



# VA OpenNotes for Mental Health Clinicians

## Orienting Veterans to Reading Their Mental Health Notes

*Having proactive, constructive conversations about clinical notes, including orienting your patients to reading their mental health notes online, is one way to practice patient-centered care. Consider the following four steps to orient your patients to reading their mental health notes using VA Blue Button.*

### Step 1: Discuss the availability of progress notes through VA Blue Button

- Inform patients that their health information, including notes from 2013, is available online through VA Blue Button on My HealtheVet.

### Step 2: Describe progress notes, their various purposes, and what patients can expect

- Describe what to expect in notes (e.g. medical terminology), the many audiences of notes, and that notes serve many purposes (e.g. billing, legal).
- Explain that certain details are required in notes and that not everything you discuss will be documented
- Describe your typical approach to note writing.

### Step 3: Discuss ways patients can incorporate notes into their recovery

- Discuss ways patients can use their notes (e.g. to view their progress over time; remember their treatment plans or other information discussed during appointments).
- Encourage patients to consider their state of mind and their environment before reading their notes.

### Step 4: Provide opportunities for patients to discuss notes or ask questions

- Encourage patients to bring up questions or concerns.
- Periodically ask patients if they have read their notes and/or if they have any questions they would like to address.
- Consider reading notes together with the patient during an appointment.



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