore, and search for the app to access the resources.

Help Desk Information

If you need assistance with the Caring4WomenVeterans App, dial **1-844-482-6624** to speak with a VA representative. For TTY assistance, dial 711.

Emergencies

If you feel that your information may have been compromised, contact your local VA facility to obtain the contact information for your Privacy Officer. To locate your local VA facility, visit VA's Facility Locator: <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1>. Note that you should never use this app in an emergency situation. If you encounter an emergency, call your local medical center or dial 911.

Appendices

Appendix #1: Project References

This app was developed in collaboration with VA's Women's Health Services according to an approved concept paper. The app was tested in a demo environment to ensure optimal functionality. Subject Matter Experts who served in the Caring4WomenVeterans App's creation are: Judy Brennan, Cait Cusack, Maggie Czarnogorski, Sally Haskell, Patricia Hayes, Samina Iqbal, Laure Veet and Alison Whitehead.

Appendix #2: Glossary

App – an application, or software program, that can be accessed through a website or mobile device and is designed to fulfill a particular purpose

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) – a term used by VA to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred during a Veteran's military service

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – a mental health problem that can occur after someone goes through a traumatic or life-threatening event like war, assault or disaster, in which the reactions do not go away over time or become disruptive to a person's life

VA – Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Mobile Health – an initiative that aims to improve the health of Veterans by providing technologies that will expand care beyond the traditional office visit and includes the creation of secure mobile apps that will leverage the popularity of wireless technologies to support Veterans, Caregivers and VA clinical teams. [More at: mobile.va.gov]