

Navigating Election Season: 20 Tips for Managing Stress and Creating Healthy Boundaries

As we near election day in November, individuals may find themselves grappling with heightened stress and anxiety. However, there are tips and useful resources available to help navigate the election season and maintain one's mental well-being.

In this Q&A, Magellan's Mary Walston, LCMHC, a counselor in the Military and Family Life Counselor program, offers practical strategies for mental wellbeing.

Q: What are effective strategies to manage stress and anxiety related to political discussion and news?

Mary Walston:

Limit Exposure by Setting Boundaries: Allocate specific times for checking news and avoid consuming political content right before bed to prevent sleep disturbances. Choose specific times of the day to check news updates. Avoid consuming news first thing in the morning or right before bed. Set a time limit for how long you spend reading or watching news each day (e.g., 30 minutes to an hour).

Curate Sources: Consider using news aggregators to filter the most relevant information. News apps can help filter and summarize the news, presenting the stories without overwhelming detail.

Practice Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques: When you do consume news, focus on it fully rather than multitasking.

This helps you process the information better and reduces the feeling of being overwhelmed. After reading or watching the news, take a few minutes to reflect on what you've learned and how it makes you feel. Engage in regular mindfulness or meditation practices to center your thoughts and reduce anxiety. Use deep breathing techniques to calm your nervous system when feeling overwhelmed by political news.

Engage in Healthy Distractions such as Hobbies or Interests: Spend time on activities you enjoy, such as reading, gardening, or exercising, to shift your focus away from political stressors. Engage in non-political conversations with friends and family and participate in community activities that bring you joy.

Seek Professional Support: Consider talking to a therapist or counselor if political anxiety is significantly impacting your mental health. Join support groups or online communities where you can share your concerns and learn coping strategies from others facing similar challenges.

Self-Care Practices

Journaling: Use a journal to express your thoughts and emotions, which can be therapeutic and help clarify feelings.

Creative Outlets: Engage in creative activities like drawing, painting, writing, or crafting to divert your mind from stress.

Pampering: Take time for self-care activities such as baths, skincare routines, or massages.

Physical Activity

Exercise Regularly: Engage in physical activities like walking, running, or any form of exercise that you

enjoy. Exercise helps reduce stress and improve mood.

Nature Walks: Spend time outdoors in nature to disconnect from the digital world and relax your mind.

Q: What are some ways to respectfully disengage from political conversations that cause distress?

Walston:

Express Personal Boundaries

Simple Decline: Politely say, "I'd prefer not to discuss politics right now."

Set Clear Limits: Use statements like, "I understand this is important, but I find these discussions stressful and would rather not engage in them."

Redirect the Conversation

Change the Subject: Shift to a neutral topic by saying, "Let's talk about something else. How was your weekend?"

Shared Interests: Bring up a shared interest or hobby to steer the conversation in a different direction.

Acknowledge and Exit

Show Respect: Acknowledge the other person's viewpoint without engaging further, such as, "I see where you're coming from, but I need to step away from this conversation."

Graceful Exit: Excuse yourself from the conversation by saying, "Excuse me, I need to take care of something," and physically leave the space if possible.

Use Humor

Lighten the Mood: Defuse tension with a lighthearted comment like, “Politics can be heavy. How about we save the world later and talk about something fun?”

Time-Limited Engagement

Set Time Limits: If you feel obligated to engage, set a clear time limit: “I’m okay discussing this for a few minutes, but then I need to move on to other things.”

Scheduled Discussions: Suggest discussing political topics at a later time when you feel more prepared, saying, “Can we talk about this another time?”

The Life Within the Game: The Importance of Athlete Mental Health

The 2024 Summer Olympics are right around the corner! The exciting world of elite sports is often associated with physical prowess, unparalleled dedication, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. The world will come together to observe in awe, cheer for their favorite athletes, and be instilled with patriotic pride. We hope that fans will also take a moment to appreciate and support the lives of competitors in the games.

Recent high-profile performers, such as gymnast Simone Biles, skateboarder Rayssa Leal, and sprinter Noah Lyles, have bravely brought to light the significant challenges faced by top athletes. Their nuanced self-awareness and recognition of the ebb and flow on the mental and emotional states we all

experience were critical to their safety and wellbeing. This awareness of elite amateur and Olympic athletes is crucial for optimizing their overall performance, long-term health, and wellbeing. Whether you are an athlete or a spectator, it's important to understand the role that mental health plays in performance.

