



Modern Military Association of America

House Party Information Tool Kit

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Modern Military Association of America

Our History

Modern Military is the result of [decades of work](#) for the LGBTQ+ and HIV+ military and veteran community through four organizations, each focused on serving their respective community in different ways. These organizations are the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), the American Military Partner Association (AMPA), OutServe (OS), and the Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC).

Some of Modern Military's founding organizations were created in direct response to Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA); others were created to be a resource and a voice for the thousands of "hidden partners" who lacked access to the benefits traditionally bestowed upon military spouses and family members. If not for their hard work and advocacy, Modern Military would not be the organization it is today.



Mission and Vision

Mission:

Modern Military educates, advocates, and champions for the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their families as well as people living with HIV.

Vision:

Modern Military envisions an inclusive and equitable military environment where every member of the LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive community is respected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Who We Serve

Modern Military serves active duty service members, veterans, military spouses, families, and children in the military and veteran community, and allies, both nationally and around the globe.

We educate, advocate for, and champion our stakeholders through various programs, in-person and virtual advocacy efforts, support groups, community outreach events, social media interactions, and an award-winning quarterly publication.

Events

As part of our mission to support, educate, and uplift the LGBTQ+ military community, we organize or attend various events throughout the year, including:

- Veteran Drag Show “edu-tainment” events, featuring veteran performers and subject matter experts who share mental health and suicide prevention strategies, talk about programs and services that can help LGBTQ+ service members and veterans find community and connection, and raise awareness about issues impacting the LGBTQ+ military and veteran community.
- Local community outreach events, specifically those designed for the military and veteran community and their families. We attend these events to share information about our





organization's programs and services, and empower the LGBTQ+ community to advocate for themselves and others.

- Local, regional, and national Pride events. We attend Pride celebrations throughout the region, uplifting LGBTQ+ military and veteran stories. Modern Military marches in the Capital Pride celebrations (and World Pride, hosted in Washington, DC in 2025) and attends the festival to share information and support for LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, families, and allies.
- Conferences, where we share statistics and stories about issues impacting the LGBTQ+ military and veteran community. These presentations inform medical professionals, attorneys, corporations, military decision-makers, government policymakers, and others through a culturally-competent military lens.
- Other events with partner organizations, to amplify the stories of LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and families, and advocate for equality in all aspects of their lives.

Our Programs

MilPride

About MilPride

The [MilPride](#) program's mission is to be a resource and support network, helping Modern Military families navigate the unique challenges of military service. This program focuses on issues impacting LGBTQ+ children of service members and veterans, no matter their age.

Through advocacy, virtual support groups, individual case management, and discussion in a private forum, MilPride helps military families with LGBTQ+ children navigate challenges related to education, healthcare, mental health, frequent moves, and policy changes.

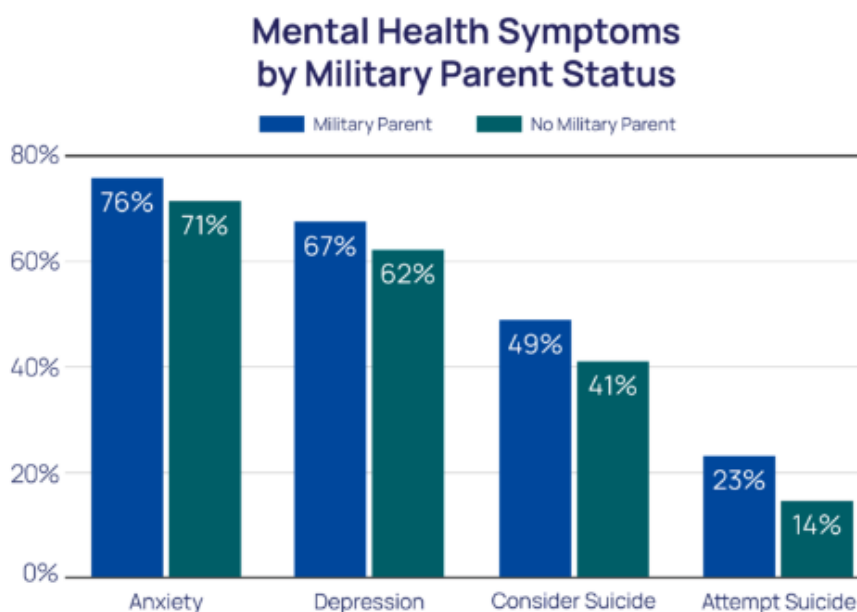
Modern Military further supports our military families by partnering with PFLAG National to host a monthly virtual support group, [PFLAG Connects: Military Community](#). This group provides community, connection, information, and support for dozens of military families each month.

