



CAREER PLANNING AND ADULT DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

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Veterans!

Robert Miles, Mary Buzzetta, Krysta Kurzynski
Guest Editors

- Recent research on veterans' career development and career transition
- Career development mechanics can help returning veterans find a job
- The advantage of being a veteran
- Applying Schlossberg's transition model of life transitions to veterans
- Counseling veterans with disabilities: apply cognitive information processing
- Understanding minority veterans, female veterans, and military spouses
- Mental health issues and unemployment among veterans.
- The reality of veteran unemployment: the National Guard and Reserve
- Strategies for career development practitioners working with veterans.
- Career counseling strategies and challenges for transitioning veterans
- The Veterans and Military Occupations Finder
- Transition GPS (Goals Plans Success), the Uniformed Services Transition Assistance Program
- Supporting the mental health needs of student veterans
- Challenges faced by community colleges in improving services for veterans
- Unique veteran services initiatives at John Carroll University
- Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) Initiative
- Professional coaching and resume writing in successful veteran transitions
- Prepare to move from military to highly competitive civilian labor market
- Bibliography of Military Career Transition Research, 2000-2014
- How to help veterans build competitive civilian professional resumes
- Online NCDA resources/materials for career practitioners assisting veterans

CAREER PLANNING and ADULT DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

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Foreword

Looking Ahead with the Journal

The authors of the 23 articles in this Special Veterans issue of the *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal* have been guided by Guest Editors Bob Miles, Mary Buzzetta, and Krysta Kurzynski, all of the National Career Development Association Veterans Committee. We sincerely thank our Guest Editors and the authors of these 23 outstanding articles! I want to personally thank the person who led the entire process and who coordinated with the Journal--Robert Miles--who chairs the NCDA Veterans Committee. Thank you, Bob, for your excellent leadership.

Here is what we have planned for future issues of the Journal:

Career Assessments, with Guest Editors **Debra Osborn** of Florida State University and **Seth Hayden** of Wake Forest University.

Career Counseling Approaches with Clients Having Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia, or Learning Disability with Guest Editor **Abiola Dipeolu** of the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.

The Connection between Career and Mental Health, with Guest Editors **Seth Hayden** and **Debra Osborn** of Florida State University.

Book Reviews 2015, with our Book Reviews Editor **Maggi Kirkbride** of San Diego, California. Please contact Maggi [(619) 980-7854; e-mail: mkpayment@usa.net] if you would like to be a book reviewer, and also please suggest new books that you would like to review.

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION TO THIS ISSUE

Background

Work on this special Journal issue began when **Rich Feller**, who was president of the National Career Development Association (NCDA) and serves on the editorial board of this Journal, contacted **Bob Miles**, co-chair of the NCDA Veterans Committee, about an “*exciting opportunity*” soon after the 2013 NCDA Conference in Boston. The editor of this Journal had printed a notice in the summer 2013 issue that he was looking ahead to a special veterans issue and asked, “*How about a little help in putting together this issue?*” Bob accepted the invitation to serve as guest editor with the understanding that he would need help from two or three other members of the Veterans Committee. Fortunately, **Mary Buzzetta** and **Krysta Kurzynski** quickly agreed to serve as co-editors.

Since it was formed as a task force in 2011, the Veterans Committee has focused the resources of NCDA on veterans’ career development issues by encouraging committee members and others to present at the annual conference and organizing into sub-committees. In 2012, a research sub-committee compiled a bibliography of journal articles published since 2000, which demonstrated a need for additional research on veterans’ career development concerns. This special journal issue was an opportunity to invite prominent members of NCDA, committee members, and others to share their findings on veterans’ career and life transitions with a broad readership of career development practitioners.

Richard Bolles and **John Krumboltz** were among the first invited to contribute articles. Their participation undoubtedly encouraged others to consider writing articles. More than half of the articles are written by members of the NCDA Veterans Committee and reflect their commitment to improving veterans’ success in securing employment, succeeding in higher education, and improving the quality of research on veterans’ career-related issues.

This special issue is intended to improve the quality of services available to veterans, encourage more career development practitioners to seek opportunities to assist veterans, and stimulate a discussion related to veterans’ career development issues. Articles are organized into eight sections.

The three co-editors welcome readers’ comments and questions, either to one of us or to individual authors. NCDA members interested in joining

the Veterans Committee may contact Bob Miles. Contact us as follows: **Bob Miles** at *rmiles6514@sbcglobal.net*, **Mary Buzzetta** at *mbuzzetta@fsu.edu*, and **Krysta Kurzynski** at *kkurzynski@jcu.edu*.

Contents of the issue

An article by **Cheri Butler**, former NCDA President, and an overview of recent research on veterans' career development introduces this issue.

Cheri Butler, who formed the Veterans Task Force during her tenure as NCDA President, appropriately begins this special issue by describing her motivation for starting the Veterans Task Force and its role in raising awareness of veterans' issues in NCDA during the past three years.

In their article titled **Career Transition and Military Veterans: An Overview of Literature from 2000 to 2013**, **Heather Robertson**, **Robert Miles**, and **Michelle Mallen** summarize the **literature on the topic of career transition and military concerns**. Their article also addresses **current gaps in the career transition literature** as it pertains to military members and veterans.

Three featured articles in the second section will be of interest to colleagues working with veterans: Personal statements from **Richard Bolles** and **John Krumboltz**, two of the most prominent leaders in the career development field and veterans themselves; and an article by **Mary Anderson** and **Jane Goodman** about applying **Nancy Schlossberg's** transition model to veterans.

In **A Serious Call for More Career Development Mechanics Who Can Help Returning Veterans**, **Richard Bolles** urges three groups of career development practitioners to assist veterans in finding a job, their most pressing need, and introduces a new chapter for veterans in the upcoming 2015 edition of *What Color is Your Parachute?*

In **Veterans Creating a New Life**, **John Krumboltz** tells a story about the advantage of being a veteran, offers lessons he learned from his military service and other life experiences, and provides *bottom-line advice* for newly discharged veterans.

Mary Anderson and **Jane Goodman**, co-authors with **Nancy Schlossberg** of four editions of *Counseling Adults in Transition: Linking Schlossberg's Theory to Practice in a Diverse World* (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012), contribute **From Military to Civilian Life: Applications of Schlossberg's Model for Veterans in Transition**. Schlossberg's model of life transitions is frequently cited as a guide for practitioners and a basis for researchers who are concerned with veterans' issues. This article guides practitioners in applying the framework of Schlossberg's model to assist veterans. It provides case studies of utilizing the model with veterans. Understanding different

needs of an increasingly diverse population of veterans and their families is essential for career development practitioners. The third section consists of four articles that describe different populations practitioners will encounter, including one on military spouses.

In Hope for the Future: Career Counseling for Military Personnel and Veterans with Disabilities, Seth Hayden and Mary Buzzetta discuss common concerns related to returning military service members and veterans transitioning with a physical or psychological disability, the benefits of career counseling as it relates to supporting this population, and the application of the cognitive information processing (CIP) approach in addressing the needs of this population.

In Understanding Minority Veterans, author **Hank Harris** provides readers with a brief history of minority veterans, unique issues they may encounter, and the evolving diversity of this population. Additionally, he includes a brief discussion of current support career development practitioners can offer in working with minority veterans.

Meghan Reppert, Mary Buzzetta, and Timothy Rose provide insight into the unique challenges and strengths of the female veteran population in their article, **Implications for Practice: Assisting Female Veterans in their Career Development.** Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg's (2012) theory of transition is also explored as a useful lens to use when working with female veterans' experiencing challenges in their career development.

In A Paradigm Shift: Strategies for Assisting Military Spouses in Obtaining a Successful Career Path, authors **Pamela McBride and Lori Cleymans** examine the challenges military spouses encounter and provide strategies for career practitioners working with this population. The strategies discussed in their article include: creating a career lattice, increasing marketability with each move, understanding the range of professional educational opportunities, learning and speaking the job market lingo, documenting accomplishments, and using social media for career development and networking.

In the fourth section, two widely recognized experts provide in-depth discussions on vital concerns of mental health issues and unemployment among veterans.

In Mental Health and Veteran Voices on Employability, Amy Stevens, a retired Navy Lieutenant and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), provides a brief review of military culture and information about common mental health concerns related to military service. *Veteran Voices* are provided from social media with permission from authors to assist in

understanding how veterans view their own mental health challenges.

In **The Reality of Veteran Unemployment: The National Guard and Reserve**, author **Ted Daywalt**, president and CEO of VetJobs.com, explains how members of the National Guard and Reserve (NG&R) are facing serious unemployment problems due to the call up policy and the increased use of the NG&R for both the wars and peacetime requirements. His article reviews the impact this has had on the veteran unemployment rate, as well as the difficulty it has created for the NG&R to obtain employment related to their skill set and education.

Section five presents two articles on strategies that can guide career development practitioners interested in broadening their skills in working with veterans.

Robert Miles examines issues that arise in career counseling with the current population of veterans in **Career Counseling Strategies and Challenges for Transitioning Veterans**. His article demonstrates widely accepted career development concepts and strategies that can be adapted and discusses the application of various career counseling theories in working with the veteran population.

In **Development of the Veterans and Military Occupations Finder (VMOF): A New Career Counseling Tool for Veterans and Military Personnel**, authors **Melissa Messer** and **Jennifer Greene** introduce a new resource, the *Veterans and Military Occupations Finder*, to address the challenges veterans face transitioning to the civilian workforce. This resource was developed using Holland's theory of personality types, and serves as a crosswalk which provides counselors and other professionals with useful information regarding the Holland code types related to specific military occupations.

Six articles in the sixth section describe assistance provided to veterans in different settings.

Understanding Transition GPS (Goals Plans Success), the Uniformed Services Transition Assistance Program, written by **Shawn Conlon** and **Lori Cleymans**, describes the newly instituted version of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provided to all service members prior to separation from the military. The new program requires service members to demonstrate career readiness standards that are aligned with their stated post-service goals to include three distinct tracks: higher education, career and technical training, and entrepreneurship.

Kaye Whitley and **Paul Tschudi** describe in **Life beyond War: Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Student Veterans** the findings of two symposia that discussed challenges facing veterans with disabilities

enrolled in colleges and universities. Attendees focused on mental health disabilities and developed twelve recommendations that will guide institutions interested in improving their services for returning veterans.

Robert Miles outlines the distinct challenges faced by community colleges as they develop services for returning veterans in **Career and Life Transitions of Veterans Enrolled in Community Colleges and Programs Developed to Meet Their Needs**. This article surveys studies that compare the responses of two-year and four-year institutions to their student veterans and reviews recommendations to provide better services for veterans, focusing on suggestions related to career and life transitions of veterans at community colleges.

In **Veteran Services in Higher Education: Going Above and Beyond**, **Krysta Kurzynski** describes the unique supportive initiatives in place at John Carroll University, and provides suggestions for ways in which other higher education institutions can go above and beyond to improve the services offered to veterans on their campuses. Her article offers suggestions for enlisting and empowering a supportive team, as well as assisting veterans in their transition to the campus environment.

Eight authors from the Veterans Administration, led by **Shannon McCaslin**, describe a national pilot program of the VA in **Facilitating Veterans' Academic Success: Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) Initiative**. The program incorporates partnerships with college and university campuses and the VA medical center to overcome barriers to care, and ultimately, to provide convenient services and resources to support the transition from military service to the college campus. This article describes potential challenges and needs of military service members transitioning to the college setting and how the VITAL initiative is addressing them.

Kathryn Troutman and **John Gagnon**, authors of **The Role of Professional Coaching and Resume Writing in Successful Veteran Transitions**, contend that there are substantial benefits to hands-on, individualized, professional assistance to veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce. The authors seek to begin a discussion and encourage further study about the best approaches to help veterans transition into rewarding civilian careers.

The seventh section consists of an important resource for veterans seeking employment, a guide by **Dick Gather**. **Military Transition Management: Preparing to Make the Move from the Military to a Highly Competitive Civilian Labor Market**, by **Dick Gaither**, is a comprehensive guide which provides information on the transition from military service to civilian employment. It clearly explains the challeng-

es faced and offers a wealth of resources.

The final section includes three resources for career development practitioners.

Four members of the research subcommittee (of the NCDA Veteran's Committee), including **Mary Buzzetta, Robert Miles, Heather Robertson, and Stefani Schomaker**, compiled the **Bibliography of Military Career Transition Research, 2000-Present** on veterans' transitions from military service to civilian life. This comprehensive bibliography includes over 90 citations from varied sources including scholarly journals, doctoral dissertations, books, and magazine articles.

Amy Sargent describes a system for assisting veterans to learn how to translate their skill sets for transition into the civilian world of work in **A Proposed Guide for Assisting Veterans in Constructing Civilian Resumes**. In four easy steps, career practitioners can work with veteran clients to effectively build stronger, more competitive professional resumes.

On-line Resources for Career Practitioners & Material on the NCDA Web-site by **Stevie Puckett** provides a quick-reference short list of on-line resources for career practitioners assisting veteran clients. This reference list for distribution to transitioning military members is suggested along with an explanation as to why each site is included.

We are grateful that so many of our colleagues agreed to contribute to this special issue and appreciate the guidance of Steven Beasley, Managing Editor of the Journal.

Robert Miles, Mary Buzzetta, and Krysta Kurzynski, Guest Editors

References

Anderson, M. L., Goodman, J., & Schlossberg, N. K. (2012). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking Schlossberg's theory to practice in a diverse world* (4th Ed.). New York: Springer.

Chapter 1

FOREWORD to this SPECIAL VETERANS ISSUE by Cheri Butler

I am not a veteran of any war. However, my father served during World War II in the Construction Battalion that helped to rebuild Pearl Harbor and my husband was in the army paying the troops during Vietnam. As a result of these connections, I have always been supportive of the military. I watched sadly as my contemporaries either didn't return alive from the Vietnam War or returned injured either physically, emotionally or both and were reviled and disdained. While I wasn't a strong supporter of that unpopular war, I did not blame those young men who were drafted into service and forced to fight using unprecedented and unfamiliar tactics.

When I became President of the National Career Development Association (NCDA) in 2010 and realized that there was much that NCDA could do for all veterans and particularly the large numbers who were returning from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), I asked the Board to allow me to form a task force that would investigate what we as an organization could do for these heroes.

There were several other initiatives in the works at the time, including the addition of information in the CDF curriculum regarding working with veterans, as well as the monograph, *Career Development for Transitioning Veterans* by Carmen Stein-McCormick, Debra S. Osborn, Seth C.W. Hayden, Dan Van Hoose with Military Consultants, Thomas McCormick, USN (Ret.) and Major C. Camille LaDrew, USAF, that was published in 2013 and is available through NCDA's Resource Store.

Since its inception and with the leadership of Robert Miles, a Vietnam veteran who now co-chairs the committee with Charles Lehman, the original task force transitioned to a regular standing committee for NCDA in two years and has accomplished much in its few short years of existence. The Veterans Committee now consists of over 80 members. A priority has been to increase the number of sessions related to veterans' issues at the annual conference. At the 2012 conference, there was at least one session on veterans' issues in every time slot.

The committee has formed sub-committees, including the Research Subcommittee that produced a bibliography of journal articles written in the past ten years, which is posted on the NCDA web-site and is continually updated.

