

Building Military Cultural Competence

A Training Program for Higher Education
Health and Wellness Professionals



About This Training

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In collaboration with:
Student Veterans of America



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Rationale: Expanding Options

1. VA is inaccessible or inconvenient for many veterans
2. Many military affiliated students are not eligible for VA care or don't have military insurance
3. Military/VA documentation of treatment might limit opportunities for future service

Civilian Healthcare:

Only 19% of NY healthcare providers screen for military affiliation
Only 25% of providers met military cultural competency requirements

(RAND, 2018)



Map of VA centers and SUNY campuses



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Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand military culture, how it differs from the culture of higher education, and the impact of these two different cultures on military students
- 2) Understand military students' perceptions of their strengths, challenges, and their needs on campus
- 3) Understand military students' help-seeking attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes, including barriers and access points
- 4) Understand how to use this information to build engagement and outreach strategies for military students



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Impact of Military Cultural Competency to Colleges & Universities

- Improved:
- Recruitment
 - Retention
 - Graduation
 - College Experiences
 - Academic Achievement
 - Alumni Engagement



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Video: An Introduction












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Understanding Military Culture





LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

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Why Learn About Military Culture?

1. Helps you tailor programs, strategies and interventions to better serve military-affiliated students
2. Helps you communicate more effectively
3. Helps students feel understood and respected

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Defining a Military-Affiliated Student

Service Members, Veterans and Dependents



Defining a "Service Member"

Active Service

- Active Duty
- Reserve
- National Guard



Defining a "Veteran"

The VA's general definition is:

- **Veteran Eligibility:** For the purposes of VA health benefits and services, a person who served in the active military service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than *dishonorable* is a Veteran.
- **Minimum Duty Requirements:** Most Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible.



Defining a "Dependent"

"Dependent" is a government definition used to determine eligibility for benefits

- Spouse (including same sex spouses)
- Children
- Step-children



Defining a "Military-Affiliated Student"

*Those who are excluded from government eligibility definitions can still be impacted emotionally:

1. Those with "Other than Honorable" Discharges
2. Siblings
3. Parents
4. Non-married individuals with partners in service

Comprehensive military background policies could inform work with all of these students who might be on your campus



U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves and National Guard - New York Population

Population

- Army Active Duty: 19,980
- Navy Active Duty: 2,184
- Air Force Active Duty: 327
- Marine Active Duty: 698
- Coast Guard Active Duty: 1,117
- Selected Reserve: 30,577
- Army National Guard: 10,648
- Air National Guard: 6,297



Source: Map from the New York State Division of Military & Naval Affairs



Reasons for Joining

- To serve your country and protect your country's liberty and freedom
- Travel the world
- Help stop terrorism
- College education
- Get a good paying job
- Duty and Honor for your country
- Family Tradition
- To improve yourself and learn new skills
- Get a career
- Turn your life around



Less Likely Reasons for Joining

Won't be successful in college

- In recent years, there is evidence coming out that suggests that student veterans do well in college. According to the SVA (2017), "Graduation is an opportunity for colleges and universities across the country to highlight and honor the success of student veterans. Our research demonstrates that when compared to their peers student veterans are more likely to persist and graduate, to have a higher GPA and to earn degrees for in-demand fields like business, STEM, and health care."

Join the military or go to jail

- No longer the case



Military as a Unique Culture

The military setting has many of the core elements characterizing distinct cultures

- Ceremonies, Rituals, Rites, and Celebrations
- Symbols, Artifacts, and Symbolic Actions
- Histories, Stories, Legends, & Myths
- Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes
- Rules, Taboos, Laws, & Ethical Codes
- Language
- Technology



(MA) Edwards, 2016)

Military Culture - Values and Beliefs

Discipline	Duty
Teamwork	Selfless Service
Loyalty	Integrity
Freedom	Personal Courage
Honor	
Respect	

(Wilson, 2008)



Branches of Services

- United States Army
 - Inception: 14 June 1775
- United States Navy
 - Inception: 13 October 1775
- United States Marine Corps
 - Inception: 10 November 1775
- United States Coast Guard
 - Inception: 4 August 1790
- United States Air Force
 - Inception: 18 September 1947



Military Components – Federal and State

Federal		State
Active Duty	Reserve	National Guard
Army	Army	Army
Navy	Navy	Air Force
USMC	USMC	Naval Militia*
Coast Guard	Coast Guard	
Air Force	Air Force	

*Not all states have this asset



Active Duty

- Federal Entity
- Service Commitment of 2-6 years
- Stationed all over the world

- Benefits
 - Tricare
 - Health Care Coverage: Little or no cost to service member
 - Comprehensive Health Coverage
 - Mental Health
 - Drug and Alcohol Treatment
 - Other on base programs

- Branches
- > Army
 - > Navy
 - > Marine Corps
 - > Coast Guard
 - > Air Force



Reserve

- Federal Entity
- Service Commitment typically 3 or 6 year contracts
- Citizen Warrior
- One weekend a month, two weeks a year

- Benefits (typically while activated)
 - Tricare
 - Health Care Coverage: must opt in and pay a premium
 - Health
 - Mental Health
 - Drug and Alcohol Treatment
 - Other on base programs
 - Benefits while in drilling status only are significantly reduced
 - May not be entitled to those benefits active duty and activated reservist receive

- Branches
- > Army Reserve
 - > Navy Reserve
 - > Marine Corps Reserve
 - > Coast Guard Reserve
 - > Air Force Reserve



National Guard

- State Entity (subjected to the needs of both that state and federal government)
- Service Commitment typically 3 or 6 year contracts
- Citizen Warrior
- One weekend a month, two weeks a year
- Benefits (typically while activated)

- Tricare
 - Health Care Coverage: must opt in and pay a premium
 - Health
 - Mental Health
 - Drug and Alcohol Treatment
 - Other on base programs
 - Benefits while in drilling status only are significantly reduced
 - May not be entitled to those benefits active duty and activated National Guard receive