Originally founded by a military spouse with a transgender daughter to help navigate healthcare systems overseas, MilPride is committed to ensuring that no matter where your family is stationed, no one in your family feels alone.

Why It Matters

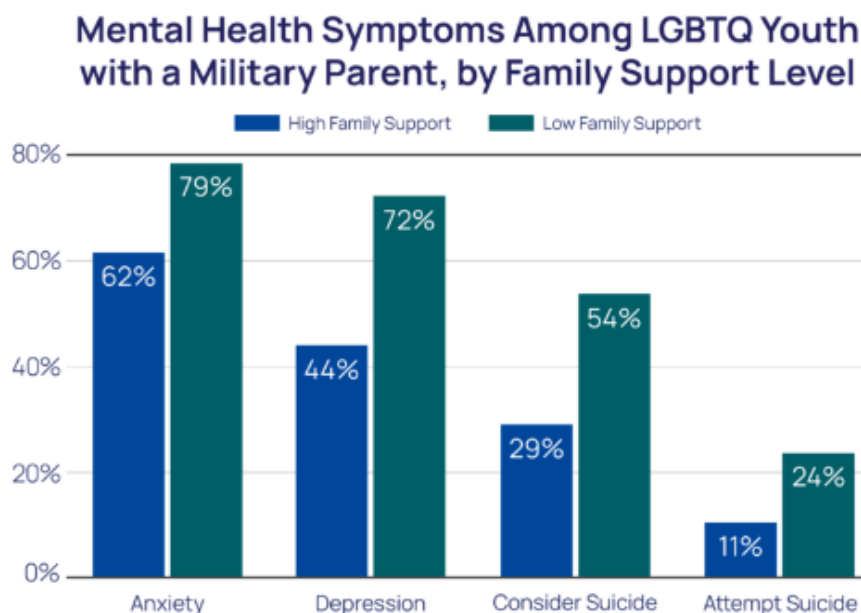
More than 1.76 million children have at least one parent in active-duty service. Given that 7% to 9% of youth identify as LGBTQ+, we estimate there are at least 50,000 LGBTQ+ military-affiliated youth. Military families move every two to three years, on average, which is three times more often than their civilian peers. This level of ongoing change is especially difficult for children, which can lead to tensions at home, a struggle adapting to new schools, difficulty making new friends, and stress or anxiety if a parent is deployed. These stressors lead to higher odds that military-affiliated youth will report depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation than their civilian peers.

These struggles are even more significant for LGBTQ+ identifying military youth who also face the challenge of finding an LGBTQ+ affirming community, having to come out repeatedly with each frequent move, and dealing with anti-LGBTQ+ legislation that may not allow them to use the bathroom associated with their gender, participate in a sports team, or access gender-affirming healthcare. Faced with all of these struggles, it is not surprising that youth may choose to use substances as a form of self-medication. Research by De Pedro and Shim-Pelayo in 2018 found that LGBTQ+ youth with military families are more likely to report substance use than heterosexual youth with military parents.