This Veterans special issue of the *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal* is guest edited by three members of the Veterans Committee. I continue to serve proudly on this committee and I was honored to be asked to write part of the foreword for this publication. Many thanks to NCDA for its interest in and support of this initiative.

About the Author

Cheri Butler earned the Bachelors degree in Education at The Ohio State University and the MA in Career Development at John F. Kennedy University. She has been a Career Counselor for over 20 years. Both her father (WWII) and her husband (Vietnam) are veterans and she has an enduring interest in the treatment of and the services provided for U. S. veterans. She initiated the Veterans Task Force in 2010 as part of her year as President of NCDA. She continues to serve on the Veterans Committee and continues to speak nationwide and worldwide on career counseling with returning heroes. She currently works as a Career Counselor at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and maintains a private career counseling practice.

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Chapter 2

CAREER TRANSITION and MILITARY VETERANS: An overview of literature from 2000 to 2013.

by Heather Robertson, Robert Miles, and Michelle Mallen

Abstract

The Veterans' Committee of the National Career Development Association (NCDA) was tasked with reviewing and compiling current literature on the topic of career transition and military concerns. A subcommittee of four members conducted a literature search, compiled resources from their search, and obtained input from the committee as well. The outcome was a comprehensive bibliography including over 90 citations from varied sources including scholarly journals, doctoral dissertations, books, and magazine articles. This article contains a summary of the literature, while also calling for additional research to address current gaps in the career transition literature as it pertains to military members and veterans.

The National Career Development Association's (NCDA) Veterans Committee initiated the compilation of career transition literature pertaining to military members and veterans. Four members of the research subcommittee, including practitioners and researchers, compiled a bibliography in 2012 of literature from the past ten years on veterans' transitions from military service to civilian life. The purpose of the bibliography addressed two primary functions. First, a compilation of military career transition literature would be helpful to career practitioners and those assisting military members in career transition. Additionally, a compilation of military career transition literature would allow researchers and practitioners to identify shortcomings in the existing literature and research base, thus paving the way for new research and publications pertaining to military career transition. The bibliography is available publically on the NCDA website (www.ncda.org) and serves as a benchmark for current research and publications in the field, which can be updated regularly.

The findings included scholarly journals, books, book chapters, doctoral dissertations, government and agency reports, as well as reputable maga-

zines in the field of education and career development, including The Chronicle of Higher Education and NCDA's web magazine, Career Convergence. A decision was made to focus on literature since 2000. This decision was based on the committee's emphasis on those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan as a result of increased enlistments after the events of September 11, 2000, specifically Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). Over 90 documents were selected and categorized into nine categories including: female veterans, veterans with disabilities, military family and spouses, theory application, veterans' employment, student veterans and other educational settings, other, NCDA publications, and related books and articles (Buzzetta, Miles, Robertson, & Schomaker, 2014). The complete bibliography is available on NCDA's website and the most current version is printed as an appendix to this journal. **Table 1 [see Appendix]** provides a summary of the publications, including the number and type of publications in each category.

Overview of Literature

Literature was compiled into nine categories for the bibliography. A brief summary of the main concepts in each category follows. It should be noted that while all literature involved military members or veterans, not all literature applied directly to the career transition process. However, it is important that career practitioners recognize how issues and experiences beyond the immediate career transition process may impact the transitioning service member, and as such, these publications were deemed relevant to the bibliography.

Female veterans

Only one of the three articles included pertaining to female veterans specifically addresses the issue of career transition. A report by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation (BPWF, 2007) outlines both the physical and psychological supports needed for the transitioning female veteran. The organization surveyed 1,629 female veterans who reported having been out of the service for an average of seven years. Of those, nearly half (44 per cent) indicated that they were still not completely adjusted to their civilian role. Female veterans reported difficulties with emotional challenges, attitudes of employers, lack of formal education or credentials, and the importance of starting the preparation process before separating from the military (BWPF, 2007). Other articles in this category closely align with student veterans (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009) or women in combat roles (Jeffreys, 2007).

Veterans with disabilities

The primary theme of the literature in this section involves increased

numbers of veterans with disabilities returning to the community, the workforce, or the college campus. Both physical disabilities (e.g. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)) and mental health disorders (e.g. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)) are addressed in the literature. DiRamio and Spires (2009) discuss the increased ratio of injury to death for the returning soldier when compared to previous conflicts, such as the Vietnam War. Advances in technology, both medical and protective armor, contribute to this trend. DiRamio and Spires (2009) address the importance of universities partnering with local military hospitals in order to provide support to veterans with disabilities who are planning to return to campus. Karney, Ramchand, Osilla, Caldarone, and Burns (2008) examine long term outcomes for OEF/OIF veterans with mental illness, including consequences such as suicide, substance use, homelessness, and unemployment. They provide recommendations for policy and labor market outcomes. Other researchers examine the specific employment outcomes for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury, although not specifically those of veterans (Keyser-Marcus et al., 2002).

Military family and spouses

The struggle of the military spouse and/or military family is often forgotten when evaluating the needs of the transitioning service member. Gleiman and Swearengen (2012) provide a solid overview of the career development needs of military spouses and families, including important concepts such as loss of identity, need for independence, and power-load-balance. While not specifically focusing on the career transition process, Drummet, Coleman, and Cable (2003) explain important concepts in the military family such as relocation, separation and reunion, and military culture.

Theory application

Three out of five of the articles in the theory application category of the bibliography address the use of the cognitive information processing (CIP) model with transitioning veterans. Bullock, Braud, Andrews, and Phillips (2009) examine relationships between career development and personality types. Clemens and Milsom (2008) utilize a case study approach with CIP and enlisted service members. Clemens and Milsom's article represents the only article on veterans' career transition found in an NCDA journal, *The Career Development Quarterly*. CIP utilizes the stages of self knowledge, options knowledge, decision making, and executive processing in order to facilitate career decision making (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004).

Veterans' employment

Employment outcomes for veterans appear to vary. For example, Zivin

et al. (2012) examined the relationships between veterans' depression and employment, and not surprisingly, found that those who were unemployed exhibited more depressive symptoms and those who were employed exhibited fewer depressive symptoms. The authors continue to describe how longer periods of employment can reduce depressive symptoms in veterans. Conversely, Burnett-Zeigler et al. (2011) conducted one of the few studies on National Guard members. Their findings indicated that mental health may not be as significant a deterrent to employment as anticipated, and that other factors, such as age and family income, may be more closely related to employment. In addition, their study on 585 National Guard members found that those who had been exposed to trauma, as well as those who had been deployed more than once, were more likely to be employed. Factors related to unemployment included education (high school education or less), lower socioeconomic status, and reports of lower mental health (Burnett-Zeigler et al., 2011). Other literature in this category suggests that veterans face difficulties in securing employment (Prudential Financial, 2012; Zivin et al., 2011), yet also find success in their employment outcomes (Feistrizer, 2005).

Student veterans and other educational settings

The large number of manuscripts in the student veterans' category of the bibliography can primarily be accounted for by two special issues in two different journals pertaining to military college students. Specifically, eight of the 40 articles were retrieved from the 2009 New Directions for Student Services (Issue 126) and seven were retrieved from the 2012 New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education (Issue 136). Although nearly one third of the publications originated from these two special issues, the volume of literature on student veterans far outnumbers any other section of the bibliography. This may be attributed to the accessibility of student veterans to university researchers on college campuses.

The primary focus of these articles involves the difficulties veterans face when transitioning to the college campus, and the resources that should be implemented in order to help them succeed. Many articles focus on the need for veteran-friendly campuses, emphasizing important concepts such as seamless services and peer-to-peer programs for student veterans (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009; Branker, 2009; Brown, & Gross, 2011; DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008). Beyond these campus-wide concepts, information on student veteran organizations (Summerlot, Green, & Parker, 2009), academic advising for student veterans (Wilson & Smith, 2009), and tips for faculty teaching student veterans (Hassan, Jackson, Lindsay, McCabe, & Sanders, 2010) are also included.

Other (transition adjustment)

One of the largest categories of the career transition bibliography is entitled *other*. However, the majority of these articles address adjustment issues for those who have experienced the military to civilian transition process. As such, this category of the bibliography may be more appropriately titled *transition adjustment* or another descriptor which addresses this adjustment theme. Several quantitative research studies are included in this section, three of which are specifically aimed at high-level military personnel and officers (Baruch, & Quick, 2007; Baruch & Quick, 2009; Spiegel & Shultz, 2003). Consistent findings include the importance of pre-retirement planning (Spiegel & Shultz, 2003), the importance of family support (Morin, 2011; Robertson, 2013), and the unique differences in transition outcomes for post 9/11 veterans when compared to other service eras (Morin, 2011).

NCDA Publications

NCDA has several Career Convergence web magazine articles, a book chapter (Engels & Harris, 2002), and an entire monograph (Stein-McCormick, Osborn, Hayden, & Van Hoose, 2013) dedicated to the career transition needs of veterans. Only one article pertaining to veterans, however, was published from 2000-2013 in the NCDA's career development journal, *Career Development Quarterly*. NCDA's web magazine, *Career Convergence*, provided a wide array of practical tools and hands-on resources to be utilized with transitioning service members. Many of these articles are written by current or former military members and/or military spouses, and provide first-hand perspectives of the frustrations, challenges, and successes of the career transition process.

A final category of the bibliography entitled *related books and articles* addresses educational needs and benefits for military members, as well as additional publications on the transition process.

Implications for Practice

The existing literature on military career development provides career practitioners with direction and guidance pertaining to this unique population, regardless of one's work setting. Four primary themes consistently emerged in the literature, regardless of the category or classification. Transferability of skills and difficulty translating military skills to civilian occupations was addressed in several publications. There are multiple tools available through the American Council on Education (ACE) which can assist service members with this process. Thus, lack of information, or lack of disseminating information, was another theme that was consistent in the literature. Military members often stated that they were unaware of job search strategies, services, and benefits, or they were unclear on how to access them. Career development practitioners have a re-

sponsibility to become familiar with the many tools and resources which exist for the veteran population. Career Convergence articles provided in the NCDA bibliography are an excellent starting point. In addition, there is a responsibility to help disseminate accurate and timely information to veterans regarding the career transition process, in a format that is easily and readily accessible. Many career practitioners point veterans to multiple internet and online resources, but these sites can be overwhelming and isolating without proper guidance and direction from a career development professional.

Guidance and direction leads to the theme of support, which was addressed repeatedly across the literature. Veterans experience different types of career transition, including retirement, transition to college, or transition to the workforce, during early adulthood, middle adulthood, and later adulthood. Regardless of their situation, military members need support in their career transition process, both before, during, and after the transition. This support may come from different sources, whether it be a family member, spouse, advisor, mentor, medical team, or support group. Most articles cite the importance of supporting the service members during the transition process with the most effective support coming from other veterans. Several publications mentioned the importance of veteran peer-to-peer support, including fellow-veteran college students, former-military university professors, and professional VA peer mentors who are also veterans. Service members and veterans appear to respond well to support from other veterans, thus career practitioners working with veterans should familiarize themselves with veteran peer support programs in their area, as well as online or distance mentoring services.

A forward-thinking approach would be to train veterans in Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) programs, which would allow them to provide career transition services to their peers based both in sound theory/practice, as well as personal experience. This training could serve as entry-level professional training for veterans interested in pursuing a degree in a helping profession, such as social work or counseling.

Opportunities for Further Research

It was intended that upon completion of the bibliography the subcommittee would develop recommendations for future research. This article may serve as recommendations to the NCDA Research Committee.

In general, compared to research on medical and mental health issues, research on veterans' career and life transitions is limited. Despite the relatively large number of articles dedicated to success of college student veterans, none of the recent articles specifically address career development needs, college career center best practices, or career outcomes for

student veterans. There also is a shortage of quantitative research among the student veterans' literature. Among the 40 articles listed on student veterans, nearly half ($n = 16$) were either qualitative interviews (ranging from 6 to 25 interview participants) or best/recommended practices based on single university experiences. While diverse research methods are always recommended, quantitative research can help to build the argument for needed services. Several studies utilized one-time surveys or analysis of snapshot data. It would be helpful to research the career development experiences of veterans over time in a longitudinal study. Quantitative and longitudinal data allows researchers to demonstrate impact and outcomes over time. Demonstrating impact data may be effective in advocating for services, grants, and funding opportunities to enhance veterans' career development processes.

To successfully complete such research, collaborations are needed within programs provided by military installations (such as transition assistance programs), as well as post-service organizations, such as the Veterans Administration (VA). Career development researchers need to initiate collaborations with the VA on research that explores different factors affecting veterans' transitions. The VA has pioneered innovative treatments for PTSD and TBI, extensively researching the medical outcomes; however, the VA provides limited assistance and research into the transition from treatment to successful civilian life and careers. In addition, there are no published studies that compile basic statistics on veterans' enrolled under VA educational benefits, such as graduation rates and semester-to-semester retention or studies of veterans who withdraw from school.

Career development concepts and assessments would contribute valuable insights into documenting successes and suggesting improved services. This research could assess the effectiveness of interventions based on different career development concepts. A professional association, such as NCDA, could assume the leadership role to develop relationships with associations and agencies working with veterans and seek funding for research.

There is an urgent need to compare the transitions of different populations of veterans because the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been waged by an increasingly diverse military. National Guard members and reservists represent a unique population regarding their career development needs because of their fluctuation between military and civilian employment. The current bibliography contains only two articles directly focused on the experiences of National Guard members and reservists (Bauman, 2009; Burnett-Zeigler et al., 2011). [1]

Examining National Guard members or reservists over time, in addition to active service members, could contribute to the career development literature for veterans.

Research is also lacking in the career development literature for other populations that encounter different obstacles in their transitions including female veterans, veterans with disabilities, veterans with criminal records, and younger veterans. Research into the needs of veterans with PTSD and other mental health disabilities which assesses the effectiveness of different strategies should be a priority. Practitioners could benefit from having access to better information about similarities and differences amongst these groups and the effectiveness of different intervention strategies. Here again, collaborative research is essential because these groups encounter inter-related issues.

Comparison data between military and civilian populations is also recommended. University career services might consider a formal research study in which data on student veterans, as well as non-veteran students, is evaluated pertaining to career center visits, mentoring relationships, graduation rates, and post-graduation employment. Most university career centers survey students at six months or twelve months post-graduation to assess employment outcomes. Minimally, employment data pertaining to student veterans and non-veteran students should be examined.

A final area that warrants attention in veterans' career development literature is the lack of formal and informal assessment, in addition to expanded theory applications. While some researchers do attempt to examine employment in relation to personality or mental health factors, only one article attempted to create an assessment instrument to measure veterans' readjustment in several areas including "career challenges, social difficulties, intimate relationship problems, health problems, concerns about deployment, and PTSD symptoms" (Katz, Cojucar, Davenport, Pedram, & Lindl, 2010, p.41). While assessment is not the only means of treating or evaluating veterans, assessments do provide a benchmark for present functioning, which in turn can be used to measure growth, development, and satisfaction throughout one's development. In addition, research on additional theories and strategies is needed, as the cognitive information processing (CIP) approach and Schlossberg's transition model are currently the only two theories cited in the literature. [2]

The authors of this article, as well as the two other authors of the bibliography, strongly recommend that NCDA make career development and transition research for veterans a priority. NCDA can facilitate this

effort by making veterans the focus of attention for members at research universities (and their doctoral students). NCDA can also provide support and guidance regarding research to members/practitioners assisting veterans in work settings outside of universities. The authors also urge NCDA to facilitate collaborations with formal transition programs for service members. Examples of such programs include Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) on military installations, Veterans Administration transition services, university support programs, such as Student Veterans of America (SVA), and other settings, such as community colleges and one-stop centers. These collaborations could likely enhance a longitudinal career development research agenda for military and veterans.

