

The New York–Presbyterian Military Family Wellness Center (MFWC) at Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) was established in 2016. Its primary goal is to provide evidence-based assessment and treatment to individuals who do not qualify for, do not benefit from, or feel reluctant to use publicly available options or the Veterans Administration (VA) health system. This novel center has distinct advantages in four areas: ease of access and cost-free services, minimal bureaucracy, confidentiality and privacy, and a wide range of high-quality treatment options. Since inception, the MFWC has prioritized collaborations with regional public and private institutions, seeking to complement existing resources rather than to compete with or replace them.

Since January 2016 the MFWC has provided cost free care for the mental health needs of hundreds of veteran patients and their families. The MFWC offers short-term (12–16 weeks), evidence based psychotherapy and pharmacological treatment for veterans, active-duty service members, and adult family members. The primary conditions treated are PTSD, major depression, anxiety disorders, and adjustment disorders (e.g., readjustment to civilian life). Recently the MFWC at Columbia has expanded services to include COVID related anxiety and depression as well. Patients receive comprehensive serial assessment with standardized clinician administered and self-report measures at treatment onset that are re-administered mid- and posttreatment. Treatments options include prolonged exposure therapy (PE), interpersonal therapy for PTSD and depression (IPT), and cognitive–behavioral therapy (CBT), as well as pharmacotherapy, emotionally focused therapy for couples, and group CBT for insomnia. All psychotherapy treatments are available via our telemedicine platform.

At the Military Family Wellness Center, our clinicians and researchers have unparalleled experience working with military service members of all duty status. Many of our civilian faculty, clinicians, and staff have decades of experience caring for service members and their families. We have led efforts to create specialized programs for our service members and their families at civilian medical centers. Our staff also includes several veterans who know firsthand the psychological impact deployment and military severance may have on service members and their families.

The challenges facing military families are enormous. Although the VA continues to provide the majority of the care for veterans, nearly half of New York’s veterans seek their care elsewhere. Many barriers exist in mental health care including bureaucracy, long wait times, ineligibility, confidentiality concerns, and inconsistency in care delivery. These are longstanding problems without simple solutions. The MFWC has established a record of excellence in addressing these gaps in service. Through focus on ease of access, privacy, and high-quality care, we have become a recognized and valued resource in the local military family community.

If you are interested in learning more or scheduling a screening, please contact our intake coordinator Chana Fisch at [Anna.Fisch@nyspi.columbia.edu](mailto:Anna.Fisch@nyspi.columbia.edu) or call **646-774-8104**

For more information visit: [www.nyp.org/mfwc](http://www.nyp.org/mfwc)