The chart (above) shows that LGBTQ+ youth with military parents have significantly higher rates of mental health challenges and suicide risk. However, LGBTQ+ military youth who reported high levels of family support reported fewer mental health challenges and suicide risk, as evidenced by the chart (below). LGBTQ+ youth with a

supportive family structure have nearly 40% lower odds of recent anxiety symptoms, 56% lower odds of recent depression symptoms, and 46% lower odds of considering suicide in the past year. These findings make it clear how imperative it is for LGBTQ+ youth to have at least one accepting adult in their life.



Program Impact

MilPride provides virtual support groups, in-person activities, and a private forum to connect about issues facing families with LGBTQ+ youth.

- PFLAG Connects: Military Community** offers safe, virtual, [moderated monthly meetings](#) in partnership with PFLAG. Meetings are open to military-affiliated parents, caregivers, and family members of LGBTQ+ children, no matter their age. Each meeting is led by current or former service members or military spouses who guide participants in receiving and giving support as well as finding resources to help parents, their families, and their communities. In 2023, the support groups reached more than 100 participants. After each support group session, participants were asked to complete a survey letting us know if they found the meeting helpful; 99% of participants responded positively.
- MilPride Private Online Community** is a resource hub for military families with LGBTQ+ children. Individuals who attend the PFLAG Connects: Military Communities with Modern Military support group [are directed to our online community](#) to continue the conversation and find the resources they need. We create and update detailed resource guides on resources available to LGBTQ+ military youth and families. The private forum includes 300+ members.

- **Resource Guides and Advocacy Tools:** Modern Military provides MilPride families and the community with [resource guides](#) on healthcare navigation, Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), Compassionate Reassignment, specialized camps, support groups, DOD and Tricare policies, and more. We update families on anti-LGBTQ+ state and federal legislation and how those laws may impact their families. We provide toolkits on how to contact your legislator about anti-LGBTQ+ measures as well as voter registration information specialized for military families.
- **Individual Case Management and Guidance:** Modern Military provides MilPride families specialized case management and guidance when they face an issue that they cannot resolve through traditional command structure, military systems, or Modern Military resource guides. Our unique expertise in Department of Defense (DoD) and Defense Health Agency (DHA) healthcare policies, paired with our legislative connections and relationships with military leadership, enable us to act as a liaison between a military family and the DoD, DHA, or other military departments to achieve a resolution for their issue. Through changing administrations, the MilPride team continues to advocate for and with military families with LGBTQ+ children.

Strong Communities

Modern Military Strong Community meetings are a safe, virtual, moderated monthly meeting for adult LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their partners to find fellowship, community, resources, and support.

A poster for MMAA Strong Communities. The background is a grayscale photo of a group of people, mostly men, standing outdoors. Overlaid on this is a large, semi-transparent version of the MMAA logo. The text "MMAA STRONG COMMUNITIES" is at the top in large, bold, white capital letters. Below it, in smaller white text, is "We're stronger together!". At the bottom, in white text, is "Join us for safe, virtual, moderated monthly meetings for LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their partners to find fellowship, community, resources, and support." A red banner at the very bottom contains the text "Register at modernmilitary.org" in white.



Why It Matters

Only 1% of 334 million Americans serve in the military. **The known LGBTQ+ community makes up more than 6.1% of actively serving members, more than one million veterans, and an estimated 50,000+ military-affiliated youth.** Even though the LGBTQ+ community is well represented within military and veteran spaces, LGBTQ+ individuals still navigate unique challenges when accessing healthcare, employment, housing, becoming parents, or integrating into their communities. These challenges are amplified when considering intersecting factors related to military service and other personal identity traits.

As an expanding number of states institute anti-LGBTQ+ laws, transgender individuals and their loved ones are increasingly criminalized in their home states, banned from healthcare, and have limited options for places where they can feel safe. In 2022 and 2023, there were record numbers of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation introduced in state legislatures and proposed within federal legislative bills. More than 43% of active-duty troops live in the worst or high-risk areas for anti-LGBTQ+ laws.