Conclusion

Imagine the career development needs of these veterans: (1) a young Marine, who enlisted immediately after high school, separating from service after two tours in Iraq and five years of service, (2) a midlife National Guard member who has fluctuated between deployments and civilian employment for the past eight years, and (3) a Naval Admiral retiring after 20+ years of service, seeking part-time employment to bridge the gap to full retirement. Military veterans encompass a wide range of individuals with diverse career development needs. The current career development literature begins to address the needs of these populations. There exists a depth of research pertaining to veteran experiences on college campuses, which is an important step in the career development of some service members. There is also a multitude of publications on best practices for veterans, as well as tools and resources available to assist service members with their career development needs. However, the range of veterans' career development needs far exceeds the limits of the existing research and publications. There is a need for longitudinal and quantitative research, theory application, formal and informal assessment, as well as research on special populations of veterans. Career practitioners and researchers are called upon to examine these areas, as well as others, which will ultimately assist veterans with their career development.

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End Notes

1. Ted Daywalt's article in this issue clearly indicates that Guard members and reservists are experiencing the greatest difficulty in securing employment, which calls for research into the obstacles they face and advocacy on their behalf.
2. Conceptual articles in this issue are intended to challenge research-

ers to compare the effectiveness of approaches based on different career development models.

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APPENDIX

Table 1:

Summary of Military Career Transition Literature Compiled by NCDA Veterans Committee

Table 1: Summary of Military Career Transition Literature Compiled by NCDA Veterans Committee

Content Area	Total Number (#)	Scholarly Journal	Book/Book Chapter	Magazine	Doctoral Dissertation	Government or Agency Report
<i>Female veterans</i>	3	2				1
<i>Veterans with disabilities</i>	7	5	1			1
<i>Military Family/Spouses</i>	5	4	1			
<i>Theory Application</i>	4	3		1		
<i>Veterans' Employment</i>	6	3				3
<i>Student Veterans</i>	40	27	5	1	3	4
<i>Other (Transition adjustment)</i>	11	6	2		1	2
<i>NCDA Publications</i>	13		2	11		
<i>Related Books and Articles</i>	4		2	2		
<i>Total Articles</i>	93	50	13	15	4	11

Chapter 3

A SERIOUS CALL for more CAREER DEVELOPMENT *MECHANICS*

Who Can Help Returning Vets

by Richard N. Bolles

Dedicated to all those men and women who volunteered to serve their country, often at great personal sacrifice to themselves and their families, and are now returning home to civilian life. One million of them in the period 2013-2018.

We who are Career Development professionals find we are helping more and more returning vets, in this current period. Some professionals have, indeed, made ex-military men and women their exclusive focus.

A career in the field of Career Development is innately a very satisfying career. But it attains a special joy, when we know that some veterans, and their families, now have a brighter future because of us. Veterans include some of the finest human beings we will ever be privileged to help and to serve. As a group, they are generally more disciplined, punctual, mission-oriented, and team-oriented than the population at large. And they are concerned to help their fellow man or woman. When we help them, we feel more proud of what we do, than ever.

And yet. And yet, there are problems, and challenges. We always know our field could do better. We always know Career Development could be even more helpful to returning vets, than it currently is. So, my question is: what do veterans need, and what can we do to help them?

Let's start by a broad overview of our whole field. Career Development is not a monolithic field. It is in fact a field comprised of many tribes, groups, or specializations. What are the major specialties that comprise Career Development in our culture? What kinds of expertise do we have to offer to returning vets? Well, actually there is a bewildering array of job-titles that we could list. So let's settle on just three, and make up our own names for them. I like to think of Career Development as composed, broadly speaking, of researchers, practitioners, and *Mechanics*.

Mechanics is the funny term. Why call them that? Well, Mechanics are people who, if they are good, pay terrific attention to details, and step-by-step systems. They work *where the rubber hits the road*. So, in our field, when I come across professionals who help people actually get a job in step-by-step detail, the word *Mechanics* leaps to mind. And I capitalize the word to make clear we are talking about people and not data or systems (lower-case *m*).

In the chart, these three—researchers, practitioners, and *Mechanics*—are depicted along a continuum, for each often has a thin boundary with the specialty that precedes or the specialty that follows, and many career development professionals have not just one of these specialties, but two or three.

I use the word *expert* in the chart. How shall we measure that? Not by reputation, which is quite a different thing. No, with researchers, their expertise appears to depend not on their fame or the acclaim they are accorded, but rather on their number of followers, viewers, and students. With practitioners, their expertise appears to depend not on the cleverness of the programs they created or teach, but on the number of clients, individually or in groups, virtual or face-to-face, who are actually helped by them.

Ah, and then we come to Mechanics. I hold that there is or should be a very different kind of test of their expertise: if they are teaching in step-by-step detail how others can go out and really, truly, find a job, their expertise should be measured by whether or not they themselves can go out and actually find a job, using these techniques they are teaching to others.

I first threw that challenge down, in a 1974 keynote at a UCLA conference, entitled, *The Essential Marks of Effective Career Counseling*. Surprisingly (to me at least) some practitioners actually went out and did that: they found a job and got a real job offer (though by prior agreement with their boss, they had to then turn it down). This made them experts. Ever thereafter they manifested a quiet authority and complete trust in the techniques—especially the creative, alternative job-hunting techniques—that they were teaching job-hunters. They no longer thought of them as theories. They knew they worked. So, if you don't like the term *Mechanics*, maybe you'd like to call them pragmatists. Or call them *job-hunting experts*. These are people who believe that every technique must first be tested in their own actual experience, before it is advised for others.

You feel I'm setting the bar too high? What if they can't go out, themselves? Is there any alternative measure of a Mechanic's expertise? Yes, I think so. It is this: do they keep careful records of how many of their clients actually find a job? This kind of thing, from a Job Search Support Group in California: "Last year we had 154 people come through the Group and exactly 50 per cent found jobs—77 people found the work they were seeking! The 50 per cent figure has been the *Rule of Thumb* for the Job Search Support Group. **Every** year (all 11 years except the first year, which was 43 per cent) the success rate has been 50 per cent! Auto mechanics' expertise is measured by does each car hum when it is out on the road? In Career Development, Mechanics' success is measured by how well their job-hunting techniques actually work out there in the workplace. A good Career Development Mechanic instinctively keeps track of that. Okay, now to our chart [see page 31: **Dick Bolles' Chart: Researchers, Practitioners, Mechanics**].

Remember our task here: what do veterans need, and what can we in Career Development do to help them? Specifically, looking at our chart, which of these expertises do returning vets need the most? There's no one answer, of course. Every returning vet is an individual, unique, with unique assets and challenges. But generally speaking, what expertise do they most need?

Answer? Every survey reveals that the main agenda on returning vets' minds is finding a job. Ergo, they most need Career Development Mechanics, and particularly those Mechanics whom I have sardonically referred to as *Code Blue* experts (a metaphor, as you probably know, from hospital vocabulary, for those who need special attention, urgently).

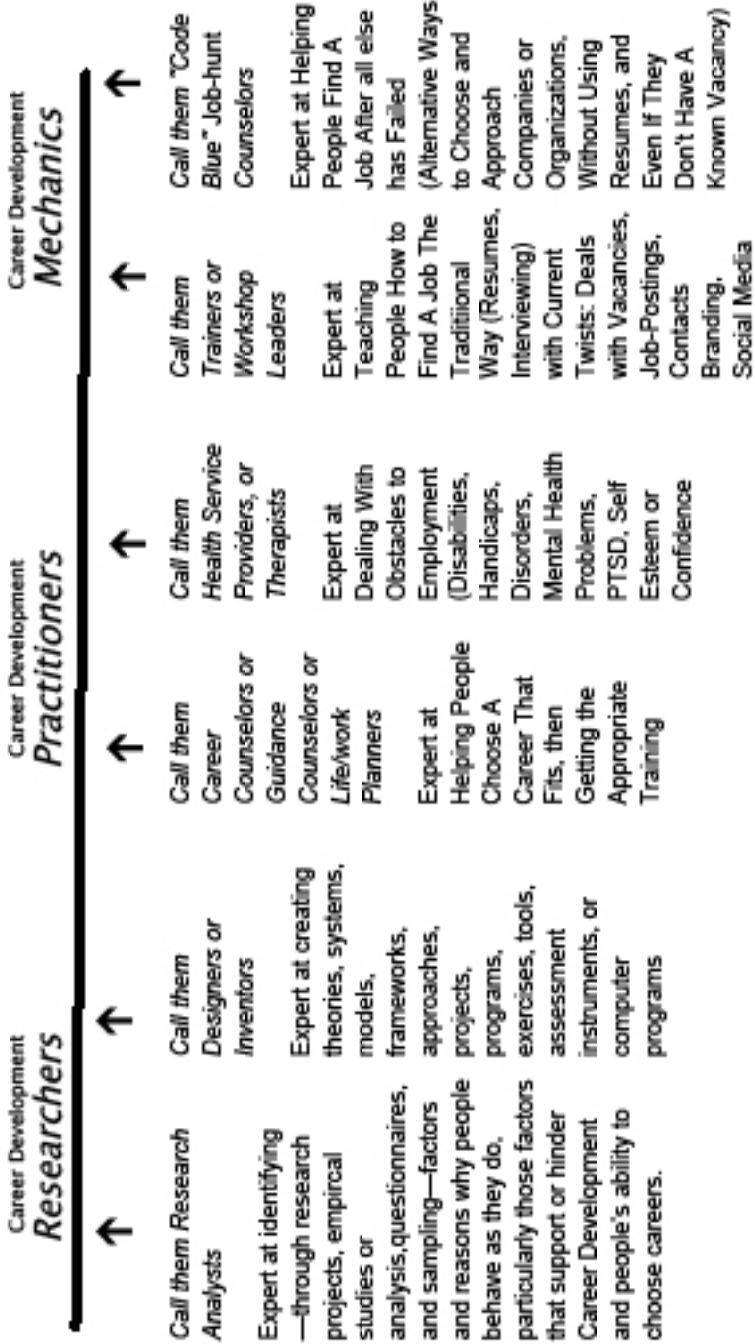
The next most pressing need returning vets have on their minds is how to overcome obstacles to employment in civilian life: medical care, handicaps, PTSD, and the like. Or, even more urgently, how to choose a new civilian career, now that they are back. So they next most need Career Development practitioners, and specifically Career Counselors.

And the final most pressing agenda on their minds are systems, approaches and programs, plus the use of assessment instruments and the like. Which brings us to Career Development researchers.

Now, each and every one of these expertises is valuable, and necessary. But some have a more urgent priority than others, in the minds of returning vets. And the question is, does our field see this? Does Career Development go out of its way to recruit, train, and encourage more of our number to become Career Development Mechanics, or at least have a

Dick Bolles' Chart: Researchers, Practitioners, Mechanics

Career Development: A Field Offering a Wide Range of Help To Veterans



command of the step-by-step details necessary to find a job, along with alternatives for

Code Blue situations

Speaking generally, the answer is an emphatic No, it does not. In word and deed, and by example, our field of Career Development is encouraging people to value researchers' work the most, practitioners' work next, and Mechanics' work the least—precisely the reverse order of priority that returning veterans cry out for. You need only look at the presentations at our major Career Development Conferences—the NCDA, the APCDA, the IAIEVG, or any other. You'll find a comparative abundance of presentations by researchers, an impressive number of presentations by practitioners, but barely even one presentation by the Mechanics in our field.

So, what is a returning veteran to do, if our field is not recruiting, training, and valuing enough career development Mechanics to help them? Well, typically, returning vets decide to educate themselves. by buying or borrowing a book. I must immodestly point out that at the head of the list, based on popularity and amount of copies sought, would be the book of which I have been the sole author for the past 40 plus years, ***What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers***, 2014 or 2015 editions.

According to actual sales records, the average book, in its entire life span, sells 5000 copies or less. (Out of 1000 business books published in 2010, for example, only 62 sold more than 5,000 copies.) But more than 10,000,000 copies of Parachute have sold thus far. It is widely considered to be the most popular Career Development book in the history of our field. Written by a Career Development Mechanic, I must point out.

But as evidence of how desperate they are for help when our field doesn't furnish them with enough expert job-hunting Mechanics, returning vets have bought a tremendous number of these books. What lessons are there in that fact? Here are some immediately obvious ones:

1. While I am held in sufficient esteem (for my taste) by the scholars and practitioners in this field, most Mechanics (job-hunting experts) are not. We need to search our hearts to be sure we do not secretly think of Mechanics as a sub-species, a less important player in the field of Career Development. Returning veterans don't. Neither should we. (Equally, of course, Mechanics need to search their hearts, to be sure they do not secretly think of scholars as a less important player in the field of Career Development. We all need and complement each other.)
2. Career Development conferences need to make it their business to

invite more Mechanics (*née job-hunting experts*) to make presentations, annually. Otherwise, the topics of current or past presentations, with their abundance of researchers, the increasing number of practitioners, but the absolute absence of *Mechanics*, shrieks to the heavens what our priorities are. They are not returning vets' priorities.

3. Veterans shouldn't have to turn to a book to find the help they need, with the detailed mechanics of the job-hunt. Our profession should offer them just such help in person, face-to-face. We need to recruit more people who are expert Mechanics within our field.

4. If returning vets and their families do gravitate toward a book—and a book by a Mechanic at that—then all people in Career Development, including researchers and practitioners, should read it before they do. Counselors are supposed to guide the client, not vice versa. Every Career Development specialist who works or wants to work with returning vets, should read a current edition of *the Mechanics' bible* (my book) from cover to cover, and do some of the steps in their own life. (And do remember, the book is rewritten and updated every year)

Your editors have asked me to close by saying something about returning vets' behavior, and my book. Not why returning vets ought to read Parachute. But why they already do, and in such large numbers.

It's certainly not because there is a special section for returning vets. There hasn't been. Not up to now, anyway. There will be a special 20 page section to aid them, beginning with the 2015 edition, in bookstores August 15, 2014, and thereafter. But that doesn't explain why returning vets have been turning to Parachute for years. Veterans are treated just like everyone else, in my book. I don't believe in putting people into categories. The worst thing we could think about the veterans we counsel, is Oh, I've seen this before. No, you haven't. Each veteran is a unique individual, and we must approach each veteran with a sense of wonder, and awe. If we lose that, we've said goodbye to a lot of our power to heal.

So, why do returning vets turn to this book?

First, the book is recommended to returning vets by countless veterans organizations and agencies to which they turn when they first come out. Family and friends even send it to them, while they are still overseas. I get letters all the time from the military overseas.

Secondly, Parachute is about stories. Veterans, like everyone else, are encouraged in chapter 7 to write out seven stories about themselves. For returning vets, this is often cathartic.

Thirdly, Parachute treats employers and their world as if they were a

foreign country, whose vocabulary and customs we need to master. This strikes a sympathetic chord with returning vets, as they feel the transition from military to civilian life is exactly like settling in a foreign country.