Understanding Mental Health Awareness in Sports

Mental health awareness refers to an individual's ability to recognize their current emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It reflects a deep understanding of how we think, feel, and act, influencing how we handle stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Wellness is a holistic concept that encompasses physical, mental, and social aspects of health, aiming for a balanced and fulfilling life.

Elite amateur athletes face unique pressures that can affect their mental health awareness and wellness. The intense training schedules, high expectations to perform, and constant public scrutiny can lead to significant stress. The pressure to excel not only comes from personal ambition but also from coaches, sponsors, and fans, which can create an environment where mental health issues are more common than most may realize.

The Impact of Mental Health Practices on Performance

Prioritizing mental health practices is essential for athletes to perform at their best. When athletes are disciplined in their mental practices, they can maintain focus, manage stress effectively, and cultivate sustainable motivation. Confidence elevates and performance excels.

Conversely, poor mental discipline can severely impact an

athlete, leading to decreased performance levels, increased risk of injuries, burnout, and/or early retirement. While many athletes may be able to perform at high levels during these challenges, this is often not sustainable and may have long-term detrimental impacts. To combat these challenges, mental resilience, mental skills training, positive support systems, healthy coping mechanisms, and work-life balance are all countermeasures these top-level athletes call upon to maintain mental health.

Common Mental and Emotional Challenges Among Elite Athletes

Continuous high-intensity training and competition can lead to *burnout and chronic stress*. Symptoms include physical and emotional exhaustion, decreased performance, and a sense of detachment from the sport.

Anxiety and Depression are among the most common mental and emotional challenges faced by elite athletes. High prevalence rates are often linked to the immense pressure to perform, fear of failure, and the struggle to balance personal and professional lives. Symptoms can include persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, and excessive worry.

Substance Abuse can be a coping mechanism for dealing with stress, pain, and performance anxiety. Unfortunately, it brings long-term consequences, including addiction and severe health problems. Athletes may turn to performance-enhancing drugs, alcohol, or other substances to manage the pressures of competition.

Athletes, particularly those in sports with a focus on appearance, weight, and body composition, may develop eating disorders. The pressure to maintain a certain body image can lead to unhealthy eating habits, negatively affecting both physical and mental health.

Strategies for Promoting Mental Health and Performance

Individual Level

Adopting self-care practices and routines that promote mental health and performance, such as mindfulness meditation, regular physical activity, and adequate rest is critical. Seeking professional help from licensed clinical psychologists or counselors is crucial when dealing with severe mental, emotional, or social challenges.

Team and Organizational Level

Creating a supportive environment within teams and organizations is essential. This can involve implementing mental health policies, providing resources, and fostering open communication about mental health. Encouraging a culture where mental health practices are prioritized can make a significant difference. Preventing and mitigating mental and emotional challenges requires recognizing the nuance of early signs and implementing strategies, often with a multidisciplinary approach.

Community and Public Level

Raising awareness and reducing stigma around mental health awareness and practices in sports is vital. The role of media and public figures in promoting mental health practices cannot be underestimated. Public campaigns and educational programs can help change perceptions and encourage athletes to seek help.

Supporting Athletes

The significance of mental health awareness for elite athletes cannot be overstated. Good mental health awareness and discipline is intrinsically linked to peak performance, overall wellbeing, and career longevity. Athletes who

prioritize their mental wellbeing often perform better, as they are more likely to adopt best practices to decrease the likelihood that mental and emotional challenges become detrimental to their performances. Their high degree of self-awareness allows them to recognize early signs of mental and emotional challenges and take proactive steps to manage them. These strategies are beneficial for everyone as they go from good to great and explore the bounds of their potential.

Starting with youth sports, we can all play a role in prioritizing mental health initiatives and providing ongoing support and resources to ensure athletes can perform at their best and lead fulfilling lives.

- Leverage and encourage the integration of technology and mental health apps to provide access to resources for athletes while reducing stigma.
- Support the advancements in sports governance that advocate for mental health resources.
- Act with awareness and intention. Observe, engage, and create a culture of open communication.

Encouraging a holistic approach to mental health and wellness will benefit not only the athletes but the entire sports community. As the Olympics commence, let's commit to being fans with a purpose – appreciating and prioritizing the lives within the games!

Four Tips to Improve Mental Health During BIPOC Mental

Health Awareness Month

July's BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month is an observance dedicated to raising awareness about the unique mental health challenges faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. This month emphasizes the importance of culturally competent mental health care and aims to address the disparities in mental health services and outcomes among these communities.