- Branches
- > Army National Guard
 - > Air Force National Guard
 - > Naval Militia (limited to certain states. New York is one of them)



MOS- Military Occupational Specialty

- Accounting, Budget, and Finance
- Business Administration and Operations
- Construction, Building, and Extraction
- Education and Training
- Health Care Practitioners
- Intelligence
- Legal Professions and Support Services
- Naval and Maritime Operations
- Arts, Communication, Media, and Design
- Counseling, Social Work, and Human Services
- Law Enforcement, Security, and Protective Services
- Mechanic and Repair Technicians
- Aviation
- Culinary
- Combat Arms



Basic Training/Induction

Initial Entry Training/Boot Camp is an intensive residential program normally lasting several weeks

- Aims to induct newly recruited military personnel into the social norms and essential tasks of the armed forces by way of:
 - Confinement and Suppression
 - Control and Conformity
 - Stress and Punishment
 - Bonding and the Hierarchy of Esteem
 - Fieldcraft and Fitness
 - Graduation and Drop-out



Chain of Command

Chain of Command

- Military-affiliated students are used to this model of communication
- May create challenges in communicating
- Taught to handle issues at the lowest level
- May prevent them from asking for help

Rules around Chain of Command:

- Disrespecting an Officer
- "Jumping" the Chain of Command
- Fraternalization



Ranks

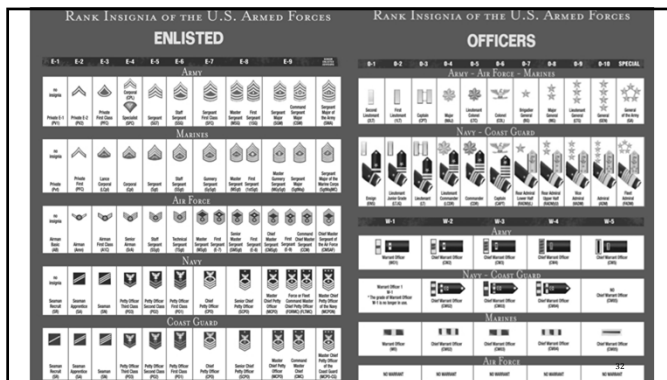
Enlisted

Enlisted are the backbone of the military. They have specific specialties within a military unit

Commissioned Officer

Officers act as managers to the enlisted. They plan missions, give orders, and assign tasks. **Enlisted execute those tasks.**





Military Rules/Taboos

Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)

- 134 Articles
- Examples:
 - Article 15: Nonjudicial punishment
 - Article 91: Insubordinate conduct toward Warrant Officer, Noncommissioned Officer, or Petty Officer
 - * (1) strikes or assaults a warrant officer, noncommissioned officer, or petty officer, while that officer is in the execution of his office;
 - * (2) willfully disobeys the lawful order of a warrant officer, noncommissioned officer, or petty officer; or
 - * (3) treats with contempt or is disrespectful in language or deportment toward a warrant officer, noncommissioned officer, or petty officer while that officer is in the execution of his office;



Terminology

- DD214 - Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty
- Service Connected Disability
- Rank - A position of hierarchy in the military
- Officer vs Enlisted
- Branch of Service
- Duty Station - where one is stationed
- Deployed
- Activated
- Soldier vs Marine
- Sailor vs Airman
- Officer vs Enlisted
- Sergeant (middle management and the backbone of the military)
- Theatre - Combat area
- Sand Box - Iraq/ Afghanistan

Acronyms

- PCS - Permanent Change of Station
- Leave - Off Duty (usually vacation)
- MEB - Medical Evaluation Board
- AWOL - Absent without Leave
- FOB - Forward Operating Base
- IED - Improvised Explosive Device
- OIF - Operation Iraqi Freedom
- OEF - Operation Enduring Freedom
- OND - Operation New Dawn
- MRE - Meal Ready to Eat
- Theatre - Combat area
- Sand Box - Iraq/Afghanistan
- UCMJ - Uniformed Code of Military Justice
- AT - Annual Training
- RSD - Reserve Duty
- SAD - State Active Duty
- TDY - Temporary Duty
- UTA - Unit Training Assembly
- VA - Veteran Affairs
- DoD - Department of Defense



Star Providers, 2012

Common Phrases



"15 minutes prior to 15 minutes prior"



"Blue Falcon"



"Embrace the suck"



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"Back on the block"



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"A good piece of gear"



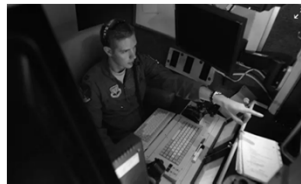
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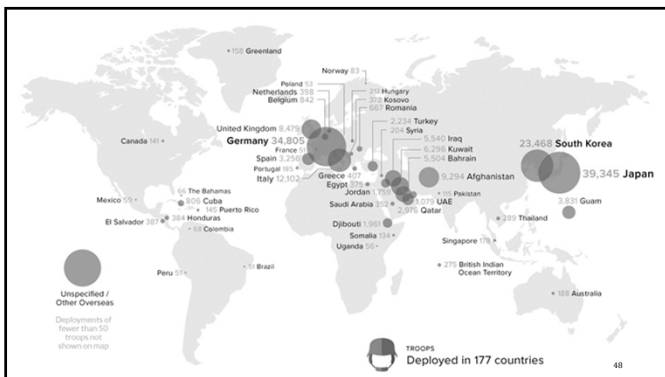
Deployment



Deployment - Characteristics

- Deployments can be during combat, humanitarian emergencies, or peacetime
- Deployment can happen anywhere in the world
- With increasing technology, combat can happen anywhere. i.e., Drones





Deployment Cycle of a Military-Affiliated Student

Pre-Deployment

- Up to six months prior to deployment
- Major stressor
- Impacts academic success
- "Physically present, psychologically absent"

Deployment

- Major stressor
- Requires leave of absence from college
- "Psychologically present, physically absent"

Post-Deployment

- Major stressor
- Transitional challenges associated
- Reintegration challenges back into college
- "Physically present, psychologically absent"