Lastly, *Parachute* insists the reader find alternatives for everything: alternative ways of thinking about themselves, alternative careers, alternative job-hunting methods, alternative ways of deciding which organizations to approach, alternative ways of actually approaching them, etc., etc.

Veterans like this idea, as it preserves Hope. And, if they saw battle overseas, this was an approach they are very familiar with.

Fifth and last: *Parachute*'s techniques are continually battle-tested, in the everyday market place. And veterans like this pragmatic approach.

In conclusion: our perennial challenge in Career Development is that we do not always see clearly our clients or their needs. There is an old saying: "To a hammer, everything looks like a nail." What does that mean here? Well, it means our vision is distorted by what we have majored in, and what our expertise is, within the general field of Career Development. Ever thereafter we are tempted to look at our clients, as "most needing the expertise that I have." The corrective for this, in our work with returning vets, is that the hammer must learn from the nail. Our concern must be not how returning vets should behave, but to study and observe how in fact, they do behave. Not what they should seek, but what they do seek. And not what expertise we think they should want. But what expertise they in fact do want, from our field. Only then can we, who are already good at what we do, get even better. And be even more helpful, to returning vets. They want jobs. We must know more to help them, even down to the nitty-gritty of the step-by-step procedures it takes to find a job in this wounded economy. That means we must know more than just how to write a resume or conduct an interview. The need is urgent. One million are coming home.

About the author

Dick Bolles—more formally known as Richard Nelson Bolles—is the author of *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Guide For Job-Hunters and Career Changers*, 2014, the most popular job-hunting book in the world, revised and updated every August, existing in 20 languages and used in 26 countries. Dick is credited with founding the modern career counseling field, and is often described as the field's #1 celebrity. *Time* chose *What Color Is Your Parachute?* as one of the 100 All-Time

best and most influential non-fiction books published in the last 90 years. The U.S. Dept. of Labor chose *What Color Is Your Parachute* as one of The Books That Have Shaped the World of Work, since 1758. The Library of Congress' Center for the Book chose *What Color Is Your Parachute* as one of 25 books that have shaped people's lives (down through history). Dick was given the National Samaritan Award in 2006 (previous honorees included Karl Menninger, Betty Ford, and Peter Drucker) and a Centennial Presidential Award from NCDA in 2013. He is a veteran, from the World War II period.

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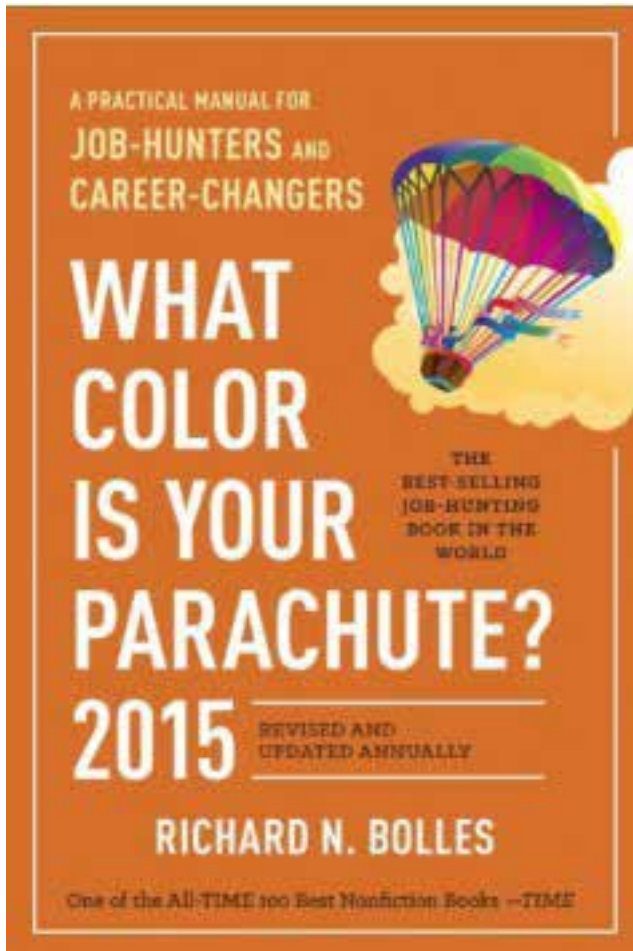
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Chapter 4

VETERANS CREATING a NEW LIFE

by John D. Krumboltz

So you are no longer in active military service. You no longer have to obey orders from superior officers. Now you are in charge of your own life. And now you are not sure what you want to do? It would be nice if someone could tell you what you should do next, wouldn't it? If I could tell you, I would right now. There are probably some people who are giving you advice about what you should do, but you are not sure that their advice is right for you? I am a veteran myself. I served in the United States Air Force for two years at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. I was asked to re-enlist, but I wanted to do something different. I did not know what. I contacted my college advisor who knew about a job opening in Michigan and recommended me for the job which I eventually obtained. Why do I tell you all this? Because I learned something valuable. I myself am responsible for deciding what I will do next, but I need the help of other people to give me ideas and to put in a good word for me.

Your future cannot be predicted in advance. I am now working in the field of career counseling. (Probably why I was asked to write this article!) I have learned that while we have abundant tests and career assessment devices, none of them can tell you what you should be. Your future career depends on two factors: (1) Your ability to find job opportunities, and (2) your willingness to exert the effort needed to capitalize on them. What will your new job be? No way to know until it happens!

Is it an advantage being a veteran? Yes, it is. Let me tell you a story. I have my automobile insurance with USAA. USAA prints the fact that I am in the U.S. Air Force Reserve on my auto insurance documents. A couple of months ago I committed a minor traffic violation (blocking cross traffic), and a police officer pulled me over and asked for my driver's license and evidence that I had auto insurance. I showed him my license and the auto insurance documents. He said, *Are you a veteran?* I said, *Yes.* He said, *I want to thank you for your service to our country.* And he did not give me a traffic ticket!

I cannot promise that you will receive a similar benefit, but right now the public is generally grateful to veterans who have served in dangerous situations in far-away places and have risked their own lives to do so. You

might as well take advantage of that gratitude—temporary as it probably will be. I had many other jobs before I entered the Air Force. I had been a farmer, gardener, door-to-door magazine salesperson, assistant to a publisher mailing catalogs to potential purchasers, loading and unloading railroad boxcars, radio announcer, pancake taster, chauffeur, assistant in a chemistry laboratory, tennis coach. None of these jobs were planned by me in advance. They were all obtained as I initiated friendly conversations with a variety of people who needed some kind of help.

A couple of years ago I was visited by a young woman named Jennifer Turliuk who wanted me to tell her what she should do with her life. I asked her what she enjoyed doing. She said she enjoyed writing. I explained to her that I had no idea what she should do with her life, but that she should explore what other people were doing. She said she thought it would be fun to work in a new start-up business. After an hour's conversation she left but said, *You still never told me what I should do with my life.* I said, *I still don't know what I should do with my life either, but I am having fun exploring possible options.*

But Jennifer repeated, *You still have not told me what I should do next.* I said, *You told me you liked writing. Write a magazine article.* She walked out the door without saying another word. A few months later I started getting emails from people all over the world—Japan, China, Thailand, Philippine Islands, Ireland, Sweden, Germany—all of them asking me to tell them what they should do with their lives. They all mentioned an article they had read in *Forbes Magazine* by Jennifer Turliuk entitled, **How I Figured Out What I Wanted To Do With My Life.** She had mentioned my name in her article. I answered all the emails. Here is one of my answers: Hi Alex: No one can tell you what you should do for the rest of your life. Only you can make things happen. But you must take action. You learn best from your own actions, not advice from someone else. You have a lot of good experience. Call up someone you used to work with just to chat. Listen to them. Tell them about yourself. Do it! My ideas are in a couple of books: *Luck Is No Accident* and *Fail Fast, Fail Often.*”

Both of the books I mentioned in my e-mail to Alex stress the importance of allowing yourself to make mistakes. You learn valuable lessons from everything you do—when you succeed, and when you fail. Either way you learn something important. It is only when you do nothing that you learn nothing. One of the actions that Jennifer took was to visit a number of start-up companies and talk with the people who worked there. She was even able to shadow the CEO at one of the start-ups. So what is the bottom-line advice I would give you?

1. Take some action. Don't just sit and wait.
2. Talk with lots of people. Ask them how they got their jobs.
3. Find out what people need help doing.
4. Maybe you could volunteer to help them for free.
5. If they found your help valuable, they might want to hire you.
6. No job is too menial. Use every task as a way to learn how to improve.
7. Learning is fun—keep on learning your whole life.

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John D. Krumboltz, PhD, is a Professor in the School of Education at Stanford University. He has received many awards for his contributions to psychology and career development, including the NCDA Eminent Career Award, Distinguished Professional Contributions to Knowledge Award from the American Psychological Association, the Leona Tyler Award from the Division of Counseling Psychology of the American Psychological Association, and the Living Legend in Counseling Award from the American Counseling Association. He is a Licensed Psychologist, served in the Air Force for two years, and began his professional career as a guidance counselor and high school teacher in Iowa. He is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Luck is No Accident: Making the Most of Happenstance in Your Life and Career*, co-authored with Al Levin, a 2nd edition was published in 2010. More recently, he is the co-author with Ryan Babineaux of the new book entitled *Fail Fast, Fail Often*.

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Chapter 5

FROM MILITARY to CIVILIAN LIFE: Applications of Schlossberg's Model for Veterans in Transition

by Mary L. Anderson and Jane Goodman

Abstract

The focus of this article is on assisting veterans as they transition from military to civilian life, utilizing the framework of Schlossberg's 4-S Transition Model (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). As veterans move through this unique life/career transition they must cope, adapt, and make decisions across many areas of their lives. Applications of Schlossberg's model are discussed for assessment and interventions across the following inter-related areas: Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies. Case studies are included to provide working examples of utilizing the model for conceptualizing and tailoring treatment for veteran clients.

Introduction

The separation from the military to civilian life can be a complex and challenging transition for today's returning veterans, and providing assistance with this transition is increasingly important, with more than 200,000 military personnel transitioning to civilian status each year (Wolfe, 2012). Although each branch of the service provides pre-separation counseling and transition services, these interventions tend to be short-term and focused on initial job search activities. The reintegration process, however, can be a complex process of adjustment across both life and career, as veterans move through a transition that involves changing structures, culture, and life roles (Stein-McCormick, Osborn, Hayden, & Hoose, 2013; Yan, et al., 2012).

While not all returning veterans experience difficulties with re-entry, those returning home after multiple deployments and/or with serious injuries may face a readjustment that is more difficult (Kline, et al., 2010; Stein-McCormick, et al., 2013). A comprehensive study conducted at the Pew Research Center (Morin, 2011) on a representative sample of 1,853 veterans revealed that the risks and rewards of military life carry over when returning to civilian life, with re-entry particularly difficult for combat veterans. This study revealed that 51 per cent of post 9/11 vet-

erans reported that they had difficulty adjusting to civilian life, and that 49% suffered from post-traumatic stress. A central goal when assisting clients through a life/career transition is to facilitate increased coping and adaptation to change (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012), and it is key to consider that the transition from the military back to civilian life can be a complex, lengthy and non-linear process (BPW Foundation, 2011).

Transition Assessment

When assessing an individual in transition it is helpful to understand the transition process, which takes place over time and includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as a person moves into and through the changes occurring in their lives. The impact of a transition can be evaluated across the areas of relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles, taking into consideration both the individual's reactions and current socio-cultural and historical context. (Anderson et al. 2012). When working with returning veterans, counselors need to be mindful of how veterans view the changes taking place, creating a space to explore their perceptions and experiences related to this transition. An important aspect of working with veterans is being culturally competent and aware of our own values, biases and preconceived notions concerning the military. With only 0.5 per cent of the population serving in the military over the past 10 years, the lowest percentage since before WWII (Morin, 2011), it can be challenging for civilians to understand the service member's experience. However, it is crucial to have a working knowledge of issues that relate to a military background, including unique experiences, knowledge, skills, and codes of behavior (McCaslin, Leach, Herbst, & Armstrong, 2013). Each veteran brings individual strengths and liabilities to the transition, and a continuous appraisal of the balance of these is also important. The transition from the military to civilian life includes both internal and external factors that influence the ability to cope and adapt, and ongoing assessment across these areas is crucial for effective interventions.

Military Culture

The military culture has been described as a fortress or a warrior society (Wertsch, 1991), which not only sets this as a world apart, but also influences mental and psychological self-perceptions (Hall, 2008). Transitioning veterans are moving out of a society maintained by a hierarchical structure with clear rules and expectations, a culture where the individual's needs are filtered through the needs of the service branch (Stein-McCormick, et al., 2013; Weiss, Coll & Metal, 2011). For returning veterans, the focus on self as an individual requires a shift away from conformity and following commands to finding one's way and navigating

a civilian world that may now be very unfamiliar territory. Returning veterans may have difficulties adjusting psychologically to civilian life as they return to a life with a changed context, circumstances and relationships, while simultaneously leaving behind a built-in social network, steady income, and sources of support and resources (McCaslin, et al., 2013). Another clear aspect of military life is that one is important, or in psychological terms, one matters. For example, being a part of a team is integral to military culture, and each member of the team is essential. Schlossberg (2014) defined mattering as including a number of factors, such as having attention paid to you, having a sense of importance, being appreciated, having people who depend on you, and having pride in what you do. When individuals muster out of service, they often feel as if they don't matter anymore. This can be compounded by family members who have learned to manage without them and don't need them as they did before the deployment and by employers who may not recognize the value of military experience.

While both men and women serve in the military, this has traditionally been a male domain, a culture that embraces the concept of honor in facing the possibility of death (Hall, 2008). These are cultural influences that may have an impact on our work with transitioning veterans. For example, the very passion for honor and conformity to traditional values may be at odds with the openness and questioning of assumptions that are an inherent aspect of therapy (Hall, 2008). Especially when navigating through a transition, flexibility and maintaining openness to possibilities are helpful qualities to embrace. Many returning veterans, however, experience acute challenges, stressors and anxieties that make this a uniquely difficult transition to manage.

Women veterans tend to have more difficulty with re-integration, with experiences that add layers of complexity to the transition process (Stein-McCormick, et al., 2013). Issues around pay equity, work/life balance, and gender discrimination remain common, and one in five women report experiencing military sexual trauma (BPW Foundation, 2011; Stein-McCormick, et al., 2013). The Women Veterans in Transition research project (2007) conducted by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation (BPW), indicated that women veterans are in need of a combination of both practical and psychological supports as they transition to civilian life and re-entry to the workforce. The various challenges of returning veterans, unique to each veteran's socio-cultural background, gender, areas of diversity, and lived experience in the military, point to the need for services that address the whole person, with interventions tailored to provide strategies and support.

Transitions and Loss

Regardless of the specific nature of the changes involved, a transition requires letting go of aspects of the self and former roles and moving toward a new emerging identity and roles. Especially for veterans returning to civilian life, this moving through must involve taking stock, negotiating internal and external changes, and working through the gains and the inevitable losses (Anderson, et al., 2012). Certain aspects of war relate to traumatic or distressing experiences, and a challenge for many returning veterans involves dealing with the aftereffects of these experiences. In fact, there is a strong link between traumatic wartime experiences and difficulties adjusting to civilian life, making for a more difficult re-entry for combat veterans and those knowing someone who was killed or injured (Morin, 2011). Two defining aspects of military life are both change and loss, and the most useful tools any counselor can have when assisting veterans is to understand transitions and how to work with issues around grief and loss (Hall, 2008).