In this Q&A, Magellan Health's Eric A. Williams, Ph.D., LCMHCS, LMFT, LPC, and Stephanie White, LMFT, regional supervisors for the Military and Family Life Counselor program, share four ways BIPOC can improve their mental health.

Q: What advice would you give to BIPOC individuals seeking to improve their mental health and well-being?

Dr. Eric Williams:

#1 Prioritize Self-Care

How you treat yourself reflects your relationship with yourself. This includes your diet, sleep hygiene, social support system, and spirituality. Here are a few strategies to prioritize your self-care:

- **Body:** Get regular medical and dental check-ups. Engage in regular physical activity, eat a balanced diet, and get enough sleep. Lastly, take prescription medications as prescribed.
- **Mind:** Ensure a healthy balance of mass media, social media, and other uplifting sources of information. This doesn't mean you have to give up your social media accounts, but it does mean you emphasize being exposed to information that supports your mental well-being. This could include practicing relaxation techniques like

meditation or deep breathing, reading, learning a new skill, or spending time in nature.

- **Spirit:** Consider establishing a personal vision reflective of your values and purpose in life. Spend time with loved ones, practice gratitude, and engage in activities that nourish your sense of meaning.

#2 Build Strong Connections with Family and Friends

Strong social connections are essential for mental well-being.

- **Nurture existing relationships:** Intentionally create time for friends and family who support you and make you feel good. Don't be afraid to set boundaries with people who drain your energy or contribute to negativity in your life.
- **Expand your social circle:** Join clubs, or sports leagues (i.e., bowling, softball, etc.), volunteer in community organizations to include church and other non-profit organizations, or take classes to connect with people who share your interests.

#3 Seek Professional Help if Needed

You may experience racial discrimination, stresses and microaggressions, which can influence your emotional well-being in ways these tips may not address. Don't hesitate to reach out for professional help if you're struggling. Finding a therapist or counselor who understands your cultural background is important. Look for therapists who identify as BIPOC themselves or have experience working with BIPOC communities.

Stephanie White:

#4 Practice Self-Affirming Habits for Adults and Children

I highly recommend a personal habit of affirming your color and appearance through meditation and self-care. Take good

care of your coils and strands, your health, and your heart. For our youth, I also recommend that we embrace and build a collection of literature that is directed toward children of color, celebrating their uniqueness as well as their belonging.

For more information to increase awareness about BIPOC mental health and wellbeing and the importance of recognizing and addressing concerns, visit MagellanHealthcare.com/BIPOC-MH.

Cultivating culture, community and connection to support BIPOC

Creating inclusive communities where Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) feel a sense of belonging and support is important to their wellbeing. Research shows individuals with strong social connections are 50% more likely to live longer and have a better chance of preventing serious illnesses like heart disease, stroke, dementia, anxiety and depression.

Here are five ways you can connect with BIPOC to cultivate culture, community and connection.

- 1. Explore the values, beliefs and traditions of diverse cultures:** Exploring BIPOC articles, books, documentaries, cultural museums, languages or cuisines can cultivate respect, empathy and inclusivity.
- 2. Seek authentic connections:** Build meaningful BIPOC relationships by finding common ground, personally and professionally. Genuine cultural connections can emerge

from supportive neighboring, discussing shared interests or embracing diverse perspectives to achieve common goals.

3. **Engage in community activities:** Volunteer to support the BIPOC community by assisting at events or with organizations serving BIPOC populations.
4. **Promote services and resources that help BIPOC communities:** Sharing information about services, resources and job opportunities online or through personal networks can aid BIPOC communities significantly.
5. **Support BIPOC organizations:** Strengthen community ties and show commitment to BIPOC concerns by supporting BIPOC organizations. This can include buying from local BIPOC businesses, amplifying their voices on social media and advocating for BIPOC needs in civic forums.

Together, we can build a more inclusive and supportive community for all. Every action counts in fostering culture, community, connection and BIPOC wellbeing.

For more information to increase awareness about BIPOC mental health and wellbeing and the importance of recognizing and addressing concerns, visit MagellanHealthcare.com/BIPOC-MH.

SOURCES:

- [Human Connection: Why It's Important I Psych Central](#)
 - [Social Connection | CDC](#)
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Spotlight Magellan Health: June is National PTSD Awareness Month!