U.S. military personnel are at higher risk of major depression than members of the general civilian population. The prevalence of depression in active-duty military forces and veterans is 23% [BMC Psychiatry, 2021]. A large proportion of individuals with depression do not access mental health services despite major depression being a leading cause of morbidity (Military Medicine, 2020). Studies of LGBTQ+ veterans show they face higher rates of mental health concerns, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts than non-LGBTQ+ veterans. LGBTQ+ veterans attempt suicide at a rate 15 times higher than veterans overall. Transgender veterans die by suicide at twice the rate as their cisgender veteran peers and about 5.85 times the rate of the general population.

Military culture emphasizes discipline, strength, courage, and leadership, which can clash with therapy and prevention. Instead, service members may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms like emotional detachment and denial rather than seeking help. The discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ servicemembers places them at greater risk for mental health concerns. LGBTQ+ active-duty service members (55%) were nine times more likely than non-LGBTQ+ active-duty service members (6%) to report feeling down, depressed, or hopeless nearly every day over the past two weeks. This is also true of LGBTQ+ National Guard and reserve personnel, at 22% and 6%, respectively (Center for American Progress, 2022).

The difficulties of transitioning to civilian life and the workforce are a mitigating factor for many veterans struggling with poor mental health and substance use. These concerns are compounded by the struggles of being openly LGBTQ+. In 2022, the Center on American Progress reported that “more than 80% of LGBTQ+ veterans

report experiencing sexual harassment, and high rates of stigma and discrimination contribute to the fact that LGB veterans are five times as likely as non-LGB veterans to receive a diagnosis for post-traumatic stress disorder, while transgender individuals experience significantly higher rates of mental illness.”

Healthcare access is key to reducing mental health risks. Unfortunately, the legacy of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ means that veterans with less-than-honorable discharges and those pushed out of service before becoming eligible, do not have access to benefits and financial support. According to data compiled by the Center for American Progress in 2022:

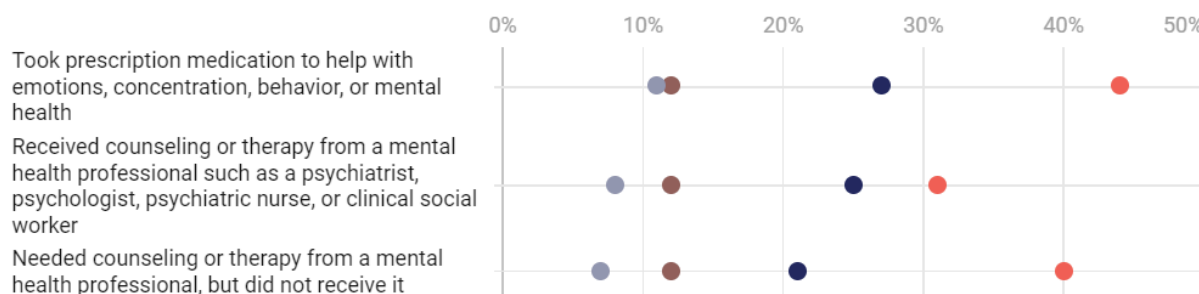
- LGBTQ+ active duty servicemembers (53%) were less likely than non-LGBTQ+ servicemembers (91%) to report they are currently covered through Tricare or other military healthcare.
- LGBTQ+ veterans (21%) were seven times as likely as non-LGBTQ+ veterans (3%) to report a time during the past 12 months when they needed mental health care/counseling but went without because they couldn’t afford it.
- LGBTQ+ veterans (26%) were less likely than non-LGBTQ+ veterans (39%) to report that they are currently covered by a TRICARE, VA, or other military or veteran’s health care plan.

Programs like MMAA Strong Communities are integral in providing service members and veterans the social support they need from peers facing similar challenges.