Schlossberg's 4-S Model

According to Schlossberg (1981; Anderson, et al., 2012), a transition can be defined as any event or non-event that results in change, thus having an impact on relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles. Depending on the individual, perceptions of a transition vary. Some adults may perceive the transition as a crisis situation, while others may be grappling with a non-event, an event that was expected to happen, yet did not occur. Schlossberg's 4-S Model provides a framework to assess and provide treatment tailored to the veteran in transition across the areas of Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies. (Anderson, et al., 2012). For example, as veterans navigate the transition from military to civilian life, we assess the situation by looking at the triggers, timing, duration, and role changes associated with the transition. For veterans, we may assess the duration in terms of number and length of deployments. Changing roles are often salient areas to work on with veterans, when moving from soldier back to employee, spouse, partner, and/or parent. When working with aspects of self we focus on interventions for enhancing inner resources, such as resilience, self-efficacy, and meaning making throughout the transition.

As people move through a transition they will assess and re-assess the meaning they took away from their experiences. This can be a profound area of focus for veterans with the exposure to death and dying in combat situations where fewer soldiers die, yet more suffer appalling injuries (Hall, 2008; McCaslin, et al., 2013). A key factor when working with veterans in transition is support. This is especially true for returning veterans as they move away from the support shared in their small unit

bonds, and with this loss of support may experience feelings of isolation after discharge. Support is often a focus in assisting veterans and can come in through a variety of means, such as information, referrals, and practical help to navigate the situation. Linking veterans to supportive services is important across the areas of physical and mental health, career readiness, and interpersonal relationships. This is an important factor for veterans today, with many veterans reporting difficulties with interpersonal relationships with family and friends during the post-deployment and readjustment period (Yan, et al., 2012).

Strategies are addressed in terms of modifying the situation, changing the meaning of problems being faced, and managing stress associated with the transition. Today's veterans face challenges with transitioning to civilian life that can include issues such as homelessness, physical and mental disabilities, broken relationships, and other internal or external barriers to returning to the world of work and/or furthering their education. Strategies are best tailored to the individual's needs, addressing the particular veteran's assets and liabilities, resources and deficits across the areas of life and career. Schlossberg's 4-S Model provides a framework to incorporate the multiple resources and deficits that have an impact on each client's situation, self, support, and strategies. The following cases illustrate the 4-S Model and highlight issues unique to veterans transitioning from military to civilian life.

Case Examples: Applications of the 4-S Model

The Case of Martin White

Martin White, a 23 year old man left the military after 2 years of service subsequent to suffering a serious wound in Iraq that left him minus part of a leg and with enormous fear and anger. After his injury, his fiancé broke their engagement, saying she just couldn't handle it. Martin had a 2-year degree and certification as a Radiologic Technologist that he had earned while in the service, but he was having trouble getting the appropriate licensure in his home state. The state licensure rules required him to take two additional classes and a qualification test, which he really resented as he had been working in this field for a couple of years while deployed. He had not saved any money while in the military, and he felt both desperate to work and at the same time completely incapable of fulfilling the state's requirements or presenting himself to an employer in a positive light. He confided in some buddies that he had even considered suicide, feeling hopeless and helpless and of no use to anyone. They convinced him to see a counselor, who thought the Schlossberg 4-S transition model might be a useful way to conceptualize with Martin the transition he was trying to manage. Martin's situation was as described above. Martin stated that before leaving the military he saw himself as a man with a future, with a girl he expected to marry and a life well

planned. During his deployment he saw himself as an important part of a larger picture, but not as a driver of his own activities. He was a “*good soldier*” and lived in the present, as the future was so uncertain. Now that he was back in civilian life, he felt that he had no identity and no future. He knew he had been a member of an elite group of soldiers, but had no sense of who he was today. In Schlossberg’s terms his self was almost non-existent.

Martin’s support system was also under construction. He felt that he had grown apart from high school friends, saw his parents as loving but ineffectual and not able to help him with much, and losing his fiancé had set him adrift socially. He knew that he had rights as a veteran but was unclear as to what they were, and considered the counselor as kind of a last chance life-line. Martin shared with his counselor that had no strategies in mind to manage his circumstances, and he disclosed that although he wanted to effectively transition into a new career, this was a future that he could not envision.

When assessing for strengths and liabilities across the 4-S’s, Martin’s counselor determined that Martin’s situation was an unexpected transition. Martin’s separation from the military was not something he had planned. His injuries were the trigger that set his separation in motion, and in his perception, this transition was not in his control. To further complicate the situation, Martin was just 18 when he entered the military and had little experience with transitions. Now, at 24, the lack of job options, along with the break-up with his fiancé created additional stress, making it harder to cope with his injuries and post-traumatic stress symptoms. When assessing the situation, his counselor found many liabilities that made Martin’s transition back to civilian life especially challenging. When exploring for aspects of self, however, the counselor was impressed with Martin’s strengths. Martin had a dedication to his own sense of honor, and although he felt lost and unsure about his future, he possessed a strong spiritual faith. He believed his faith had brought him through danger, and he shared his strong commitment to finding his purpose in life again. This led the counselor to address issues around meaning and loss. Many of Martin’s *brothers*, fellow soldiers, were also injured in the same incident, and two of them had died. It was difficult for Martin to relate to his high school friends, feeling that they “*just did not get it,*” and that their lives seemed “*boring and superficial.*” Martin had begun to lose contact with his former combat brothers, and his counselor encouraged him to re-connect with them to see each other through this transition, as they had done in other tough situations. This network of injured vets became an important source of support for Martin, and also helped him to get beyond his resistance to seek out help.

Other sources of support were explored that addressed his physical injuries and his need to further training in his field. Through support and resources, Martin began to gain clarity about his future plans, and he found funding through the Veterans Administration for the classes he needed to take for his certification. He was also referred to other benefits available for disabled veterans and veterans suffering from PTSD through the Veterans Administration (VA). The strategies for Martin included getting the information about the services he needed, and taking steps toward achieving a new set of goals. Although he hoped to continue in the medical field, he chose to add other technical expertise to his original plan of getting an X-ray technician certification. This would allow him flexibility in his job search. Moving toward his goals included re-claiming a sense of purpose in life, a purpose that was taking him on a path he could now envision for himself.

The Case of Susan Rodriguez

Susan Rodriguez finished her second tour of duty in the army after serving in Afghanistan. She had reenlisted after she served her first tour in Germany. She enjoyed working to develop communications systems for European collaborations, and received training in systems analysis, a career she hoped to continue in civilian life. Susan had finished high school with decent grades, but not good enough for her to get a scholarship to college, and the recruiter's promise of tuition money after she finished her time in the military seemed an ideal solution to her. The second tour guaranteed even more money for school, but her time in Afghanistan had rocked her emotionally as well as physically.

Susan's situation included a mix of assets: she had saved money while in service, could live with her family while attending college, and had decided to study computer programming, the specialty she had developed in Germany. She had decided to enter into this field, hoping to get credit for her military experience. Although everyone seemed to view her situation as hopeful, she struggled internally, making the self part of the equation less certain. On her last tour of duty, she was one of the few females serving in her unit, and she chose to tell no one of the sexual harassment she had endured. Her desire to be seen as strong and "one of the guys" had prevented her from reporting the unwanted advances that occurred almost daily. Since returning home, she felt socially awkward and misunderstood, with former friends telling her she was acting withdrawn and not at all like her *old self*. Susan thought that her symptoms were PTSD, with recurring nightmares, jumping at loud noises, and generalized anxiety, but she did not recognize the impact of the military sexual trauma (MST) that complicated her re-adjustment to civilian life. Susan's support could be described as mixed. Her family did not understand her emotional outbursts or why she wanted to go to college when

her military training had prepared her for entry-level jobs in computer work. Susan struggled with her family's expectations, especially living at home and being expected to help care for an elderly aunt. This was clearly a role change for her, returning to traditional gender roles after serving with her unit in combat. Susan's deep religious faith had been shaken while in Afghanistan where she saw so many bad things happen to good people. She still went to church, but it was not as comforting as it had been; she stated that she really went out of family obligation, rather than out of conviction.

Susan's counselor initially assessed Susan's situation as very positive, as Susan had clear skills, experience and goals. When exploring issues related to self, the counselor worked with issues around the role change involved with Susan moving back in with her parents. Susan described how she had changed, and discussed issues about gender role expectations and her crisis of confidence in her faith. MST emerged as an issue as Susan discussed her symptoms, her relationships, and her difficulties adjusting to civilian life. The counselor then chose to focus on this issue, both in session with her and through referral to group counseling for women veterans.

For Susan, support and strategies were crucial to managing this transition. Her counselor underlined the need for Susan to continue her counseling, group attendance, and pursue available services that included programs at her college tailored to veterans. Susan strived to meet the challenges of how to make meaning of the situation, manage symptoms related to both MST and PTSD, and come to terms with her family's expectations. Support through counseling, connection with other women veterans, and utilizing available services became the key strategies for Susan to move forward. Throughout her process of re-integration, Susan often stated that she remained grateful to be whole and alive, and was trying to channel her anger at what she felt was bad policy in Afghanistan into energy to achieve her own dreams. She stated that she was committed to following through on her plans to pursue work in the computer field for which she had expertise and experience. She also shared that she would continue to focus on stress-reducing activities, which included working out at a gym, taking a watercolor class, and serving as a volunteer with her therapy dog in helping children learn to read.

The Case of Tom Washington

Tom Washington completed 30 years in the Navy, was honorably discharged, and found he was at a loss as to how to navigate his new circumstances. He described himself as betwixt and between, on the threshold of a new life, but still feeling connected primarily to his old life. He wasn't sure how to cross the threshold and become the person he wanted

to be as a civilian. Tom decided to see a civilian counselor rather than wait for the services available to him at the VA. His wife's job provided health coverage that included mental health services, and he hoped that seeking help in the civilian world would help him feel more separated from the military.

Tom's counselor congratulated him on recognizing that he was experiencing a major transition and for seeking assistance in managing it. She explained the 4-S transition model to Tom and asked him if he thought it might be a way to assess his circumstances and make a plan. Tom agreed to give it a try, and they began with the counselor asking Tom to describe his current situation in terms of his triggers, timing, duration, and role changes, as well as his previous experiences with transitions and any concurrent stressors that he was experiencing. Tom said that his decision to retire from the Navy was his own. The Navy would have been happy for him to stay, but his wife had also been urging him to retire to have more time with her, their children, and grandchildren. Tom's son was married with a child on the way, and his daughter and her husband said they wanted children. Tom's parents and his in-laws were still living independently, but all four were showing signs of aging and he anticipated needing to be more involved in their lives.

The timing of Tom's transition seemed ideal to him. He believed that he had marketable skills, his children were independent, and his wife had a good job that would allow Tom to take some time to assess his situation and develop positive strategies. Tom had been in the military all his adult life, so the transition seemed abrupt, even though it was planned. Tom indicated that his biggest issue was the role change he was experiencing. He had had authority over a number of men and women, had routines and rules, yet very little need or opportunity to make decisions about his own plans or face the kind of ambiguity that he was now encountering. The civilian world seemed to be lacking in any order or predictability and his wife and children certainly didn't think he was "in charge." Tom had moved frequently during his Navy career, but each move had been planned by the Navy, and the new jobs came with clear expectations that he wasn't experiencing with this transition. Tom's major concurrent stress related to his aging parents. He expected that his responsibility for them would be increasing, and he was worried about his ability to help them financially and emotionally with the physical care they might require. He wanted to have his own well-being under control so that he could have the strength required for these anticipated demands. Tom seemed to have a clear picture of his situation, and the counselor moved to helping him consider aspects of his self that were important in understanding his transition. Tom stated that he thought the ratio of his assets to liabilities in the personal arena was a positive one. He had

always been an optimist, felt confident in his ability to handle his life and plan his future, and saw his current unease as situational rather than indicative of long-term life problems. The counselor reinforced Tom's confidence, reminding him that his seeking help was an example of this strength.

Tom's support system had undergone a sea change since his retirement from active service. He had a loving family, but they were struggling to understand why this transition was so difficult. Tom described how much he had depended on his military companions for social life, camaraderie, ideas and actual assistance. He needed to develop a plan for finding that support now that he was a civilian. He was beginning to realize that the promises of, "*We'll stay in touch*" frequently do not materialize.

As stated earlier, strategies relate directly to coping responses in the Schlossberg transition model. Tom's counselor helped him look at strategies to access more support to replace what he had in the military, find meaningful activities and/or work as a civilian, and manage plans related to his aging parents' circumstances. Together, they explored the meaning of the transition for him, which revealed his sense of satisfaction for all he had contributed to his country through his extended service. He referred to this service as "*the life I lived, and the person I learned to become.*" Working with his counselor, Tom determined which aspects of this person he would carry forward, along with those to let go. Relationships with family were now in the forefront. A re-balancing of his roles was necessary in relating to his children as adults and to his wife as a partner in life decisions moving forward. Tom and his counselor also focused on stress management strategies and he agreed to give himself time for enjoyable activities and connecting with others. For Tom, these activities included taking hikes in nature, listening to music, and becoming involved in community organizations.

Summary

The focus of this article was on applications of Schlossberg's 4-S Model for working with veterans as they move through the transition from the military to civilian life. Some common issues were discussed, which underscored the importance of meeting the needs of veterans through useful and practical models. Cases were included to highlight and provide illustrative examples of challenges veterans may encounter while striving to cope and to navigate successfully a transition that has impacts across many areas of their lives. The inter-connected areas of Schlossberg's 4-S theory were described to assess and plan interventions related to individual strengths and liabilities, with a central goal of enhancing coping and adaptation for transitioning veterans. The 4-S Model was utilized as

it addresses the situation, self, support, and strategies relevant to moving through a life/career transition. It is our hope that the 4-S model will assist career development professionals working with veterans to meet their needs through both meaningful and practical interventions.

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Chapter 6

HOPE for the FUTURE: Career Counseling for Military Personnel and Veterans with Disabilities

by **Seth Hayden** and **Mary Buzzetta**

Abstract

Military personnel and veterans are continually transitioning into the civilian workforce largely due to the current draw down of the fighting forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many return with new emotional, psychological, and physical challenges related to their deployment experience. Career practitioners working with this population encounter a myriad of concerns ranging from creating a resume, to translating military training and experiences to civilian employment. Given the unique experiences and array of career development needs of veterans with disabilities, it is important to possess a schema in which to assess needs and develop appropriate interventions. The Cognitive Information Processing (CIP; Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004) approach offers a comprehensive and systematic approach in which to address the career development needs of veterans with disabilities. This article will discuss common concerns related to returning military service members and veterans, the benefits of career counseling as it relates to supporting this population, and the application of CIP in addressing the needs of this population.