Recognizing National Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month is crucial for raising public awareness about PTSD. This observance fosters understanding of symptoms, reduces stigma, and encourages those suffering to seek help. By promoting education and support, we can improve lives and support recovery efforts, ensuring that those affected receive the care they need. Magellan Health's Dr. Yasmee Benjamin, psychologist advisor, shares her thoughts on the importance of recognizing National PTSD Awareness Month, and what available resources there are to support the mental health of individuals living with PTSD.



What are some facts about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that individuals may not be aware of?

The triggering event or stressor that causes PTSD can look very different for everyone. However, for all those who struggle with PTSD, the symptoms are the same. This is important because sometimes individuals with PTSD don't know they have PTSD, or they will minimize their symptoms if they deem their trauma to be less severe in some way.

The symptoms of PTSD consist of re-experiencing the traumatic event in some way, avoidance, negative changes in thoughts and mood, and increased arousal or reactivity. To have a diagnosis of PTSD means these symptoms will cause significant distress in an individual's life and persist following the traumatic event. It is also important to recognize that PTSD can

negatively affect many aspects of a person's life, which makes living with PTSD very difficult and isolating. Relationships can suffer as well as performance in a work or school environment. But there is hope to manage PTSD with scientifically proven treatments, such as evidence-based therapies. I am a believer in these treatments because I have seen first-hand how they work to significantly decrease symptoms and help individuals get their lives back. These treatments include, but aren't limited to, Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure Therapy. I highly encourage anyone experiencing PTSD to discuss these and other PTSD treatment options with a clinician who is well-trained in them.

Why is it important to recognize National PTSD Awareness Month?

PTSD affects many different types of people of all ages and backgrounds. Given that this condition doesn't discriminate, it's important to understand PTSD and to be able to identify the signs and symptoms so we could be a support to those individuals with this condition. Social support is an important variable in any recovery process and can be a huge help for individuals living with PTSD to receive that understanding and empathy needed to help them.

What are some available resources for individuals with PTSD?

The [National Center for PTSD](#) provides helpful resources and psycho-educational materials to individuals with PTSD as well as their family and friends. Additionally, there are helpful books and workbooks that individuals can read to learn more about their symptoms as well as learn helpful skills to better manage or decrease PTSD symptoms.

What are some ways that individuals with PTSD can

take care of their mental health while navigating this condition?

PTSD does not have to feel like a lifetime sentence. With the right treatment, people can get their lives back. I highly encourage individuals with PTSD to find professionals who have the training and experience to effectively treat this condition. Additionally, I encourage individuals with PTSD to find a way to not only address their mental health, but also address their spiritual and physical health as well. PTSD affects the entire being.

Use Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to Address Your Mental Health

If you have ever reached out to a therapist or the community for mental health support, you may relate to the frustration that many individuals feel. The healthcare system is experiencing more demands for access to care, and the mental health industry is no different.

Here are some of the common obstacles to getting mental healthcare:

1. **Stigma:** Fear of judgment can result in individuals choosing not to seek out help.
2. **Cost:** Even with insurance coverage, deductibles have risen, and paying out of pocket is challenging for many people.
3. **Provider shortage:** A shortage of mental health providers in many areas leads to longer wait times for

appointments. As a result, individuals may give up on looking for a provider after one or more failed attempts.

4. **Time and transportation:** Getting to and from appointments is often time-consuming, and many cannot afford to take time away from other personal or work responsibilities. In addition to scheduling conflicts, transportation challenges are also often a barrier to seeking help.
5. **Mistrust:** Having or knowing someone who has had negative experiences with mental health providers (or healthcare in general) can lead to avoidant behavior.

The EAP as a Mental Health Resource

If you are a federal government employee or are employed by one of the millions of private employers who offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), you are in luck. Your EAP is here to help you overcome these common obstacles by offering free, convenient, and confidential mental health support.

Magellan Federal partners with 296 federal agencies to offer a comprehensive EAP that includes short-term solution-focused counseling services. We continuously work with our clients and providers to eliminate the barriers associated with accessing mental healthcare. We collaborate across various teams and contract agreements to provide resources and quick, reliable care. Here's how we break down the barriers to mental healthcare.

