



FIELDSTONE  
MENTAL HEALTH

CHECKLIST FOR VETERANS

# "Everyone feels like this" isn't always the truth.

Common mental health symptoms hiding in plain sight that veterans often dismiss as "normal"



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# You were trained to adapt.

To push through. To suck it up. To say “I’m fine” even when you weren’t.

**Over time, it gets hard to tell what normal looks like.** Minimizing your struggles becomes second nature—especially when it comes to mental health.

The following checklist includes many of the signs and symptoms that I have seen over and over during veteran disability exams.

These symptoms are so common that you don’t even think to mention them. When I ask - about your sleep, your mood, your memory - you tell me it’s “fine”. The problem is that when you tell a psychologist that you’re “fine,” they’ll usually take you at your word.

## Here’s the thing:

Just because these symptoms are common, that doesn’t mean they’re normal or something you just have to live with. They’re common because many veterans are living with undiagnosed mental health conditions.

**That’s why it’s so important to know what isn’t *normal*, so you can:**

- Recognize when it’s time to ask for help
- Accurately describe what you’re going through during disability exams
- Get access to treatment and benefits you’ve earned



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# Symptoms Hiding in Plain Sight

How many of these describe you?

## Sleep

- ☐ Sleeping less than 6 hours on most nights
- ☐ Taking more than 20 minutes to fall asleep
- ☐ Waking up during the night and not falling back asleep
- ☐ Waking up earlier than you want, often feeling wired
- ☐ Using alcohol or cannabis to get to sleep
- ☐ Needing multiple coffees or energy drinks to make it through the day
- ☐ Having disturbing dreams
- ☐ Waking up distressed and/or in a cold sweat
- ☐ Hitting or yelling in your sleep



## Brain Fog

- ☐ Forgetting entire conversations (even though “I told you this 3 times”)
- ☐ Having to write everything down
- ☐ Still not remembering your coworkers’ names



## Angry Outbursts

- ☐ Going from calm to a full-on rage in a split second
- ☐ Trouble de-escalating once you're upset
- ☐ Being told that people walk on eggshells around you
- ☐ Getting reprimanded at work for how you speak to coworkers/customers



## Going Out

- ☐ Turning down invitations and/or canceling plans
- ☐ Avoiding crowds or unknown environments
- ☐ Sitting in a strategic location
- ☐ Tracking everyone around you
- ☐ Mentally planning how you will protect yourself and others



## Dealing with People

- ☐ Feeling apathetic about other people's "problems"
- ☐ Feeling drained by and/or disconnected from people, even your loved ones
- ☐ No longer being the "people person" you used to be
- ☐ Constantly getting annoyed with people's incompetence

### What should you do with this information?

- Download this checklist.
- Bring it to your disability exam.
- Use it as a reference when talking to your provider.

**And most importantly**—stop minimizing what you're dealing with. You didn't come this far to go unheard.



**FIELDSTONE**  
MENTAL HEALTH

# Your Mental Health Matters.

Your VA disability rating should reflect that, but standard VA evaluations miss what veterans don't report.

**That's where I come in.**



**I'm Dr. Jacqueline Belanger**, a clinical psychologist with 22 years of experience who specializes in helping veterans get accurate mental health documentation for VA disability claims. To date, I've conducted over 2,500 disability exams that have been verified and accepted by VA reviewers.

While most VA examiners take a superficial "check-the-box" approach, I dig deeper. My clinical expertise helps me ask the right questions and document your experiences with the accuracy and validity the VA requires through Independent Medical Exams (IMEs) and Nexus Letters.

**The VA needs paperwork. You deserve understanding. I provide both.**

**Ready to get started?**

Find your path forward in 2 minutes or less.



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