Top 5 Military Stressors

	Active Duty Members	Military Spouses	Veterans	Veteran Spouses
Deployments	47%	53%	40%	46%
Financial Issues/Stress	38%	46%	45%	55%
Relocation Stress	44%	45%	25%	24%
Separation	39%	44%	39%	39%
Isolation from Family and Friends	31%	40%	24%	23%
Job Stress	35%	17%	22%	11%
Spouse Employment	22%	32%	13%	21%
Worries about Children/Parent Time Away and Impact of Military Life	33%	26%	24%	23%
Lack of Childcare	16%	22%	7%	13%
Marital or Relationship Issues	20%	15%	23%	21%

Blue Star Families, 2017



Deployment-Experience

- Physical demands (intense heat, need to wear heavy body armor)
- Exhaustion
- Extreme boredom
- Home/civilian concerns
- Increased means of communication has pros and cons
- Transition to home/civilian life



Challenges for OIF/OEF Veterans

- No clearly defined "front line"
- Long and repeated deployments
- Complex missions
- Harsh environment



Deployment- Experience

Potential repeated exposure to trauma:

- Constant sense of threat - hypervigilance as necessary state for survival
- Witnessing violence
- Experiencing violence





"We don't all come back broken"

Physical Wounds of War

Service related medical issues:

- Loss of limb
- Auditory loss
- Mobility issues – joint pain, back pain
- Burns
- Respiratory problems
- Autoimmune disorder
- Light sensitivity



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Toxic Exposure- OIF/OEF

- Exposed reported higher levels of respiratory conditions, including COPD, chronic bronchitis, or emphysema than non-exposed
 - Exposed reported higher levels of cardiovascular conditions, mostly high blood pressure than non-exposed
 - Burn Pit exposure reported higher levels of liver conditions, neurological problems, insomnia and immune system problems
- *Exposure to toxins, chemicals makes long term extent of health damage unknown
Other exposure: Agent Orange (Vietnam). Gulf War Illness (1990-present), illness linked to radiation



Other OIF/OEF/OND Exposures

- Infectious Disease - Nine infectious diseases associated with Southwest Asia and Afghanistan military service
- Toxic Embedded Fragments - Shrapnel and other metals that remain in the body after injury
- Traumatic Brain Injury - Concussions and brain injury often caused by explosions
- Mefloquine - Lariam ® - Round, white pill taken to prevent and treat malaria
- Cold Injuries - Possible health problems from cold, mountainous climate
- Depleted Uranium - Uranium used in military tank armor and some bullets
- Noise - Harmful sounds from guns, equipment, and machinery that is often experienced during service
- Rabies - Disease transmitted by bite or saliva from an infected warm-blooded animal
- Heat Injuries - Health problems that could be caused by extremely hot temperatures
- Occupational Injuries - Exposures from working with chemicals, paints, and machinery during service
- Sulfur Fire - Sulfur plant burned almost a month in June 2003; large amounts of sulfur dioxide released into the air
- Chemical Warfare Agents - Exposure to mustard or nerve agents from demolishing or handling explosive ordnance
- Chromium (Qarmat Ali) - Hexavalent chromium in contaminated sodium dichromate dust; water treatment plant in 2003



Health Hazards for Older Generations:

- Persian Gulf (August 2, 1990 to present), includes Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm
 - Vaccinations - Including anthrax and botulinum toxoid
 - Chemical and Biological Weapons - Ammunitions storage depot containing warfare agents that was demolished
 - CARC Paint - Chemical Agent Resistant Coating (CARC) used on military vehicles to resist corrosion and chemical agents
 - Pyridostigmine Bromide (PB) - Round, white tablet used as pre-treatment drug to protect against nerve agent
- Korea War (June 25, 1950-July 27, 1953)
 - Exposure
 - Occupational Hazards
 - Noise related injuries
- Vietnam (Nov. 1, 1965-April 30, 1975)
 - Agent Orange and Other Herbicides - Herbicides used to destroy foliage and crops
 - Hepatitis C - Vietnam-era Veterans are at risk for hepatitis C



Psychological/Emotional Wounds of War

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicidal ideation
- Replacing the high with risky behavior/ legal trouble
- Sleep disturbances
- Survivor's guilt
- Moral injury
- Military Sexual Trauma



Moral Injury:

Events are considered morally injurious if they "transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations"

Things I saw/experienced in the war left me feeling betrayed or let-down by military/political leaders

I did things in the war that betrayed my personal values

There were times in the war that I saw/engaged in revenge/retribution for things that happened

I had an encounter(s) with the enemy that made him/her seem more "human" and made my job more difficult

I saw/was involved in the death(s) of an innocent in the war

I feel guilt over failing to save the life of someone in the war

I had to make decisions in the war at times when I didn't know the right thing to do

I saw/was involved in the death(s) of children

I experienced tragic war-zone events that were chaotic and beyond my control

I sometimes treated civilians more harshly than was necessary

I felt betrayed or let down by trusted civilians during the war

I destroyed civilian property unnecessarily during the war

I made mistakes in the war zone that led to injury or death

(Currier, Drescher, Holland and Foy, 2015)



Military Sexual Trauma

Assault or serious harassment – 15.7% of military personnel and veterans report MST (3.9% of men, 38.4% of women)

- Forced or coerced sexual encounters
- Sexual encounters perpetrated while a person is unwilling or unable to give consent
- Inappropriate sexual jokes or lewd remarks
- Unwanted physical contact that makes you uncomfortable
- Repeated sexual advances
- Offers of something in exchange for sexual favors

(Wilson, 2016)



Suicidal Ideation

Risk for suicide was 22% higher for veterans than non-veterans in 2015, after accounting for sex and age (US Dept. of VA)

Veterans describe physical ailments, disabilities and their complications as important factors leading to consideration of suicide.

Veterans stress the role of perceived burdensomeness in decisions to consider suicide.

Social isolation and lack of community/other support is seen by veterans as directly related to suicide.