Roughly 1.7 million troops have been deployed to Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF; Berger, 2010). Of these individuals, 45 per cent seek compensation for service-related injuries (Marchione, 2012). Many of these recent engagements are unique in that psychological wounds of war outstrip physical injuries related to military experience (Sammons & Batten, 2008). For example, between 19 and 38 per cent of recently returning veterans report having emotional difficulties (Katz, Cojucar, Davenport, Pedram, & Lindl, 2010), and as many as 20 per cent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and 27 per cent of Vietnam veterans suffer from some form of invisible wounds of war (e.g., depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)) (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is also a signature wound of these conflicts

(Bagalman, 2011), in addition to high numbers of active duty military and veterans with various injuries such as loss of limbs, blindness, hearing loss, tinnitus (noise or ringing in the ears), and disfigurement (Marchione, 2012).

According to Sammons and Batten (2008), this group is a very small subset of the veteran population. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the service members deployed for OEF/OIF will experience one of three conditions: PTSD, major depressive disorder, and Traumatic Brain Injury (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008), all of which are commonly referred to as invisible wounds of war because they often go unrecognized by fellow service members, family members, and society. Additionally, several researchers have found high comorbidity of mental health diagnoses amongst individuals who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan (Bagalman, 2011; Batten & Pollack, 2008; Jakupcak et al., 2009; Seal, Bertenthal, Miner, Sen, & Marmar, 2007). For example, there is a high comorbidity of PTSD with other mental health concerns such as mild TBI, depression, and substance abuse (Batten & Pollack, 2008). In addition, several researchers have found that suicide risk increases for OEF/OIF veterans diagnosed with mental health disorders (Jakupcak et al., 2009; Kang & Bullman, 2008). According to Jakupcak et al. (2009), veterans diagnosed with PTSD are four times as likely to endorse suicidal ideation in comparison to veterans without PTSD. Additionally, veterans with PTSD and multiple comorbid mental health disorders (such as major depressive disorder, alcohol abuse, and substance abuse) are 5.7 times more likely to endorse suicidal ideation in comparison to veterans with PTSD only.

Many of these concerns cause functional impairment in several arenas including work, home, or interpersonal relationships (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). Furthermore, a disability can influence the type of environment in which a veteran desires to work. For instance, a disability can permanently impact specific skills and tasks individuals previously enjoyed using and engaging in (Ainspan, 2008). According to Kraus and Rattray (2013), a disability can also impact a veteran's sense of self, as it is associated with failure and incapacity. In addition, specific impairments caused by injuries such as traumatic brain injury or PTSD may interfere with a veteran's ability to secure meaningful employment. For instance, depending upon the severity of the diagnosis, individuals experiencing traumatic brain injury are predisposed to a range of physical, psychological, and cognitive signs and symptoms including difficulty concentrating, fatigue, loss of coordination, mood changes, agitation, and restlessness (Bagalman, 2011). Veterans with PTSD experience major health concerns related to disruptions in sleep, nightmares, uncontrollable anger,

flashbacks, hyper vigilance, and difficulty focusing (Kraus & Rattray, 2013), all of which have implications for veterans seeking employment. Overall, veterans experiencing a physical or psychological disability typically have to undergo extensive rehabilitation processes and relearn everyday activities (Kraus & Rattray, 2013), thus encouraging them to rebuild and maintain a sense of autonomy. Career development professionals are in a unique position to assist these individuals in their transition to the civilian workforce.

Difficulties in Transitioning

More recently, researchers have begun to emphasize the various challenges veterans face when transitioning from military to civilian life (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009; Bauman, 2009; Bullock, Braud, Andrews, & Phillips, 2009; Duggan & Jurgens, 2007; Phillips, Braud, Andrews, & Bullock, 2007; Simpson & Armstrong, 2010). Simpson and Armstrong (2010) highlighted major career development concerns for veterans, including culture shock, transferable skills, job preparation, job search concerns, and financial concerns. Veterans commonly experience a sense of loss in their transition from military to civilian life. Many veterans may return to their previous places of employment and find their civilian jobs to be unfulfilling and boring compared to their military experiences (Simpson & Armstrong, 2010). Often times, veterans will enter the military just after high school and have not learned the skills necessary to successfully engage in the civilian job market (Clemens & Milsom, 2008; Simpson & Armstrong, 2010). Additionally, veterans experience difficulty in identifying the transferable skills they gained in their military training and experience, and articulating how these skills are relevant to civilian jobs (Felder, 2008; Simpson & Armstrong, 2010; Smith, 2008). For these reasons, veterans experience complexities in the job preparation and job search processes.

Service members transitioning with a disability may experience additional barriers, especially if their wounds are psychological in nature. Ainspan (2011) describes the barriers service members encounter when transitioning with a psychological wound in comparison to transitioning with a physical injury including documenting the nature of the disability and overcoming stigma and misconceptions of mental illness from coworkers, supervisors, and customers. In addition to general misconceptions regarding hiring military individuals (e.g., translation of skills, military terminology, military environments), mental illness can also influence an employer's hiring decision (Ainspan, 2011). Ainspan (2008) provides an overview of concerns employers may have when hiring a veteran with a disability. Many question whether or not a veteran will be a productive employee. In addition, if the veteran has a mental illness, then there is a concern of stability and possibly being a threat to others while on the job.

Many employers are also concerned about whether or not the veteran will be able to complete assigned tasks, communicate well with other employees, and adapt to the environment. These misconceptions, uncertainties, and doubts have implications for career development professionals working with veterans with disabilities who are seeking to transition into the civilian workforce.

Benefits of Work

For many transitioning service members, employment is a critical component of reintegrating into civilian society. Moreover, employment can serve as a form of rehabilitation for service members returning home with psychological wounds (Ainspan, 2011; Wehman, Targett, West, & Kregel, 2005). For instance, career counseling has been found to have a tangible benefit for those with TBI (Keyser-Marcus et al., 2002). Additionally, research indicates that addressing career concerns often reduces depression, likelihood of substance abuse, and other secondary deleterious outcomes (Wehman et al., 2005). According to Ainspan (2011), employment can provide numerous psychosocial benefits for individuals with hidden disabilities including ability to cope with life stressors and demands, increased interaction and socialization with coworkers and clients, financial benefits, and feelings of meaning in one's life. Employment can also enhance an individual's self-esteem, encourage self-sufficiency, and provide access to employee benefits (Wehman et al., 2005). Lastly, Keyser-Marcus et al. (2002) broadens the term productive work activities for veterans with a disability and indicates that this can be applicable to any activity which contributes meaning and satisfaction to one's life including educational experiences and volunteer work.

Previous studies have found that veterans with PTSD report lower levels of emotional well-being, quality of life, and physical functioning in comparison to veterans without PTSD (Karney, Ramchand, Osilla, Caldarone, & Burns, 2008). In addition, veterans with PTSD are less likely to be employed in comparison to veterans without PTSD. More notably, as PTSD symptoms increase, the likelihood of work decreases (Karney et al., 2008). Although there is minimal research related to the benefits of career counseling for veterans with PTSD, it can be assumed that career counseling and development services would prove to be beneficial for this population.

Career Approaches in Working with Veterans with Disabilities

Given the aforementioned challenges veterans with disabilities encounter in relation to employment, career counseling offers a potentially significant means in which to positively impact a veteran's functioning. There are several career development theories which discuss issues connected to the symptomology of PTSD, TBI, and other concerns of perception

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Rao et al.; 2007). Theories that focus on the perception of oneself, those around them, and the environment provide a framework to address veterans with disabilities and their challenges related to employment.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Brown & Lent, 1996) attends to one's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. The major tenants of this approach contend that some individuals eliminate possible occupations due to faulty self-efficacy beliefs or outcome expectations. The greater the perceived barriers to an occupation, the less likely individuals are to pursue those careers. Modifying faulty self-efficacy and outcome expectations can assist individuals in acquiring new successful experiences and open their eyes to new occupational alternatives (Brown & Lent, 1996). Counseling strategies aligned with this approach work to identify foreclosed occupational options, analyze the perceptions of barriers, and modify self-efficacy beliefs related to employment. Given the alteration of perception common with some disabilities, this approach could offer a useful conceptualization in which to positively influence veterans with disabilities' beliefs and perceptions related to their ability to effectively obtain employment.

Cognitive Information Processing

Another career development theory which strikes a balance between perceptions and goal-oriented career exploration is Cognitive Information Processing (CIP; Sampson et al., 2004). This approach is cognitive-behavioral in nature and focuses on the process of career problem solving and decision-making. A critical component of this approach is the attention to the readiness of the client to receive various interventions. A career practitioner utilizing this approach adapts interventions to client needs. A large portion of the work is to expand knowledge of self, options, and decision-making skills. There is also attention to the implementation of a defined strategy to navigate the decision-making process termed the CASVE (Communication – Analysis – Synthesis – Valuing – Execution) cycle. The primary intention of the CASVE cycle is to combine the processing of information, while monitoring progress, to empower a person to effectively engage in career problem-solving and decision-making (Sampson et al., 2004). Given the focus on readiness, as well as the attention given to career problem solving and decision-making skills, both of which are areas of apparent need for veterans with disabilities, the CIP approach will receive the primary attention from this point forward.

CIP and Veterans

Previous researchers have examined the connection between CIP and vet-

erans (Bullock et al., 2009; Clemens & Milson, 2008; Hayden, Green, & Dorsett, 2013; Phillips et al., 2007; Stein-McCormick, Osborn, Hayden, & Van Hoose, 2013). In addition, negative career thinking has been found to be associated with lower satisfaction, lower emotional stability, and higher career worries (Bullock et al., 2009).

Readiness

While career development may at times appear to be an active process of research and task achievement, clients may not always be functioning at a level which allows for effective engagement in these activities. From a CIP perspective, it is important to assess readiness for career decision making prior to offering various interventions. There are two primary dimensions of readiness from a CIP perspective. Capability refers to the cognitive and affective capacity to engage in effective career problem solving and decision making (Sampson et al., 2004). Complexity refers to contextual factors originating in various areas (e.g., family, society, economy) that may be impacting the career decision. These factors make it more difficult (or less difficult) to process information necessary to solve career problems and make career decisions (Sampson et al., 2004). Given the multi-dimensional elements of various issues faced by veterans with disabilities related to their career development such as alterations in cognitive functioning, uncertainty of available options, and associated factors such as family and reintegration into civilian life, the concept of readiness provides a schema in which a career practitioner can determine appropriate interventions based on the needs of the client.

Assessment and Interventions

Negative Thinking

Given the focus of CIP, it is important to assess and attend to negative thinking of veterans with varying levels of ability. Based on previous examination of cognitions associated with career development, negative metacognitions, when present, make other tasks such as self-exploration and examination of options difficult (Sampson, McClain, Musch, & Reardon, 2013; Walker & Peterson, 2012). Often times, veterans with disabilities receive messages related to limitations associated with changes in functionality. Treatment related to their disability may focus primarily on deficits, as they are often engaged with addressing limitations and symptomology. The following sections provide an overview of suggested assessments and interventions practitioners can utilize when working with the veteran population.

Career Thoughts Inventory

The Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996; 1998) and associated workbook (Sampson et al., 1996) provide a useful manner in which to intervene when negative

metacognitions inhibit effective career decision-making and problem solving. The CTI is a measure of dysfunctional thinking in career problem solving and decision-making involving a single, global indicator of dysfunctional thinking with subscales examining decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict (Sampson et al., 1996; 1998). While the assessment identifies negative career thoughts, the CTI workbook is designed to assist in the process of reframing identified negative career thoughts. Used in combination, these resources offer a structure to assess and intervene when veterans with disabilities may be experiencing negative career thinking.

Self-Knowledge

In addition to the examination of negative career thoughts, there are other elements of CIP such as exploring self-knowledge which may be useful in assisting veterans in their career exploration. Knowledge of self can be specifically useful in working with veterans given the shift from a structured culture to civilian employment. There are various means to examine the interests of veterans and how these may translate into expanding options. The Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, 1994) is designed to explore interests aligned with a person's environment. Recently, the Veterans and Military Occupations Finder (VMOF; Messer, Greene, & Holland, 2013) was created to address the bridge between military and civilian employment by conceptualizing military occupations as they align with Holland Occupational Codes (Gottfredson & Holland, 1996). This allows for exploration of civilian employment options associated with veterans' interests. Other interventions such as value card sorts and transferable skills activities can be utilized to examine elements of self-knowledge. Having a specific strategy and associated assessment in which to address self-knowledge can be useful in assisting veterans with disabilities.

Options Knowledge

Options knowledge is another important element when working with veterans with disabilities on their career development. Once information is gleaned regarding options aligned with interests, expanding knowledge of options can be another important aspect of this process. Veterans who have spent significant time in the military may be limited in their understanding of civilian employment options. With the support of a career practitioner, utilizing established resources such as O*NET (National Center for O*NET Development, n.d.) and the Occupational Outlook Handbook (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2014–2015) can be useful tools in expanding and then focusing attention on viable options, which are hallmarks of the CIP approach (Sampson et al., 2004).

Decision-Making

The previously utilized CASVE cycle offers a schema in which to move through the often complicated process of assisting veterans in their career development. Discussion of the process of making a decision, along with attention to client progress, can assist in creating a clear strategy. Identifying the issue in need of attention (communication), analyzing the issue at hand (analysis), expanding and narrowing a list of occupational alternatives (synthesis), critically analyzing options aligned with client values (valuing), executing the decision (execution), and examining the decision to determine reengagement in the process (communication) provides a defined and teachable means in which to address the current concern in hopes of enhancing a veteran's skills in career decision making and problem solving. The Guide to Good Decision Making (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, & Reardon, 1992) is a useful resource which can allow veterans to explore different elements of their decision-making process, actively engaging them in a defined strategy for career problem solving.

CIP Application

In the application of this approach, several steps can be taken to address the career development needs of veteran with disabilities. First would be to establish a working alliance. Given the unique context of veterans and potential difficulties they face in transitioning from the military to civilian culture (Buzzetta & Rowe, 2012), civilian providers would benefit from having knowledge of military culture to prevent a therapeutic barrier. The second step would be to assess readiness for career decision making, in addition to evaluating a client's complexity and capability. The third step would be to develop an Individual Career Learning Plan, analogous to an Individual Transition Plan, to include collaborative creation of goals and activities addressing career development concerns.

Conclusion

As noted, there is an unprecedented number of individuals returning from military service with various injuries, both physical and psychological, all of which can impact their ability to successfully transition into the civilian workforce. Career development professionals are in a unique position to assist service members with a disability in their transition. The CIP approach can be utilized to assist veterans with disabilities in developing the skills necessary for career problem solving and decision making (Sampson et al., 2004). This approach emphasizes client readiness in the career decision-making process, which includes assessing for a veteran's capability to engage in decision making and complexity of possible external factors (e.g., family, society, and employing organizations) which may influence the career decision. This approach also highlights the importance of attending to a client's negative career thoughts, as this can also influence a client's decision-making process. Utilizing

resources such as the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI) or *The Guide to Good Decision Making* can assist veterans with disabilities in further understanding their decision making, finding viable options, and obtaining meaningful employment. The use of theoretically-based assistance can enhance veterans' career decision-making and problem-solving skills which can positively impact a lifetime of career development.

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Chapter 7

UNDERSTANDING MINORITY VETERANS

by Henry L. Harris

Abstract

Minorities have a long standing turbulent history in United States Armed Forces and have been actively involved in every U.S. military conflict dating back to the American Revolutionary War in 1776. This article will address the current status of minority veterans, unique challenges encountered by minority veterans, a brief history of minorities serving in the Armed Forces, and a brief discussion of current support and counseling services provided.