2 in 5 LGBTQ active-duty service members needed counseling but did not receive it

Shares of service members who did and did not receive mental health treatments in the past 4 weeks

● LGBTQ active duty ● Non-LGBTQ active duty ● LGBTQ National Guard and Reserve ● Non-LGBTQ National Guard and Reserve



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Household Pulse Survey Public Use Files (PUF), Weeks 34–40," available at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/datasets.html> (last accessed April 2022).
Chart: Center for American Progress



Program Impact

Modern Military Strong Communities provides virtual support groups, chapter engagement, individual case management, and a private forum to connect about issues facing HIV+ service members.

- Strong Communities virtual support groups meet once a month on the third Monday of every month at 8 pm ET.
- For individuals facing an issue that they are unable to resolve through traditional command structures or military systems, Modern Military encourages them to utilize:
 - **Resource guides and advocacy tools:** Modern Military provides the LGBTQ+ military and veteran community with resource guides like the recently updated Freedom to Serve guide, healthcare navigation, support groups, and more. We update servicemembers on anti-LGBTQ+ state and federal legislation and how those laws may impact them and their partners. We provide toolkits on how to contact your legislator about anti-LGBTQ+ measures as well as voter registration information specialized for active servicemembers.
 - **Individual case management and guidance:** Our unique expertise in Department of Defense (DoD) and Defense Health Agency (DHA) healthcare policies, paired with our legislative connections and relationships with military leadership, enable us to act as a liaison between a military member and the DoD, DHA, or other military departments to achieve a resolution for their issue.

Resilient Heroes Mental Health Program for Veterans

At Modern Military, we care deeply about the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ veterans. That's why we help address these challenges. The [Modern Military Resilient Heroes program](#) is designed to meet veterans and their families where they are in their mental health journey to reduce suicide risk and improve overall well-being.

Peer Support: Building Resilience

Peer support is offered by a veteran who has shared lived experience. Participants have the benefit of increasing their social network, improving self-esteem and confidence, as well as building resilience. Peer support is available through individual and group sessions, and topics include obstacles related to transitioning into civilian life, family/relationships, coping skills, and resources.

Modern Military Resiliency Circles are professionally supervised and peer-facilitated virtual support groups designed to help LGBTQ+ veterans and their families. The virtual



sessions will provide participants with emotional and practical support, equip them to overcome obstacles, understand how to manage stress, and find a path forward in civilian life.

Client Management: Connection to Resources

Case management includes a comprehensive evaluation of a veteran's immediate and long-term needs. Our Mental Health Coordinator will connect you with community-based and VA resources, including your LGBTQ+ Care Coordinator and LGBTQ+ VBA Coordinator who are trained to meet your unique needs. Case management services can help resolve issues related to basic needs, finances, employment, housing, family issues and more.

Modern Military's [Health and Wellness Resources](#) which provide national and regional health and wellness resources.

Modern Military's [LGBTQ+ and Community Resources](#) which provide legal referrals, military community networks, and regional LGBTQ+ community networks.

Education and Outreach: Mental Health in the Community

Funded by the SSG Fox Program, Modern Military Resilient Heroes is part of VA's public health approach to end veteran suicide. Everyone (families, friends, businesses, communities) can help keep veterans safe by learning more about suicide prevention. Modern Military provides suicide prevention community education to engage service members, veterans, and family members who are at increased risk of suicide.

We understand that family members and friends are best positioned to identify and support a Veteran or service member heading toward crisis. We offer nontraditional community outreach activities that align with the interests and needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be a military veteran with a discharge status other than dishonorable
- Or be a family member of a veteran currently receiving SSG Fox services
- Experience challenges or circumstances associated with increased suicide risk or have an identified concern that may contribute to suicidal thoughts or distress

If you are not eligible for the Resilient Heroes Program services, we still have you covered. Modern Military provides peer-facilitated support groups, including Strong Communities, listed above.

Why It Matters

About one in four U.S. military personnel are at risk of major depression than the general public.