Risk Factors

- Social Isolation
- Traumatic stress
- Loss of meaning, mission, & purpose
- Moral injury
- Unmet mental health need
- Substance abuse
- High-risk activities
- Unemployment
- Relationship difficulties
- Access to firearms

Protective Factors

- Social connections
- Healthy peer relationships
- Family support
- Meaningful work
- Having a mission and purpose
- Helping others / service
- Open communication re: challenges

(Hardiman, Matteson Turner, 2018)

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Psychological/Emotional Wounds of War - Impact on Dependents

Children

Child Maltreatment

- Historically, half the rate of civilian families
- Active duty parent most likely to be the perpetrator
- Increases when one parent is deployed, with stay at home parent committing the offense
- Rates of domestic violence and alcohol abuse are higher in military populations, both are linked to child maltreatment

Spouses

24% of military spouses have been diagnosed with depression. 50% higher than national average (*Blue Star Families, 2017*)

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MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Percent of respondents indicating they were diagnosed with

Group	Depression (%)	Anxiety (%)
Active Duty	12%	17%
Military Spouses	24%	30%
Veterans	37%	34%
Veteran Spouses	48%	30%

48% of veteran spouses say their veteran has exhibited signs of PTSD in the last year

29% of veteran spouses have considered separation or divorce in the past year

Rates of depression and anxiety were higher than the general U.S. population for all subgroups except Active Duty

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Diversity within the Military

- Military culture is heterogeneous
- Service Member, Veteran or family member can have many different experiences depending on own subculture, branch, job, unit atmosphere
 - Gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity also intersect
- Military culture is voluntary. The extent that one takes on this identity is fluid.



Diversity within the Military



Women

In the Military

- Women work really hard to be seen as a service member first
- Genitourinary health issues – bladder/UTI
- Fit of gear

On Campus

- Women are underrepresented in the military but overrepresented as military students
- Nationally: Represent 27% of Student Veterans compared to 16.5% of the military (According to SVA Spotlight, 2016)
- New Paltz: Women represent 26% of our Student Veterans
- They are leading, active, and engaged



LGBTQ+

LGBT military service members find themselves living in two different worlds.

In the Military

- Don't Ask Don't Tell repealed
- Transgender policies inconsistent
- Est. 1 million veterans identify as LGB
- Est. 66,000 serve on active duty or reserve
- May have delayed mental or physical healthcare in the military for fear of discrimination = less prevention, screening and treatment

On Campus

- Small percentage of higher education institutions have nondiscrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity
- Higher levels of all mental health symptoms and diagnoses reported by service member and veteran LGB population compared to heterosexual military student population
(Pelts & Albright, 2015)



Race and Ethnicity

In the Military

- Asian, Hispanic service members slightly underrepresented in military service
- Black populations are slightly overrepresented
 - Are MORE overrepresented in lower ranks
- Experience of racial harassment
- Black service members more likely to be disciplined in military *(Protect our Defenders, 2017)*

On Campus

- Very little research



Demographics

Vet Student Population: Nationally (According to SVA Spotlight, 2016)

- White/Caucasian – 70.86%
- Hispanic/Latino – 8.58%
- African-American – 8.06%
- Bi-/Multi-Racial – 6.78%
- Asian – 2.48%
- Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native – 1.13%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – 0.60%
- Middle Eastern – 0.23%
- Other, not listed – 1.28%

What about your institution?

- SUNY New Paltz
- White/Caucasian – 69%
 - Hispanic/Latino – 15%
 - African-American – 6%
 - Asian – 3%
 - Bi-/Multi-Racial – 3%
 - Preferred not to answer – 4%



Different Era Veteran Students

Pre OIF/OEF Generations

- Older, non-traditional students, less common but still present on campuses

Post 9/11 generation:

- More awareness
- Arguably better post-service treatment
- More resources
- Influx of veterans at our college campuses

What will future service members need?



Getting to Higher Education



GI Bill

Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty

- 36 Academic Months
- Pays monthly stipend to student
- Expires after 10 years

Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve

- 36 Academic Months
- Pays monthly stipend to student
- Expires after separation from service

Post 9/11 GI Bill (note: shifting to Forever GI Bill)

- 36 Academic Months
- Pays monies to both the institution and student
- Expires after 15 years of service
- Transferable to spouse and/or child

Survivors and Dependents Assistance

- 48 Academic Months (36 for those who use after 1 Aug 19)
- Pays monthly stipend to student
- Expires when child turns 26. After 10 years for spouse

Vocational Rehabilitation

- 36 Academic Months
- Pays monies to both institution and student
- Requires individualized plan with case manager

Tutorial Assistance

- Monthly rate not to exceed \$100
- Maximum amount payable is \$1,200

VA Work Study

- Must be utilizing GI Bill benefit
- Registered for at least 1/4 status

(Source: <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>)



Services Students are Eligible For

- Education
 - TA
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Program
 - NYS Scholarship through Higher Education Services Corporation: <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/pav-for-college/military-corner.html>
 - Veterans Tuition Award (VTA)
 - Military Enhanced Recognition Incentive and Tribute (MERIT)
 - NYS Regents Awards for Children of Deceased and Disabled Veterans
 - Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program (RIRP)
- Financial Aid
 - FAFSA
 - NYS Tap
 - Scholarships



Other Services Students are Eligible For

- Health Care
 - Five years of coverage post-service
 - Thereafter, generally need a service connected disability
 - VA Health Care System
 - VA Mental Health Department
 - CHAMPVA (Health Insurance to dependents of permanently disabled veterans)
- Disability Benefits
 - For those who have a service connected disability
 - Veterans receive health care services for those disabilities



Military Culture vs. Higher Education



BATTLEMIND Skills

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| Buddies (cohesion) | vs. | Withdrawal |
| Accountability | vs. | Controlling Behavior |
| Targeted | vs. | Inappropriate Aggression |
| Tactical Awareness | vs. | Hypervigilance |
| Lethally Armed | vs. | "Locked and Loaded" at home |
| Emotional Control | vs. | Detachment |
| Mission OPSEC (Op. Security) | vs. | Secretiveness |
| Individual Responsibility | vs. | Guilt |
| Non-Defensive Driving | vs. | Aggressive Driving |
| Discipline and Ordering | vs. | Conflict |