Understanding Minority Veterans

Minority veterans have honorably served in all five branches of the United States Armed Forces and have played influential roles in every major U.S. military conflict dating back to the American Revolutionary War to more recent military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (Institute of Medicine, 2010). The definition of a veteran refers to a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Without the historical contributions of minority veterans that include African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans, and Hispanics, the outcome of these conflicts may have been significantly altered (Rochin, Fernandez, & Oliveros, 2005). Despite the significant contributions of various racial and ethnic minority veteran groups, with the exception of recognition received in their local communities, they have received only a limited amount of attention detailing their military experiences (Bielakowski, 2013).

In the vast majority of conflicts involving the United States, many minority veterans paid the ultimate sacrifice fighting for rights and freedoms of U.S. citizens in foreign countries that they themselves were not afforded in the United States. Minority service members often served in segregated units and some research indicates that their military experience included various forms of racial discrimination such as 1) not being called by their formal names, 2) being passed over for promotions, 3) restricted to performing menial tasks, and 4) witnessing other minority

groups being discriminated against (Harada, Villa, Reifel, & Bayhille, 2005; Mershon & Schlossman, 1998). The military did not officially end segregation until July 26, 1948. President Harry S. Truman then signed Executive Order 9981, which ended racial segregation for all persons in the Armed Services regardless of color, race, religion, or national origin. Executive Order 9981 was not without controversy nor fully embraced by all branches. While the Navy and the Air Force proved to be more accepting, the Army forthrightly stated from their perspective that the order did not precisely forbid segregation. The Korean War began in 1950, yet racial segregation was still an active part of the military culture and this included veterans affairs (VA) hospitals. Whether or not these hospitals were integrated was reportedly determined by the racial climate of the surrounding towns. Responding to this issue of segregated hospitals, a 1953 investigation sponsored by President Eisenhower found that 47 of the 166 veteran hospitals operated in a segregated manner. As result of the investigation, Harvey Higley was appointed head of the VA and given orders by President Eisenhower to fully integrate all VA hospitals. In 1954, all VA hospitals, along with the five branches of the Armed Forces became fully integrated (Jensen, 2013; Pierpaoli, 2013).

Current Status of Minority Veterans

Minorities represent a unique group of military veterans and in 2011 they represented 20% of 22.7 million veterans. The majority of minority veterans were African American at 11%, Hispanics 6%, some other race 1.4%, Asian American and Pacific Islanders 1.3%, and American Indian and Alaskan Natives at .6% (Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), as cited in U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013). During Persian Gulf Wars I and II, African Americans comprised 16% of all veterans, followed by Hispanics at 10%. The overall population of military veterans is projected to decrease between 2011 and 2040 from 22.7 million to 14.5 million; however, the number of minority veterans will increase from 21% to 34%. While the African American veteran population will increase to 16.5% by 2040, the Hispanic veteran population is projected to experience the most significant growth increasing to 11.5% (Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), as cited in U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

When comparing the age of minority veterans, American Indian and Alaskan Natives were the oldest with a median age of 57. African American and Hispanic veterans were slightly younger at 54. Of all minority veterans age 75 or older, Asian Americans represented 17% of the population, Hispanics 13%, African Americans 10%, and American Indian and Alaskan Natives were at 9.5% (PUMS, as cited in U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013). Veterans are typically offered various forms of

support (e.g. health care, pension, education and training, compensation, home loans) if they are discharged with a service connected disability (McMurray-Avila, 2001). The amount of support or services provided is also impacted by their service disability rating. For instance, 23% of African Americans, 20% of American Indian and Alaskan Natives, 19% of Hispanics, and 18% of Asian American veterans held a service connected disability rating. In addition, 32% of American Indian and Alaskan Natives and African Americans, 28% of Hispanics, and 21% of Asian American veterans used the VA health care system. It is also important to note that American Indian and Alaskan Natives (15%) and African American veterans (12%) lived in poverty. Even so, all minority veterans held incomes higher than non-veterans in 2011 (PUMS, as cited in U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

In a comparison study of minority veterans to their non-minority counterparts, American Indian and Alaskan Native veterans participated in the labor force at a higher rate than American Indian and Alaskan Native non-veterans (59 % compared to 52%). In addition, American Indian and Alaskan Native veterans were more educated, less likely to be in poverty, older, more likely to have healthcare insurance compared to American Indian and Alaskan Native non-veterans (PUMS, as cited in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013). The outcomes were the same for all other minority veterans when compared with minority non-veterans from their specific group. Nonetheless, when minority veterans were compared with each other, Asian American veterans were more educated than other minority veterans; American Indian and Alaskan Natives had the highest level of poverty, and socioeconomic status was also impacted by minority veteran citizenship status (PUMS, as cited in U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013). Since the 2000-2014 time period, a total of 24 American Indian and Alaskan Natives, 78 Asian Americans, 444 African Americans, and 230 Hispanic service members have become casualties of U.S. military conflicts (Fischer, 2014).

Minority Veteran Challenges

According to Bonvissuto (2008), minority veterans encounter a number of unique health care and social challenges, ranging from high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and chronic disease disparities to difficulties in gaining access to appropriate medical treatment and other needed services. For example, in a 2006 report among minority veterans, it was revealed that Asian American veterans were less likely to be homeless and abuse alcohol compared to other minority groups (Lim, Kaspro, & Rosenheck, 2006). Another significant finding discovered that African American and Asian American veterans were more likely than White veterans to be diagnosed as schizophrenic. Of all the minority

veteran groups, Asian Americans were more likely to be given a clinical diagnosis of some psychiatric illnesses, yet least likely to be homeless (Lim et al., 2006). Being homeless is a serious threat for some minority veterans and in 2010, African Americans comprised 35% of veterans staying in shelters. The next largest group was Hispanics at 8% and the vast majority of all sheltered veterans lived alone (U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that may occur following a direct experience of a traumatic event, seeing a life threatening event, learning of a traumatic event that happened to a close family member or close friend, and personally experiencing extreme or repeated to harsh details of the traumatic event (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In a study of Vietnam veterans, African Americans reported higher rates of PTSD than did White veterans. Hispanic veterans were exposed to more war zone stressors when compared to White veterans and less war zone stressors when compared to African Americans. Even so, they had the highest rates of diagnosed PTSD. Hispanics were the youngest group in Vietnam, scored lower on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), and had less pre-war education, which could explain the higher rates of PTSD (Dohrenwend, Turner, Turse, Lewis-Fernandez, & Yager, 2008). Additional research has indicated that somewhere between 20 and 30% of personnel deployed to military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with PTSD (Sundin, Fear, Iversen, Rona, & Wessely, 2010). Another study discovered that PTSD was greater in minority Gulf War veterans than for White veterans (Kang, Natelson, Mahon, Lee, & Murphy, 2003). Furthermore Black et al. (2004) reported similar findings in Gulf War veterans.

When taking into consideration previous research studies on PTSD and minorities, Loo (2014) indicated the results have not been exclusively consistent. However, they appear to support outcomes that have demonstrated that minority veterans have higher rates of PTSD than White veterans. Loo (2014) further noted that other powerful influencing risk factors for PTSD include racial related stressors and personal experiences of racial prejudice. Past military discrimination has further revealed that minority veterans who experienced discrimination, compared to veterans that did not experience discrimination, reported significantly lower levels of physical health (Sohn & Harada, 2008). It therefore is imperative to develop an understanding of the history of racial and ethnic minority groups that have served in U. S. Armed Forces.

American Indians and Alaskan Natives

American Indians and Alaskan Natives, like other minority groups, have made significant contributions as service members in the United

States military. Beginning with Revolutionary War in 1776 through the Civil War (1861-1865), American Indians served as scouts and auxiliary troops. In 1866, the Indian Scouts were officially established by the U.S. Army and they remained active until the early part of the twentieth century. During World War I (1914-1917), over 12,000 American Indians served, and as a result of their service, four were awarded France's most esteemed military honor, the Croix de Guerre (U. S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2012). Used as a tactic to confuse German code deciphers, the Choctaw language was used to code messages and in 1919, Native American sailors and soldiers were awarded U.S. citizenship. It is also important to note that American Indians were extended citizenship until Congress signed into law the 1924 Snyder Act and even then the legal status of American Indians remained uncertain (Kieval, 2009).

During World War II from 1941 to 1945, while there were less than 350,000 American Indians residing in the U.S., over 44,000 served in the military. Furthermore, approximately 99% of all healthy Native American men ranging in age from 21 to 24 were registered for the draft (Holiday, Bell, Klein, & Wells, 2006). Over 400 American Indians from the Navajo tribe worked as cryptologists or "code talkers" with the United States Marines. They were primarily responsible for talking over radio and telephones transmitting critical battlefield information that included military tactics and troop movement. The code talkers served with distinction in all engagements conducted by the U.S. Marines in the Pacific from 1942-1945 and their coded messages were never broken by the enemy (Naval History & Heritage Command, n. d.). American Indians and Alaskan Natives have also honorably served in other major U.S. conflicts including the Korean War, Vietnam, the Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn (Department of Veteran Affairs, 2012).

Hispanic or Latino

Hispanics have a long history of military service in the United States dating back to the War of 1812 to present conflicts (Lutz, 2008). Unfortunately, their level of participation has not been appropriately documented because they were not identified by U.S. Census Bureau or the Defense Manpower Data Center until the 1970's (De Angelis & Segal, 2012). Some estimates suggest that 9,000 Mexican Americans fought in the Civil War serving in both the Confederate and Union Armies (Department of Defense, 1989). Hispanics also served in both World Wars and according to Allsup (1982), based on surnames, one half million Latinos fought in World War II. During the Pacific campaign of World War II, Hispanic soldiers of the 158th Regimental Combat Team were one of the first units to successfully engage the enemy in the Pacific (Rochin et al.,

2005). Hispanics served in both racially integrated and segregated units that were sometimes determined by their skin tone (Dansby, & Landis, 2001).

Hispanics also served bravely during the Korean War and one of the most successful combat units was the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment. According to Rochin et al. (2005), members of this unit were awarded 124 silver star medals and four distinguished service crosses. Furthermore they were given credit to killing nearly 6,000 enemy soldiers and capturing over 2,000 of them. In spite of their impressive war records, many Hispanic soldiers were still treated unfairly, yet they continued to fight for the U.S. They were ultimately awarded nine Congressional medals of Honor for their contributions in the Korean War (Rochin et al., 2005).

During the Vietnam War, a large number of Mexican Americans volunteered for service because they hoped it would lead to a more promising future. Military service also appealed to their sense of machismo. During the 1990 Persian Gulf War or Operations Desert Storm/Desert Shield, approximately 425,000 troops were deployed to the Persian Gulf region and at that time, Hispanic Americans comprised 3.1% of the Air Force, 4.2% of the Army, 6% of the Navy, and 7.9% of the Marines (Mischka, 2013). On March 19, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom began and during this time, Hispanic Americans comprised nearly 10% of the active duty enlisted force and nearly 18% of the combat troops. Less than 6 months after combat operations began, 30 Hispanic American troops had been killed, representing nearly 18% of all military personnel killed in Iraq (Mischka, 2013). These numbers further illustrate Hispanics' strong desire to serve and uphold the Constitution of the United States and defend democratic principles. The Medal of Honor was created by Congress to recognize the highest act of bravery in combat and 39 Hispanics have received this award for their heroism (Rochin et al., 2005).

Asian American and Pacific Islanders

Asian American and Pacific Islanders have served in the U.S. Military since the War of 1812 and fought on both sides of the Civil War. During the late 19th century, Asian Americans served in a military branch of the U.S. Army as Philippine Scouts when the U.S. was fighting a counter insurgency campaign in the Philippines. They were knowledgeable of the terrain and successfully served as combat soldiers, spies, and guides helping American troop movement during the Philippine-American War (Parker, 2008; Segal & Segal, 2004). During World War I, many Asian Americans served with distinction on battlefields for the U.S. Army in France. As a result of their war contributions, Asian American soldiers were allowed to become naturalized citizens. World War I ended in 1918

and there were close to 180,000 Asian Americans living in the United States (Army.mil Features, n.d.).

During World War II, following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor that occurred on December 7, 1941, many men, women, and children of Japanese descent had their lives transformed forever as a result of the prejudice treatment they received from government agencies and fellow American citizens. Less than three months after Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which forcibly removed people of Japanese descent on the west coast from their homes without due process and relocated to holding facilities or internment camps located in the western part of the United States. The camps had armed guards in watchtowers and at gates. In addition, the camps were surrounded by barbed wire fence. Many Japanese Americans wanted to join the military and believed doing so was their only chance to prove they were loyal Americans (Bielakowski, 2013).

Even under these adverse conditions, Japanese Americans served honorably in World War II as draftees or volunteers. The 100th Battalion comprised of only Japanese soldiers, became the most decorated unit of their size. Other units, such as the Army's 442 Regimental Combat team, bravely fought in Europe and Italy. Many others trained as interpreters and translators and their significant contributions were credited with decreasing the war by two years (Tamura, 1999). Chinese Americans also faced discrimination during this time and estimates suggest over 12,000 served in integrated units during World War II (Yung, 1999).

Asian American and Pacific Islanders also have honorably served in the Korean War, Vietnam, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, in 2011, old wounds concerning racial discrimination and prejudice for some Asian American and Pacific Islanders resurfaced when Private Daniel Chen committed suicide as a result of bullying received from fellow soldiers. It was reported that he was teased about his Chinese name and even though he was a native of New York, he was often asked if he was Chinese. On October 3, 2011, Private Chen was discovered dead in a guardhouse in Afghanistan, where he apparently had taken his life with a gun. The U.S. Army charged eight soldiers with illegal hazing in connection with his death (Hawley, 2011).

African Americans

African Americans are the largest minority group in the U.S. military and they have participated in every war since the founding of the United States (Segal & Segal, 2004). They have experienced racial discrimination and prejudicial treatment in the military that mirrors treatment experienced by other minority groups. However, according to De Angelis and

Segal (2012), “they are unique regarding the duration and the harshness of their conditions of service. From the end of the Civil War up to the Korean War, African Americans served in racially segregated units such as the black cavalry regiments on the Western frontier known as the Buffalo Soldiers” (p. 329). Since the days of Reconstruction, the Army had maintained four African American regiments, yet none were sent to fight in Europe during World War I. Other African American combat units during this time were often assigned to perform menial labor because of military concerns about their morality and loyalty (Mershon & Schlossman, 1998). The military thus enforced the many elements of institutionalized racism into their own formal policies.

During World War II, African Americans joined the military in greater numbers and at one point comprised 9% of the U.S. Army (Dansby & Landis, 2001). Even so, they were kept away from combat because they were perceived as cowards likely to flee during combat operations. As a result of manpower shortages, more than one million African Americans served in segregated combat units during World War II (Saldin, 2011). Two of the most celebrated segregated combat units of this era were the Tuskegee Airmen of the 99th Pursuit Squadron and the 332 Fighter Group. These two groups eventually merged and flew bomber escort missions in North Africa and the Mediterranean. They were quite effective and out of the hundreds of bombers escorted, they only lost 25 bombers to hostile enemy aircraft (Whynot, 2013).