- Referrals are always voluntary and confidential, easing the stigma and fear of coming forward for help.
- EAP provides free counseling sessions with no co-pay or deductible.
- Many EAPs offer a variety of virtual counseling options, which reduce delays in appointment scheduling.
- Employees can often schedule directly with an EAP provider at their convenience, either via the website's

online scheduling links or through a find-help function

- The Magellan Federal EAP call center answers calls in less than 30 seconds, eliminating the frustration of being transferred or put on hold.
- The call center is staffed with clinical experts who remove any guesswork and connect the caller with appropriate referrals and resources.
- The employer EAP website provides current information and provides reliable resources.
- When requested by a manager, health and wellness presentations are readily available to promote self-awareness and self-care and introduce individuals to available services.
- Virtual counseling sessions reduce transportation and scheduling conflicts. This modality can also decrease the stigma some people may feel if seen walking into a counselor's office.
- EAP services often promote coping skills, resiliency, and resource use. These skills may lessen or prevent a mental health crisis in the future.

The Magellan Federal EAP eliminates common challenges associated with accessing mental health support and continues to implement new operations that improve care. Consider using your EAP as an alternative to paying out of pocket for quality mental health services. Your well-being—and wallet—will thank you!

Resources

- [Exploring Barriers to Mental Health Care in the U.S. | Research and Action Institute \(aamcresearchinstitute.org\)](https://www.aamcresearchinstitute.org/), y Hemangi Modi, former Analyst, AAMC Research and Action Institute; Kendal

Orgera, MPH, MPP, Senior Research Analyst, AAMC Research and Action Institute; and [Atul Grover, MD, PhD](#), Executive Director, AAMC Research and Action Institute.

- [Study Reveals Lack of Access as Root Cause for Mental Health Crisis in America – National Council for Mental Wellbeing \(thenationalcouncil.org\)](#), National Council for Wellbeing

Spotlight Magellan Health: World Schizophrenia Awareness Day is May 24!

World Schizophrenia Awareness Day is a vital reminder of the profound impact this complex mental health condition has on individuals and families worldwide. This day offers a platform to challenge stigmas, dispel myths, and advocate for greater understanding and support for those affected by schizophrenia. By acknowledging World Schizophrenia Awareness Day, we're highlighting the need for improved access to mental health resources and service and taking a crucial step towards fostering inclusive communities and promoting mental well-being. Magellan Health's Lyle Forehand, MD, is board certified in psychiatry and forensic psychiatry. Dr. Forehand shares his thoughts on the importance of recognizing World Schizophrenia Day, and what available resources there are to support the mental health of individuals living with schizophrenia.



What is some information about schizophrenia that people may not know?

Schizophrenia is a very serious, lifelong condition that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. It shows up differently in different people, but it is almost always associated with decreased insight into what is, or is not, real. Usually starting between ages 16 and 30-years-old, individuals tend to respond better to earlier treatment. However, people who suffer with these symptoms are often very unwilling to share their scary, and often bizarre, experiences with others. That slows down, or even prevents, getting treatment. Many also have a neurological condition called anosognosia, that blocks their ability to know they are ill or need treatment.

Why is it important to recognize World Schizophrenia Day?

World Schizophrenia Awareness Day is celebrated every May 24th, in honor of the day in 1792 that Dr. Phillipe Pinel started releasing psychiatric patients from the chains that bound them at the Bicêtre Hospital outside Paris. Many of his patients had been chained for 30 – 40 years! Our hope, in recognizing this day, is that the stigma of schizophrenia (and of mental disorders in general) will lessen. More people will be able to live with dignity and with access to the same level of care as individuals without schizophrenia.

What are some available resources for individuals with schizophrenia?

Information is helpful in managing most difficulties. For schizophrenia, which is often quite scary to those who suffer from the condition and to those who love them, this is even more important. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, has been a source of information and support since 1979. The Treatment Advocacy Center, founded in 1998, has

been controversial because of its advocacy for forced treatment of some people with schizophrenia, but it remains a great information resource as well as a vigorous advocate of legal changes that could enhance treatment.

Schizophrenia requires lifelong treatment. That treatment should include some amount of medication. Not all psychiatrists are comfortable prescribing these medicines, but many are willing to work with schizophrenic patients until a regimen can be found that works well for them. These regimens often change over time, or in response to fluctuations in stress, or symptoms, or both. A good relationship with a consistent provider is very important. A relationship with a full-service team is even better. This team can provide some combination of psychotherapy, social skills training, vocational rehabilitation, supported housing, and supported employment.

What are some ways that individuals with schizophrenia can take care of their mental health while navigating this condition?