(Walter Reed Army Institute of Research)



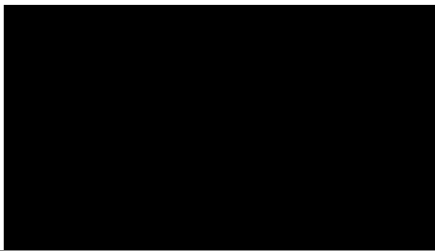
Incongruities Between Military & Academic Cultures

Cultural Reference	Military	Higher Education
Structure	Strict chain of command	Loose, collegial
Authority	Absolute	Relative
Response to authority	Obedience to superiors	Critical assessment of leadership
Teaching & learning	Transfer of info thru briefings	Constructed thru experience & discussion
Community cohesion	Group loyalty & conformity	Varied interests & individuality
Sense of purpose	Mission given & accomplished	Discover your own path
Social norms	Conservative	Liberal

Kelley, Fox, and Smith, 2013




Video: Transition




https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-MMp68F_a8





Self Check-In




Adapted from Center for Deployment Psychology Self-Awareness Exercise









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Self Check-In

I am opposed to war and believe that there is a peaceful way to resolve a crisis



War is justifiable if it stops an otherwise unstoppable aggressor while inflicting minimal damage to persons and property











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Self Check-In


Military families are strong and committed




Military families have to deal with terrible suffering














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Self Check-In

People who serve in the military or law enforcement have a higher calling to serve




People who go into service or law enforcement are on a power trip









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Self Check-In

People who like or are comfortable around firearms are inherently dangerous




Firearms themselves are not inherently dangerous or bad









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How might this impact the services you provide?

Can impact:

- How you view the student
- How you view the challenge
- How you view the solution







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Military-Affiliated Students' Perceptions of Their Strengths and Challenges

Learning Objective 2



Strengths



Strength: Appreciating Education

Value of Education

- Service members and vets have a sense that they have earned their education; dependents feel like it was a gift (if GI Bill transferred to them)
- It was a choice, not just the thing you do after high school
- Overall, data suggests better academic performance than other students



Strength: Perspective and Priorities

Perspective

- They have a sense of knowing what is “really” hard
- They talk about being able to work hard without complaining
- Respect for authority

Priorities

- Being able to take a 30,000-foot view
- **Mission Driven: Military affiliated students often see a specific purpose to university: Degree=Job**



Strength: Resilience

They perceive themselves as able to tolerate things other students can't

- They have all sorts of sayings and euphemisms from the military that highlight the necessity to keep on trucking:
 - Rub some dirt in it
 - Suck it up and drive on
 - Embrace the suck



Strength: Work Ethic

- Maturity and work ethic
- Work well under pressure
- Leadership skills
- Work well in teams



Strength: Cultural Exposure

They view themselves as more cultured and worldly

- Work with people from all over the nation
- May have seen more of the world/experience
- BUT usually from a very specific lens - the meaning they make of the exposure can be very different from student to student



Challenges of Military Affiliated Students



Challenge: Transition from Service Member/ Vet to Student

Existentially:

- Can feel like they are starting over, or went backwards in development
- They had a career
- Their non-military friends are having kids, settled in careers

For women, they are renegotiating several life/student roles, including their student status



Challenge: Direct needs

- VA
 - Certifying paperwork
 - Getting funds on time

Financial
Housing
Childcare



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Challenge: Current Service Concerns

- Active Duty
 - Change in routine
 - Less structure in academic life
 - Can get in trouble with "downtime"
 - Disruption in academic activity esp. for foundational classes
 - i.e. "Other students learned this last semester, I learned it last year. I had to relearn it"

- Guard or Reserves
 - Balancing classwork with drill weekends
 - Feeling like you are part of two different worlds



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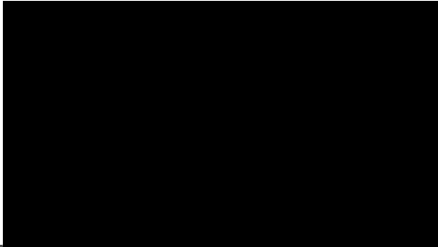
Challenge: Relating to Other College Students

- Have difficulty relating to other students
 - Affiliated students may be older
 - Frustration with peers' perceived lack of respect for education or authority
 - "You got kids walking in with headphones, just listening to it the whole time. We are not going to be doing that."
 - Perceive peers as having "baby" problems, immature
 - Feel like they have "off-color/crude/dark" humor



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Video: On Being Different



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Challenge: Other Military Peers

Military Friends

- Previous friends may be spread all over after service
- Lonelier as you move up in rank
 - Can't fraternize above or below you
- You may get to a position where there are only one or a few people of same rank in one location

May feel inadequate compared to previous military generations or other peers.

- They might feel like they don't meet expectations of the Greatest Generation
- Haven't had it as bad as Vietnam Era vets
- Self-comparison to other vets by rank, MOS, station



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Challenge: Finding Friends, Camaraderie

- In the military friends happen as a result of working together, living together
- Many affiliated students live off campus instead of residence halls
- Feeling like they don't have a space. Mimicry of a barracks
- Try not to hang out on campus



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Challenges: Stereotypes and Judgment

- Can feel attacked in classroom for political beliefs and/or service
- Can be resistant to disclose military/veteran status
- Especially difficult when they feel judgment is going to come from a professor.
Can feel penalized for different belief system
- Describe themselves as often holding back in classes
- Often feel group discussions are ill-informed
- "Twitterpinions"



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"You don't want to come across as that veteran who's still wearing a 'F... Isis' hat, got his boots on in class, went to Guantanamo Bay for a month and that taught him all he needs to know about philosophy and the political justice system."