LGBTQ+ veterans attempt suicide at a rate 15 times higher than veterans overall.

Transgender veterans die by suicide at twice the rate as their cisgender veteran peers and about 5.85 times the rate of the general population.

A U.S. Transgender Study found that 98% of respondents who had experienced four instances of discrimination and violence in the past year thought about suicide that year, and 51% of them attempted suicide.

During military service, LGBTQ+ service members are at greater risk for chronic psychological distress and a higher risk factor for suicidal thoughts due to discrimination, stigma, and minority stress. The difficulties of transitioning to civilian life and the workforce are a mitigating factor for many veterans struggling with poor mental health and substance use.

HIV Positive Service Program

Modern Military's previous advocacy stance prioritized supporting the creation and passage of a law to allow [service members living with HIV](#) the ability to serve their country without arbitrary restrictions on their assignments and ability to deploy. Modern Military, alongside Lambda Legal, filed the *Roe and Voe v. Austin* and *Harrison v. Austin*. In April 2022, a federal court ruled that the DoD could no longer discriminate against servicemembers living with HIV and must allow them to deploy and commission as officers.

Between January 2017 and June 2022, DoD's Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division estimated that 1,581 servicemembers were newly diagnosed with HIV. Of those servicemembers, 981 (62%) still served in the military in 2022.

In June 2022, the DoD affirmed its policies that:

- Prohibit individuals living with HIV from entering military service.
- Retain servicemembers living with HIV if they are "fit for duty."
- Consider currently serving individuals with HIV for officer accession or commissioning programs on a "case by case basis."
- Despite the policy changes, PLWHIV in the military still face monumental barriers to advancement and large-scale discrimination. There is still a social and cultural stigma associated with HIV following the 1980s AIDS epidemic that targets the LGBTQ+ community.

Modern Military provides HIV-positive service members access to a private network of experts who can help them navigate legal and policy challenges, access healthcare, and find community.



Rainbow Shield Certification

[Rainbow Shield](#) provides in-person and virtual training for companies, military institutions, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and individuals seeking to increase their understanding of LGBTQ+ and HIV topics through a military and veteran lens. It includes LGBTQ+ 101 and HIV 101 for leaders, advocates, and service providers as well as trauma-informed care for LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive veterans. In recent years, Modern Military introduced inclusion and belonging in the workplace training for LGBTQ+ military and veteran employees.

Other Resources

Modern Military Magazine

[Modern Military Magazine](#) is our award-winning quarterly magazine featuring powerful first-hand stories, words of wisdom, resources, and advocacy updates written by — and for — the LGBTQ+ military community. It serves to increase acceptance and support for LGBTQ+ individuals and provide information on issues impacting the community.

Each digital magazine issue focuses on a distinct theme impacting the Modern Military community, from legislation concerns to faith and spirituality to celebrating transgender service members and their commitment to service. Our issues receive tens of thousands of views.

LGBTQ+ and HIV Discrimination Reporting Portal

[Discrimination reports](#) help Modern Military track discrimination as it arises within the worldwide U.S. military community. If a person is a victim or witness to LGBTQ+ or HIV discrimination as a service member, military spouse/family member, or veteran, we want to know.

Modern Military reviews the report and determines the next steps, which may include following up for more information, guidance to resolve the issue, referral to another organization for further help, or sharing the story (with permission) to increase visibility and awareness.

Printed Materials

The House Party folder includes designs for double-sided postcards that you can print for your guests (also found below). You can also choose to print any or all of this tool kit.

Donations QR Code:



Printable Postcard



As the nation's largest organization of LGBTQ+ service members, military spouses, veterans, their families, and allies, we provide a united voice for the LGBTQ+ military and veteran community. Modern Military works to uphold and expand LGBTQ+ civil rights progress through education, advocacy, support networks, and discrimination tracking.



- Advocacy
- Education
- Resources
- Community

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