

Seeking mental health services does not affect one's ability to gain or hold clearance eligibility. Adjudicators regard seeking necessary mental health treatment as a positive step in the security clearance process.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SECURITY CLEARANCES

FIGHTING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Research shows that stigmas related to mental health treatment have decreased in recent years. However, mental health stigma still remains a notable challenge, particularly among military members. A RAND study showed many service members do not regularly seek care for mental health symptoms due to reasons such as personal beliefs about self-reliance, concerns about how their supervisors and co-workers may react, and availability of mental health care. **But most importantly, cleared individuals fear seeking mental health care could adversely impact their security clearance eligibility. This is not the case.**

FACTS REGARDING CLEARANCES AND SEEKING CARE

A detailed analysis of denial and revocation statistics involving psychological conditions clearly demonstrates that **a cleared individual is not likely to lose or fail to gain clearance eligibility after seeking mental health care or experiencing mental health symptoms.**

Even for individuals with concerns in other adjudicative areas, the loss or failure to gain clearance eligibility was rare. During that same period, only 713 individuals with psychological concerns in addition to one or more other concerns had their eligibility revoked or denied. Of particular note, none of the cases resulting in a denial or revocation were based solely on an individual seeking mental health care. Rather, other factors, such as non-adherence to medical recommendations or simply not seeking care in the face of a clear need for mental health support, were generally the disqualifying issues.

It is important for the cleared workforce and prospective employees to understand that there are no automatically disqualifying conditions or treatments. For individuals suffering from psychological conditions, seeking and participating in a treatment plan helps demonstrate integrity and trustworthiness and may contribute favorably to decisions about eligibility. Avoiding care when needed, in contrast, can raise security concerns.

RISKS FROM AVOIDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

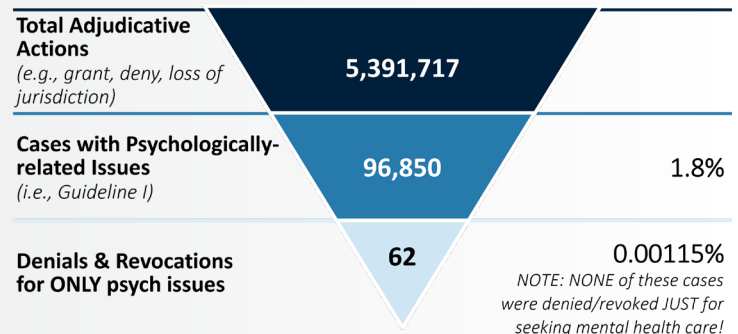
- **Decreased force readiness:** Untreated psychological conditions can increase other physical health issues, negatively impacting a cleared individual's ability to deploy or perform their job.
- **Increased suicide risks:** Mental health care is one of the primary protective factors against suicide.
- **Increased security concerns:** Performing sensitive national security duties while overly burdened by emotional issues could lead to impaired decision making and therefore pose a security risk.

For more information go to www.dcsa.mil/mc/pv/dod_caf/.

DEFENSE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AGENCY

Last updated: October 27, 2021

DoD CAF Metrics: 2012–2020



BOTTOM LINE: It is extremely rare for someone to lose a clearance for a psych issue standing alone