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Barriers to Help-Seeking

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3



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"One director shared an especially compelling story about a veteran who recently arrived on her campus. He was the sole survivor of his Special Forces unit in Iraq and had great difficulty walking because shrapnel had destroyed most of the muscle in one thigh. When the semester began, the student was in such pain that he could not walk from the parking lots to class without stopping several times. However, he would not use a cane and refused to take pain medicine, because he feared becoming addicted. It was only after the Director pointed out that the University's disability parking tags were removable that she was able to convince him to start using disability parking spaces closer to the classroom buildings"

(Stackelford, 2009)



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Barriers to Help-Seeking

- Barrier 1: Stigma
- Barrier 2: Understanding
 - A) Awareness
 - B) Confidence
- Barrier 3: Structural Barriers
- Barrier 4: Preference for Military Affiliation



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Are Students Concerned about Impact of Help-Seeking on Their Careers?


Students in our surveys and interviews did not endorse this idea

According to Student Veterans of America, only 6% of students are pursuing Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting majors, where this might be an issue.



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Barrier 1: Stigma



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Military Training on Mental Health & Suicide Prevention


- Routine Training Provided
- Benefits:
 - How to identify symptoms, where to get help
- Challenges
 - Becomes seen as a box to be checked off
 - Service members start to tune out, not take it seriously



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Messages Communicated/Received Are Mixed

- Stigma within the military for getting help is decreasing on the surface
- Deeper entrenched culture still communicates the message that seeking help is not ok - "suck it up"
- Consequences of seeking help still seen by many as high



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Self-Stigma

- Having mental health symptoms means you are weak
- Stubbornness - Not wanting to admit defeat - belief in their ability to push through may result in not seeking help until it is almost too late
- Self-reliance - may lead to self medicating
- Martyr/ Self-Comparison-Their challenges are not as bad as the other guy



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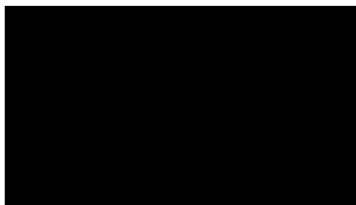
Members of Marginalized Groups

- May be less likely to seek help
- Less likely to utilize transitional services for service members
- Female Service Members: Get messages about needing to suck it up from other women
- Stereotype threat - fear of confirming stereotypes about one's group through one's performance



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Video: Military and Stigma



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Barrier 2: Understanding



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Lack of Awareness of Services

- They aren't sure what's offered
- Or where they are offered
- They aren't sure if they qualify



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Lack of Confidence in Services


- Perceive other students as kids with small or dumb problems.
- Perceive campus service providers as specializing in those type of 'kid problems'.
- Perception that campus services providers don't have experience working with vets
- Perception that they aren't trained to deal with the seriousness of the problems that vets bring
- Perceptions of ages of the counselors – see them as young and being more like peers than as authority figures to be looked up to.

“When you go see a counselor they marvel at you – you get more questions than answers.”



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Barrier 3: Structural Barriers



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Structural Barriers

- Campus Providers:
 - Limited number of sessions is not sufficient for the seriousness of their problems
 - Not being able to have an ongoing relationships
 - Having to tell their story more than once
 - Intake processes
 - Can't choose your provider
 - Don't know anything about the providers
 - Even if there is a vet on staff - they might not necessarily get to see that provider



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Barrier 4: Preference for Military Affiliation



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Preference for Military Affiliation

- Military-affiliated students have a strong preference for military affiliation when they seek help



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Video: Seeing a Provider



123

Access Points

- Large range of preferences for where and from whom they would prefer to seek help

- Veteran's Coordinator
- Peers
- Faculty Members

*All touch points have to be competent when a student reaches out for help



123

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Learning Objective 4



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Needs

Logistical Needs:

- Financial, housing, childcare

Social Needs:

- Interact with each other
- Interact with other students, including other student groups, fraternities, sorority, athletic clubs, social action groups
- Interact with general public

Academic Needs:

- Career support
- Classroom support

Health/Psychological Needs:

- Need range of options for maximum care



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Some Factors That Impact Academic Success

Harmening and Semer (2015) published a research study looking at the college experience of veterans in hopes of identifying ways of helping them be academically successful. They identified seven factors that impacted first term GPAs veterans:

1. Race
2. The number of credit hours taken
3. Talking to faculty members about career aspirations
4. Receiving oral feedback from a faculty member about academic performance
5. Attending events on campus
6. Exercising or participation in physical activities
7. Time spent commuting to class



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Supporting Students

Collaboration

- Work cohesively across college/university units, not as functional silos
- To be academically successful, military-affiliated students need support from across our campuses
 - Academic Affairs
 - Student Affairs
 - Enrollment Management

Advocacy

- May require stepping "out of your lane" or your "silo." Committee work, organizing training

Outreach

- To students, faculty, staff and community



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Three Levels of Supporting Students

- Individual
- Unit/Department
- Institutional



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Individual



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Individual

Support military-affiliated students by:

1. Demonstrating awareness, interest and knowledge
2. Making good recommendations and referrals
3. Create a welcoming and friendly environment



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1. Demonstrating Awareness, Interest and Knowledge



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Do Ask

ASK THE QUESTION- Did you ever serve?

What branch of service were you in?

What was your rank?

How long were you in the military?

What was your job or specialty?

How many deployments?

- When, where, how long?

Where was your favorite place you lived?

Would it be ok if I talked with you about your *military* experience?

What branch of service were you in?

What was your rank?

How long were you in the military?

Could you be called back to active duty?

Can you still be deployed?

Why did you leave?



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Don't Ask/Say

Inappropriate statements/comments:

- You volunteered to join the military, you take the consequences
 - Did you ever kill anyone?
 - What did it feel like to kill someone?
 - How were you injured?
 - How could you leave your family?
 - Do you agree with the President... on x, y z?
 - Do you have PTSD?
 - Were you raped?
 - What's the worst thing that happened to you over there?
 - How could you join, especially as woman, member of LGBT community?
- Understand that interjecting political beliefs may alienate these students
 - Be sensitive when thanking students for their service



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2. Making Good Recommendations and Referrals



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Know Your Resources

If you refer out, know who has military competency, knows best practices and help make the connection yourself.

