



Telemedica's Psych FAQ



+ **What is an Independent Medical Opinion (IMO) from Telemedica, and why should I get one?**

An Independent Medical Opinion (IMO) is a document that is completed by someone who does not work with and/or is not contracted with the VA. This document provides evidence of mental health conditions and how they have affected your life. You can use an IMO to help you obtain a service connection for mental health. Many veterans' mental health was impacted by their time in service, and obtaining an IMO can help document these concerns clearly and concisely.

+ **What is the purpose of a Telemedica Psych evaluation for mental health?**

The psychologist you meet with will be attempting to determine if you have a mental illness that is caused by your time in the military. Our psychologists may sometimes determine that you have a mental illness but that it was not caused by the military. At other times, the psychologist may determine that you do not have a mental illness. Our psychologists offer their professional opinion, they do not guarantee a diagnosis or that the VA will agree with them.

You are paying to see a licensed psychologist who will meet with you and discuss your life before the military, during the military, and after the military. You only pay for a one-time evaluation with the psychologist and not for any other services. After your appointment, you will not see the psychologist again.

+ **What credentials do the doctors at Telemedica have?**

All Telemedica mental health providers are licensed psychologists. A psychologist is a type of mental health professional. Psychologists are doctors in psychology. They have the most training and knowledge to help you. Only psychologists can provide you with an Independent Medical Opinion.

+ **Can the Telemedica psychologist guarantee a service connection?**

Our psychologists are doctors who do not work for the VA, although many of them have worked there before or worked for additional companies contracted through the VA. Because of this, our psychologists can offer a non-biased opinion of your diagnoses and current symptoms. However, because the VA does not employ our psychologists, they can only recommend a service connection. The VA will ultimately determine if you receive a service connection, even if our psychologists believe that you should have one.

+ **What does the psychologist look for during the evaluation?**



The primary questions that your psychologist will be looking for are:

- Did your time in the military cause a mental illness?
- Did your time in the military cause a decline in your ability to work, have relationships, and take care of yourself because of a mental illness that was caused by being in the military?
- What happened in the military that may have caused this mental illness?
- Can the psychologist provide enough concrete evidence to show that these symptoms and mental illness are due to your being in the military?

+ I feel nervous or uncomfortable about my upcoming evaluation. What can I do to prepare?

It is normal to feel nervous about your evaluation. Many things you will discuss with our psychologists may be difficult or hard to talk about. Your story and what has happened to you are very important to our psychologists, and we want to hear what you say. However, to ease your mind, you should know that our psychologists do not expect you to go into great detail about distressing events. Instead, they are looking for one or two sentences that speak to what you went through, how it is affecting you, and evidence that shows that these things are occurring or did occur for you. They are also trained to provide the best and most important information in the shortest way possible. This is because the VA tends to believe that "less is more," and VA raters are very busy. A short and to the point report is better than a long, meandering report.

Make sure that you do not schedule anything overly stressful on the day of your appointment. If you have a good friend or family member who supports you, make sure you talk with them about the appointment. If you see a therapist, you may want to book an appointment with them to discuss your feelings about the appointment. The day of your appointment should involve as much self-care as possible.

+ Why do I need to provide records for my evaluation?

Although your story is important to us, the VA puts more weight on evidence (your medical records, service records, or any other paperwork that shows that what you are saying occurred) than they do on your report or the report of others in your life. Our psychologists will be more likely to recommend a service connection if you provide them with written, concrete evidence. In addition, without this evidence, the VA is more likely to reject your IMO and not provide you with a service connection.

+ What records should I provide prior to my appointment?

In order to book an appointment, the minimum records required are your DD214 and Blue Button Records. You can attend an appointment with only these two records, however, if you can provide concrete, written evidence then it is more likely that the psychologist can recommend a service connection and that the VA will agree.

We recommend that you provide the psychologist with any evidence that shows 1) a mental health condition and 2) difficulty managing your life after the military. This includes items like formal write ups or Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) at work, divorce decrees, police records, and any other information gathered from someone else who does not have a vested interest in you obtaining a service connection for mental health.



+ How long will it take to get my completed IMO after the evaluation?

Providers have 48 hours to complete the IMO and upload it to the secure portal.

+ I noticed a mistake on my IMO or I do not agree with my IMO. What should I do?

If you notice a mistake on your IMO, you should create a ticket in the Telemedica Help Desk. This way your psychologist can respond to you and ensure that any factual corrections are made in a timely manner and that your concerns are reviewed. It is up to the discretion of the independent provider to use their clinical judgement and provide a determination. The Help Desk can be found at: <https://help.telemedicallc.com/>

+ Can I request corrections to an IMO from a year ago?

Mental health disorders and life circumstances can change quite rapidly. Because of this, we cannot edit or make changes to any IMO over six months old. It is recommended that if you would like changes made you make an appointment for a new evaluation.

+ I have a friend who has the exact same symptoms as I do, but my psychologist gave me a different diagnosis. Why did this happen?

Many mental health diagnoses have overlapping symptoms. Symptoms can show up in one person in different ways, and, although you and your friend may have similar symptoms, only someone with schooling and training can determine your true diagnosis.

+ I read the symptoms for the diagnosis I think I have online. Why didn't my psychologist agree?

Although the internet is a valuable source of information, diagnosis of mental health conditions requires years of school and training. A review of symptoms cannot provide an accurate diagnosis. Psychologists also look for symptoms that they determine to be "clinically significant," meaning that these symptoms impact your life enough to cause a decline in your quality of life. Someone can have symptoms of a mental health condition, but these symptoms may not meet the requirements to be clinically significant.

+ I have hired another company to help me obtain my disability benefits. Someone at this company said that I have a certain diagnosis, but my psychologist disagreed. What happened?

Unless you are working with someone who is a licensed mental health professional, people from different agencies cannot provide you with a diagnosis. This is because they lack the schooling and training necessary to provide an accurate diagnosis.

