

Fact Sheet

What is Give an Hour™?

- Founded in 2005 by Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, a licensed clinical psychologist, Give an Hour (GAH) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that develops national networks of volunteers who are capable of and committed to responding to acute needs within our society, beginning with the mental health needs of our military service members, our veterans, their loved ones and their communities. In addition, GAH leads the [Campaign to Change Direction](#), a collective impact effort focused on changing the culture of mental health in America. In 2012, Dr. Van Dahlen, president of Give an Hour, received international recognition for her work with GAH when she was named one of TIME Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.
- Give an Hour's network of volunteers includes nearly 7,000 licensed mental health professionals across the nation in all 50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, and Guam. To date, they have donated approximately 224,000 hours of free counseling, valued at nearly \$25 million.

What does Give an Hour do?

- Give an Hour provides free mental health services to military personnel, veterans, and their loved ones – as well as other populations in need. To do this, the organization mobilizes a national network of mental health professionals who pledge to “give an hour” of their time each week to support these individuals.
- In addition to direct counseling, Give an Hour's network of volunteer professionals are working to remove the barriers to mental health care by participating in and leading education, training, and outreach efforts in schools, communities, and on military bases.
- GAH's [Campaign to Change Direction](#) has created a common language that allows us to recognize the Five Signs of Emotional Suffering in ourselves and others and encourages us to care for our mental well-being and the mental well-being of others.

Why does Give an Hour do this work?

- As of May 2016, there are over 23 million living veterans. Over 2.6 million have been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf since September 11, 2001. In addition to the physical injuries sustained by those who serve, countless servicemen and servicewomen are experiencing mental health conditions directly related to their deployment.
- The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are attempting to address the mental health needs of service members and veterans through a variety of programs, but the capacity of government resources is limited, and we continue to see the large and growing mental health needs of this community.
- Because of negative attitudes associated with mental health issues and the fear of jeopardizing their careers, service members and veterans who suffer from depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress often avoid seeking mental health care. By providing community based services, Give an Hour offers an essential option for men and women who might otherwise fail to seek appropriate mental health care.
- Moreover, mental health is not only a veteran issue. One in five Americans has a mental health condition; and in 2011, more people died by suicide in the United States (39,518) than in motor vehicle crashes (32,367). We can all play a critical role in changing the culture of mental health so that all in need receive the care they deserve. GAH has expanded our services to help others in need.

How do I find out more?

- If you or a loved one would like assistance, visit www.giveanhour.org to learn more about the services we provide. If you are a licensed mental health professional interested in serving those who serve or other groups in need, click “For Providers” on our website to register to join our network. There are numerous opportunities to volunteer in other areas, such as outreach, education, and administration. Please go to giveanhour.org or www.changedirection.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities.
- If you are a member of the media, please contact Sally Charney at scharney@giveanhour.org.