- Accurate information about campus activities
- Local resources for vets
- Local resources for housing, food insecurity, etc



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Encouraging Pro-Social Behavior

- Clubs/activities that might be of interest
- Vet center/lounge
- Local veteran communities
- Other individuals (faculty, peers)



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3. Create a Welcoming and Friendly Environment



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Military Friendly Environment

- Arrange your physical space so that the student's back isn't to the door
- Have a physical "cue" that it's a welcome space
 - A magazine, a flag, a photo, etc.



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Department/Unit Support



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Support Military-Affiliated Students by

1. Outreach
2. Promoting Connectedness
3. Addressing Structural Barriers



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1. Outreach



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Outreach

- Consider identifying an individual with military affiliation (interest) to serve as the touch point for your department
 - Even the slightest bit of affiliation can make a difference
 - That person should be very honest about their experiences.
 - Military affiliated students can usually see through exaggerations
- Demystify whatever services you offer
- Collaborate with other departments



Outreach

- Outreach through a variety of means: informing students, staff and other departments about your services
 - Making outreach relevant
 - Using right words – being more direct, not sanitizing
 - Chalking
 - Social Media
 - Flyer boards
 - Listserv
 - Peer
 - Vet organizations



Intake Question

- Add formal veteran intake question
- Ex): Indicate if you are one of the following:
 - ___ **U.S. Veteran** (A Veteran is a person who has served in the U.S. Armed Forces as Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard)
 - ___ **U.S. Military Service member** (Active Duty, Reserve or National Guard)
 - ___ **Dependent** of a U.S. Military Service member or Veteran (Dependent is defined as either spouse or child)



2. Promoting Connectedness



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Programming

Best Practices:

- Diverse and regular- Different types of programming and events with variety, times of day and often
- Different populations: Vet specific/mix
- Student led as much as possible

Veteran's Events:

- Veteran job fairs
- Memorial Day events
- Veterans Day events

*It's not always an honor to ask military affiliated students to work at these events (color guard, ceremonies, etc)
 - It's work and can be seen as "mandatory 'fun.'"

Other Social Events:

- BBQs/ FOOD EVENTS
- family events
- sporting events
- fun runs
- ice skating
- hiking
- board games
- movie nights
- trips to places of interest
- networking/ meet and greets
- integrated with other students/ groups
- community service



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Mentoring Program

- Mentoring Program
 - Faculty-student
 - Peer-peer
 - Student – business professional and/or alumni



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Health and Wellness Providers



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Career Resource Center


- Translating military experience to civilian resume
- Tips for service members to translate military culture to civilian workplace
- Job fair for veterans
- Creating archive of military friendly employers/internship sites
- Encouraging internships early
- Offer specialized career guidance counseling or other programs to help military students identify careers to pursue
- Industry-employer relationship programs available to active duty military students and veterans to assist with post graduate employment outcomes



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Career Resource Center

- Provide information about job placement rates at your institution defined as the percentage of students who, within 180 days of the day they receive their degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential in a given year, obtained gainful employment in the recognized occupation for which they were trained or in a related, comparable, recognized occupation.) (Example provided from Victory Media's 2019/20 Military Friendly Survey for schools)
- Job placement rate for all students
- Job placement rate for Active Duty Military Students
- Job Placement rate for Guard and Reserve Military students
- Job Placement rate for ALL Veteran and Military students
- Job Placement rate for Military Spouses
- Job Placement rate for ALL Military Dependent students



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Counseling Centers

- Target Messaging- services, payment (if and how), location/hours
 - Use direct language, don't try to soften it, include them when talking about the services you offer
- Understand common psychological/emotional concerns
- Attend trainings on evidence based practices - CBT, PE
- Consider putting information about counselors on your website (specialties, models)
- Can a student request a counselor?
- If your agency allows you to a few "long term" clients, is that something you can communicate with your veterans services rep?
- Is there a strong campus policy/method for supporting students who are struggling with mental health?



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Counseling Centers

- Encouraging peer support:
 - Create peer to peer
 - Veterans peer groups
 - Vet Group counseling
- Outreach:
 - Collaborate with the VA/ see if you can bring in a Rep
 - Mobile Vet Centers
 - Go to the veterans - hang out at the vet center, vet lounge



15

Disability Services

- Targeted messaging - what kinds of services are offered, what kinds of accommodations can be offered, how to qualify
- Service connected disability rating and how that transfers to their services
- Understand common service related impairments, and that some students may be impacted by undiagnosed learning disabilities prior to service



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Health Centers

- Screen for Agent Orange, Gulf war Syndrome, Burn pit exposures, PTSD, TBI, etc.
- Targeted outreach - services, payment (if and how), location/hours, applicability to veterans
- Start small (willingness to get a flu shot vs ...)



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Video: Recommendations for Providers



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3. Advocating for Policies and Practices to Support Military-Affiliated Students



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Veteran Specific Offices and Spaces



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School Certifying Official (SCO)

- At minimum, every university has a SCO responsible for communicating records back and forth from the VA
- This person may be housed in Financial Aid or Student Accounts where they have other responsibilities
- This person may be housed in Veterans Services Offices or Vet Resource Centers where they do other student support activities



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Student Support Centers

Specialty Student Support Centers:

- Create a favorable campus climate for the demographic
- Have department or centers for the demographic
- Establish specific coordinators for the demographic
- Establish mentors for the demographic

- Schupp (2013), Success Rates of Campus Student Support Centers, based on data from Women's Centers and African American centers on Campuses



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Veterans Resource Center

Veterans Resource Center is the "ideal"

- Veteran Lounge
- Provides a place for military-affiliated students to go to feel like they belong
- Similar to other student success centers
- Provide a campus advocate for the military-affiliated student
- One-stop shop for military affiliated students
- A resource for VA benefits (education, health care, disability, employment, etc.)
- Help with transition from military to campus community
- Help with connecting students to campus student services
- Be a resource to campus faculty/staff
 - Counseling Services
 - Disability Services
 - Health Centers
 - Career Resource Centers
 - And others...



