



SECURITY CLEARANCE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Myth: If I go see a mental health provider, I will lose or be denied my security clearance

Fact: Actively seeking professional care for mental health issues does NOT jeopardize eligibility for a security clearance.

- Between 2006-2012, significantly less than 1% (145 of 85,000 cases) had security clearances denied or revoked due to mental health reasons alone
- In FY 2014, 18 individuals had security clearances denied or revoked due to psychological issues; **none were solely because they sought mental health services.**

FAQ

Q: I'm noticing things have been "off" for me lately, should I go see someone?

A: Studies suggest seeking treatment shortly after the onset of symptoms is less likely to have negative career impacts than seeking treatment later on. By self-referring for treatment, this may help prevent a "command-referral." Typically, there are fewer duty limitations and provider disclosures to commanders if you self-refer for care.

Q: Does a mental health provider (e.g., psychologist) decide whether or not I obtain or maintain my security clearance?

A: No. The mental health evaluation is part of the data gathered across the investigative process. Mental health providers serve as consultants and provide recommendations – they do not have decision-making authority. Instead, decisions are rendered by the adjudicators at the Department of Defense Consolidated Adjudications Facility (DoD CAF).

This document is for informational purposes only. If you are in crisis, having an emergency, or need immediate assistance, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.



Q: I marked "yes" on Question 21 of the SF-86. What happens now?

A: In general, seeking out treatment and adhering to treatment recommendations are favorably viewed behaviors.

Question 21 of the Questionnaire for National Security Positions asks whether you have been:

1. Declared mentally incompetent by a court or ordered to see a mental health professional;
2. Hospitalized for a mental health condition;
3. Diagnosed with psychotic disorder, bipolar mood disorder, or certain personality disorders; and
4. Impacted by a mental health condition, such that it substantially and adversely impacts your judgment, reliability, or trustworthiness.