Just as everyone else does, people with schizophrenia have some amount of stress (not just from their disorder!) and some amount of resilience (the ability to “bounce back” from difficulties). Resilience is a skill that all of us can improve. The four steps are: making positive lifestyle choices, forming positive social relationships, having a sense of meaning and/or purpose, and the practice of mindfulness/meditation (even just three minutes a day).

Operation Warfighter: Career Transition Assistance for Wounded Warriors

For many Service members, dealing with an injury or illness can change the entire trajectory of their career paths, leaving them unsure of their future. According to the Government Accountability Office, over 200,000 military personnel leave the military annually. While most of these Service members leave on their own terms, many leave for medical reasons caused by their active-duty service. What happens when a military career ends unexpectedly and how do we take care of our recovering Service members?

Military Transition Challenges

In addition to experiencing anxiety and uncertainty around a new civilian career, some additional challenges veterans may experience with transitioning from military life to civilian life include:

Health Concerns: Health is a top concern for veterans after separating from military service. A Veterans Affairs study found that 53% of participants reported having chronic physical health conditions within three months of leaving the military. Additionally, mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may worsen during this period.

- **Identity Reevaluation:** The abrupt end of a military career can lead to a profound identity crisis. Veterans may struggle with defining their sense of purpose and self-worth outside the military.
- **Navigating Services:** Veterans transitioning out of the military may need to learn how to access civilian

services such as healthcare, life insurance, and other benefits. These services were previously provided by the military, so adjusting to the new system can be challenging.

- **Social Network Changes:** Leaving the military means losing the built-in social network that comes with military life. Veterans may find it difficult to establish new connections and maintain a sense of camaraderie.
- **Employment:** While most veterans successfully transition into civilian jobs, others face difficulties in finding suitable employment. Adjusting to a different work environment and culture can be a significant challenge.
- **Paperwork and Benefits:** Navigating the paperwork and processes involved in obtaining benefits and services from the Department of Veterans Affairs can be overwhelming. Veterans may need assistance in understanding their entitlements and how to access them.

Navigating the Transition to Civilian Employment

Magellan Federal helps solve the problems of Service members transitioning from the military to the civilian sector. Operation Warfighter (OWF) is a Department of Defense (DoD) internship program that provides opportunities for recovering Service members to participate in internships with Federal agencies during their medical board and rehabilitation process.

The main objective of OWF is to place recovering Service members in supportive work settings that positively impact their recovery. The program presents opportunities to facilitate the recovering Service members' development and employment readiness by assisting in providing comprehensive resources that assist them with their transition and support their needs. This is done through resume building, exploring

employment interests, and developing job skills through internship opportunities. Currently, there are over 533 participating Federal agencies that accept OWF interns.

Building Skills for a Civilian Career

Magellan's Regional Coordinators (RCs) work with the recovering Service members to help identify areas of interest and hone in on transferable skills along with soft skills they have gained through their military service. Our Regional Coordinators coach them on how to build resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and make suggestions to assist them in learning how to navigate a civilian workforce setting. Our Regional Coordinators partner with all branches of service and work closely with Transition Coordinators, Recovery Care Coordinators, Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers, Command Teams, Medical Providers, and Individual Disability Evaluation System staff to ensure participation is in the best interest of the recovering Service member.

The average Medical Board process lasts between 180 days (about 6 months) to 1 year. The OWF program is a valuable experience that lasts between 90 and 120 days (about 4 months). Participation in OWF can positively impact recovery time, provide valuable work experience in a non-military environment, and assist with developing new skills while providing benefits of career preparedness upon transition to civilian life.

All OWF Regional Coordinators have personal experience as military spouses or have served in the military themselves. They understand the military lifestyle and culture, and the stress surrounding transitioning out of the service.

Getting Started

Operation Warfighter Regional Coordinators are in 10 different regions throughout the United States. These individuals work

with wounded, ill, and injured Service members at all military installations. A Service member can participate in OWF if they are on active duty and meet the basic criteria of being enrolled in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) and/or assigned to a service Wounded Warrior program. The first step in the OWF process is to obtain "medical and command approval" from the Service member's recovery team and chain of command. Once they are determined to be ready to participate, a Regional Coordinator assists the individual in identifying an internship opportunity based on their interests and capabilities.

The Operation Warfighter program is a wonderful opportunity for Service members to get real-world work experience to ease the transition to civilian life. Magellan Federal is proud to deliver OWF services that make a difference in the lives of recovering Service members around the nation.