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Office of Veteran and Military Services

- o Laptop borrowing
- o Men and women discussion groups
- o Social media presence
- o Connections with faculty and staff
- o Connections with other units
- o Programming



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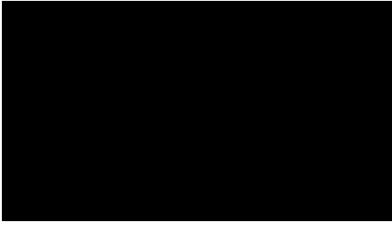
Vets to Vets Programming/Organizations

- Veteran volunteer opportunities
 - o Team Rubicon
 - o Mission continues
 - o Big Brother/Big Sister
 - o Volunteer match
- Veteran activities in groups
 - o Veterans expeditions
 - Outdoor training- ice climbing, etc
 - o Outward bound activities
 - o Warrior Writers
 - o Vet to Vet peer groups
 - o American Women Veterans
 - o Team Red White and Blue
- Student or veteran organizations- interacting with partner groups
 - o Student Veterans of America
 - o Team Rubicon
 - o VFW



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Importance of Being Around Other Veterans



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Other Institutional & Academic Student Services



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Campus Policies

- Targeted recruitment
- Admission policies
- Transfer credits for military experience
- Better strategy for counting military affiliation on campus
- Policies on viewpoint diversity

Other policies – examples from <https://newpaltz.edu/veterans/policies.html>

- Housing
- Meal plan
- Readmission
- Military Leave of absence
- In State Tuition
- Circumstances Beyond Control (CBC) - Likely where you will be involved the most



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Admissions

- Targeted outreach to military affiliated applicants
- Assist with application process
- Credit evaluation - accepting military credit
- One stop - applications for GI Bill, TA, FAFSA, etc. when applying



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Orientation

Best practice is not a separate orientation, but a breakout session

- Have Veteran and Military Services office involved in check-in
- During breakout session
 - If possible, led by your Office of Veteran & Military Services
 - Meet other military-affiliated students
 - School Certifying Official
 - Accomplish education benefits
 - Discuss on and off campus resources
 - Integrate student support services
 - Disability Services
 - Counseling Center
 - Career Resource Center
 - Academic Advising
 - Health Office



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Academic Advising

- Best practices on how to advise student veterans
- Course selection and course sequence - doing GE later, social science earlier)
- Class schedule - creating class schedules that can allow vets to access VA appointments



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Academic Support/ Tutoring

Students may struggle to transition from military and academic communication styles:

- Military Communication is successful if it's "unambiguous and undebatable."
- Academic writing is non-linear; with a messy process, meant to impact the way readers think.



Academic

- Academic
 - Priority registration
 - Encourage professional development for faculty
 - Syllabus - informs students
 - Provost Annual Welcome - informs faculty



Sample Syllabus Statement

Veteran & Military Services statement: *Office of Veteran & Military Services (OVMS) is committed to serving the needs of veterans, service members and their dependents during their transition from military life to student life. Student veterans, service members or their dependents who need assistance while attending campus may refer to WEBSITE; call PHONE; e-mail EMAIL; or stop by the BUILDING AND ROOM.*



Sample Provost Welcome

*In partnership with academic and professional faculty, the **Office of Veteran & Military Services (OVMS)** makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals who must be absent due to military obligations. The student and faculty member must agree that the length of the absence is reasonable for the type and structure of the course and must devise a written plan detailing expectations for successful course completion. Students who actively participate in the United States Military Reserve or National Guard are highly encouraged to provide each faculty member, as well as the OVMS, a copy of their Reserve and/or National Guard schedule during the first week of class each semester.*



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In the classroom

- Faculty/classroom
 - Clear syllabus
 - Having flexibility to account for DoD, VA, other military related competing interests
 - Preparedness to see themes of military experiences in assignments
 - Ask if there is anything you can do to help or are there any special accommodations that could be made to ensure their Academic success
 - Service learning
 - Small group activities/ team based learning
 - Student disruptions will often be unique, and many will require individual solutions
 - Understand impact of different abilities in classroom (i.e., psychological, learning, physical)
 - Cultural competence training



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Classroom Environment

Physical

- Appropriate physical adaptations
- Problematic classrooms: rooms where your back is to others, large rooms with multiple entrances and exits, lots of external sounds, lots of windows
- Solutions: Ensure ability for student to sit where they can feel secure (and understand that a student who is in the back may be engaged)
- Arrangement of offices



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Classroom Environment

Emotional

- Encouraging military-affiliated students to self-identify in confidence and ensuring you are a resource.
- Don't single out the student as a representative of the military
- Saying inappropriate statements/comments - separate feelings about war from service members
- Don't presume all students are conservatives/ militaristic
- Don't pity them
- Redirect conversations as needed



173

Classroom Environment

Behavioral

- Course expectations that minimize distracting behavior
- Clear guidelines around interrupting and asking questions



174

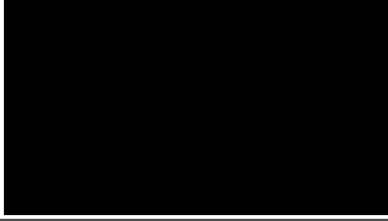
Online Education

- Very attractive to military affiliated students
- Often encouraged by military
 - Can be one online class at a brick and mortar, hybrid technology, full degree at brick and mortar, completely online
 - Would still benefit from knowledge of actual services offered
- Should consider the possibility that some students may be overseas active-duty military personnel
- Faculty can implement a more responsive instructional posture by communicating daily, responding to inquiries expeditiously, and providing frequent feedback



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Video: Final Reflections



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Questions?



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