African Americans also participated in the Korean War and in Vietnam. During Vietnam, racial tensions were intense in the United States and it was believed that African American soldiers were dying at disproportionately high rates. In spite of representing only 11% of the total U.S. population, African Americans comprised 20% of all combat deaths (Segal & Segal, 2004). The military responded by changing their policy and the death rates were reduced. The military also became an all-volunteer force in 1973 and African American military representation increased (De Angelis & Segal, 2012). During Operation Desert Storm, African Americans continued participating in high rates and comprised 20% of the troops in the Gulf War (Buckley, as cited in Lutz, 2008).

Implications for Career Development Professionals

In all likelihood, the number of minority veterans will likely increase in the future and in order for career development professionals to be most effective providing services to this population, they are encouraged to develop a keen sense of awareness about their values and beliefs concerning minority military veterans. Developing a keen sense of awareness is warranted because opinions and perspectives of military veterans of some military conflicts have not always been perceived in a positive

manner (Burris, 2008). If prejudicial beliefs exist concerning minority veterans, career development professionals are encouraged to confront them by attaining accurate information because this could help them provide more culturally responsive services. This is significant because a perceived lack of cultural competence has in the past impacted usage of VA services for minority veterans (Duke, Moore, & Ames, 2011). According to Harada et al. (2002), “veteran identity is defined as veteran’s self-concept that derives from his/her military experience within a sociopolitical context” (p. 117) and this one concept is essential for career development professionals to understand. The manner in which veterans perceive themselves will likely vary by race or ethnicity as a result of their sociopolitical history and military experience. Veteran identity may additionally impact how they utilize other VA services (Harada et al., 2002).

Given the number of services offered to veterans, career development professionals must understand that stigma is a significant factor that may prevent some veterans from seeking mental health services (Duke et al., 2011). For example, Hoge, Auchterlonie, and Milliken (2006) discovered, in a group of over 6,000 veterans that served in Iraq and Afghanistan, how they would be perceived by fellow peers, and military persons in leadership positions was the primary factor preventing them from seeking mental health services, particularly for PTSD. Regardless of stigma, it is essential for career development professionals to help veterans suffering from PTSD attain appropriate services because this could help alleviate some of the social and economic costs associated with this disorder (Duke et al., 2011).

Career development professionals providing career services to minority veterans are also encouraged to help minority veterans learn to utilize transferable skills, which are skills they may have developed throughout their military career that could be useful in future civilian careers (e.g., communication, leadership, work ethic, research, adaptability). The region of the country is another factor that career development professionals should take into consideration because California, Texas, and Florida are the most populated states with military veterans (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2013). Career development professionals must know the minority veteran population and understand the distinction between Gulf War era I veterans, Gulf War era II veterans, veterans of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam Era, veterans of other service periods, veterans with a service-connected disability, and veterans with Reserve or National Guard membership (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, 2014). Even though these groups were not addressed in this paper, career development professionals are further encouraged to

become sensitive to the needs of minority veteran women, veterans who identify with other cultural/ethnicity groups, and gay and lesbian veterans.

Career development professionals would be wise to use a variety of resources provided by the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV). The CMV is located in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and was created to make certain that all veterans receive the same level of quality service regardless of gender, origin, race, or religion. CMV's are also responsible for removing barriers and creating strategies to improve the level of involvement in active VA benefits programs for eligible minority veterans (Center for Minority Veterans, n.d.).

Conclusion

Minority veterans from many different racial and ethnic groups have honorably served in every U.S. military conflict and while they have made valuable contributions to this country, their military efforts have not always been appropriately recognized (Bielakowski, 2013; Rochin et al., 2005). Many minority veterans encountered various forms of institutionalized racism and were often perceived as un-American and less than human (Mershon & Schlossman, 1998). In spite of this harsh climate, minority veterans perceived military service, particularly service in combat, as proof of their loyalty to the United States and right for equal citizenship (De Angelis & Segal, 2012). Additionally, they perceived the military as an organization that offered better opportunities for steady employment, additional training, leadership, and higher pay that were not available in the civilian world (Armor & Gilroy, 2010).

It is likely that minority representation in the military will remain steady along with the number of minority veterans. As the military continues to evolve, minority veterans will also be defined by other characteristics beyond race, ethnicity, and gender, to include national origin, religion (De Angelis & Segal, 2012), and sexual orientation (Blosnich, Foynes, & Shipherd, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative for career development professionals to continue to provide culturally responsive services to minority veterans for their noteworthy contributions.

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Chapter 8

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE: Assisting Female Veterans in their Career Development

by Meghan L. Reppert, Mary Buzzetta, and
Tim Rose

Abstract

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (2013) projects that the number of female veterans is expected to increase in the upcoming years. Although, the research specific to female veteran's career development is sparse, a review of the literature indicates that this is indeed a topic worth attention (Mulhall, 2009; Silva, 2008; Service Women's Action Network [SWAN], 2013). This article will focus on a synthesis of the current literature in hopes of providing some insight into the unique challenges and strengths of the female veteran population. Attention will be given to factors that directly impact female veterans' career development, as well as provide an overview of the general characteristics associated with this population. For practitioners to begin to understand how they can most effectively work with female veterans, it is essential to have some insight into not only who they are as individuals, but who they are as service members and veterans. Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg's (2012) theory of transition will also be explored as a useful lens to use when working with female veterans' experiencing challenges in their career development.

Females are now the fastest growing group within the veteran community (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2013). Furthermore, while the male veteran population is projected to decrease in the upcoming years, the female veteran population is expected to continue increasing (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2013). Female veterans face challenges of unemployment, underemployment, and can also experience significant challenges related to their career development (Mulhall, 2009). They are a population in need of, and deserving of, effective assistance with career transition and issues related to career development.

According to Engels and Harris (2002), approximately 14% of the military population consists of females. Female veterans face unique challenges during their time in service and while transitioning back into civilian life. For instance, the unemployment rate for female veterans (8.2%)

is higher in comparison to the rate for male veterans (4.7%) (Duggan & Jurgens, 2007). Additionally, female veterans experience higher rates of divorce, homelessness, and are more likely to be single parents in comparison to their male counterparts (Mulhall, 2009). Similarly, they face challenges with regards to healthcare, career advancement, and sexual harassment/sexual assault (Mulhall, 2009). Conversely, many females have positive experiences in the military. For instance, they may experience freedom from restrictive gender roles, a means to advance their career, and fulfill their desire to serve their country (Silva, 2008). When working with female veterans or veterans in general, it is important to have a basic knowledge of the military culture, including cultures specific to a veteran's military branch.

Provided the unique experiences of females in the military, they also have distinctive needs in terms of career development and career transition. While literature specific to the career needs of female veterans is lacking, the current article will provide an overview of information pertinent to the identity of female veterans, as well as transitions and experiences specific to this population. An overview of military culture will also be included to provide a context for the lived experiences of female veterans.

Military Basics

The United States military comprises five branches: Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard. Three branches of the military, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, were created in 1775 as a result of the American Revolution. The War Department, the precursor to the Department of Defense, was established in 1789 and the Coast Guard was created in 1790 (U.S. Department of Defense, 2013). The Air Force was later established in 1947, and this same year, the Secretary of Defense assumed direct oversight of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

In addition to the different branches of the military, there are different categories of service members. Service members may be enlisted, warrant officers, or officers. Each category has specialized training, responsibilities, and areas of expertise (Strom et al., 2012). Similarly, each service member has a different rank. A military rank can be considered a badge of leadership. As a service member's rank increases, responsibilities increase as well (U.S. Department of Defense, 2013). More than one rank can be included in the same pay grade. In terms of progression in the military, many females express a belief that they have to work harder than men for the possibility to be promoted. Similarly, some females report that they are less likely to be provided opportunities which allow them to prove themselves as capable for career advancement within the military (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011). Females are currently underrepre-

sented in higher ranks for the military and have lower promotion rates than their male counterparts (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011). This dynamic may be particularly relevant for career development practitioners working with female veterans leaving military positions to transition to civilian work.

Military Culture and Gender Socialization

Culture can generally be defined as a shared set of values, beliefs, and behaviors (Strom, et.al., 2012). In the military, there is a culture that is common to all branches, as well as culture specific to each individual branch. In exploring the overarching culture of the military, it is important to look at the aims of the military. “Among veterans, shared values stem from service to one’s country, shared training experiences, and shared mission, namely preparation for war/and or national defense” (Strom, et al., 2012, p. 68). In working with veterans, it is important to have a context with which to understand their values and worldview. While each veteran is an individual with a unique set of values and beliefs, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of military culture in order to help them transition into civilian life, as well as make meaning of their experiences in the military.

Females were officially recognized in the military in 1948 when President Truman instated the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act. While females have traditionally not been permitted to have active combat roles, the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have blurred the frontlines, thrusting female service members fully into combat roles (SWAN, 2013). The Army and Marine Corps have evolved their use of females on the battlefield through the use of ad hoc Female Engagement Teams (FETs) and Lioness Teams, which are often tasked to work with combat arms unit (SWAN, 2013). Due to the strong patriarchal values which define the military structure, females’ more active role in the military has been met with some resistance (Silva, 2008).

Females in western culture are encouraged to be relational, caring, and altruistic individuals. However, when females enter the military, they are immersed into a culture which values hierarchal power dynamics, physical strength, fraternal bonding, unquestioning loyalty, and authority (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011; Silva, 2008). As Silva (2008) states, “if performing gender in culturally recognizable ways is crucial to the conception of one’s deepest self, as well as essential to forming meaningful interactions with others, the extent to which military women can adopt traditionally non-feminine behaviors and characteristics and still retain their identities as women, may be called into question” (p. 398).

While some may argue that females’ presence in the military is a sign that they have reached some level of equality with men, females in the

military are asked to conform to traditionally male standards of success in order to succeed. It was not until the early 1990's that females' occupational roles within the military began to change. This was due to a policy change made by the Department of Defense allowing female service members to serve in ground units (Patten & Parker, 2011). As evidenced by the recently lifted combat ban for females, they are still fighting for equal rights and recognition in the military. While females across career paths are encouraged to detach or repress parts of themselves that are considered to be feminine, the demands to do so are greater when females work in the military. Research suggests that the military has, historically, institutionally resisted the presence of females and feminism (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011; Silva, 2008).

Additionally, many veterans have experienced trauma. Female veterans are even more likely than their male counterparts to have experienced trauma (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011). According to a recent report from Patten and Parker (2011), 15% of the overall female veteran population has served in a combat or war zone, a rate much lower than their male counterparts (35%), yet over 40% of post 9/11 female veterans indicate symptoms of post-traumatic stress (42%) and frequent feelings of anger and irritability (45%). Furthermore, female veterans suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at approximately twice the rate of men veterans (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009). It is recommended that services are provided to female veterans in a manner that is consistent with a holistic approach in which all of the strengths and challenges of the veteran are taken into consideration. While PTSD may not be the focus of career counseling, it is important to process how having PTSD might impact a female veteran's career development.

Unique Challenges

Females face unique challenges as service members and as veterans transitioning into civilian careers. The following will highlight some of the issues faced by this population.

Career Advancement within the Military

In order to assist female veterans with issues pertaining to career, it is important to have some insight into the challenges they face within the military. Research indicates that many females in the military are skeptical in regards to their opportunities to advance in the military (Mulhall, 2009). The results of a Department of Defense survey conducted in 2008 suggests that female enlisted soldiers are less likely than their male counterparts to believe they would get the assignments needed for promotion, or that they would advance proportionately to their skills and experiences (American Women Veterans [AWV], 2013). Similarly, the survey found that both officer and enlisted females consistently rated their experiences

with supervisors more negatively than their male counterparts (AWV, 2013). Provided these challenges, it can be assumed that female veterans, particularly those who are enlisted, may have lower self-efficacy in relation to their ability to comprise successful careers after leaving the military (Brown & Lent, 2005). Implications for this will be discussed further when exploring specific strategies for assisting female veterans with career concerns.

Family and Support

Female service members are much more likely to be a single parent than male service members (Mulhall, 2009). As of March 2009, more than 30,000 single mothers have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Not only are female service members more likely to be single mothers, but their marriages are failing at almost three times the rate of their male counterparts (Mulhall, 2009). These statistics suggest that female veterans may have less social support and more family responsibilities than male veterans. Compounded with the lower earning potential that females still experience in many fields, these factors could prove to be a significant barrier in making a successful career transition (Coogan & Chen, 2007). However, it is necessary to note that female veterans appear to make more than civilian females; conversely, male veterans tend to make less than civilian men (Mulhall, 2009). While this apparent increased earning potential is a benefit that some female veterans experience, female veterans still make approximately \$10,000 less than their male counterparts. There is little research to explain the differences in salary between female veterans and civilians. One assumption indicates that female veterans possess additional education and training in comparison to civilian females and that this may translate into a higher salary when leaving the military (Mulhall, 2009). More research is needed in order to gain a comprehensive picture of the manner in which military experiences impact female veterans when transitioning into civilian life.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Military Sexual Trauma

Females in the military experience higher rates of sexual harassment and trauma than do men in the military (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011; Mulhall, 2009). Recent research indicates that the incidence of military sexual trauma (MST) has declined for recent generations. Approximately 1 out of 3 female veterans throughout the generations report having been sexually assaulted or raped while in the military. Approximately 70% say that they experienced sexual harassment while serving (AWV, 2013). MST often leads to long-term debilitating psychological conditions, including PTSD and major depression (SWAN, 2013).

Female veterans are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009). However, they are also not often diagnosed with this

disorder. The fact that females have not traditionally served in active combat roles has likely contributed to the under diagnosis of PTSD in female veterans (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011). Symptoms of PTSD can include, but are not limited to, flashbacks of the originating trauma, social withdrawal and avoidance, emotional numbing, and hyperarousal. Estimates of the lifetime prevalence of PTSD in the general U.S. population ranges from 3.6% for men and 9.7% for females (National Comorbidity Survey, 2005). For men and women who have served in the U.S. military, the prevalence of PTSD is over 2% more than the general population. As previously mentioned, while mental health issues are not typically the focus of career counseling, they may significantly impact a person's career development and should be considered in a holistic approach to career counseling (Lenz, Peterson, Reardon, & Saunders, 2010; Zunker, 2008).

The higher rates of specific mental health disorders may contribute to the disproportionate number of female veterans who struggle with homelessness, provided that approximately half of all people who are homeless struggle with mental health issues and close to 25% of people who are homeless have serious mental health disorders, including chronic depression (National Coalition for Homelessness [NCH], 2013).

Homelessness

While recent statistics indicate that the number of homeless veterans has been decreasing, the number of homeless female veterans has been on the rise (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009). Female veterans are up to three times more likely to experience homelessness than male veterans (Institute for Veterans and Military Families, 2013; Mulhall, 2009). One contributing factor may be that on average, female veterans earn lower wages than their male counterparts (Mulhall, 2009). In general, the United States Department of Labor (2012) identifies equal pay and work flexibility as two primary challenges facing female workers. On average, females who work full-time earn only about 80 cents for every dollar a male earns. Female veterans more commonly struggle with finding jobs which pay comparably to their earnings in the military than male veterans.

Homeless veterans have continually cited childcare as their number one unmet need (Mulhall, 2009). Over 20% of female veterans in the Veteran Affairs (VA) homelessness programs have children under 18 years old. However, the VA cannot provide direct care to children or spouses of veterans. As a result, providing suitable housing for homeless veterans with families falls under the responsibility of multiple agencies. The decentralization of services for homeless veterans with families can lead to challenges in coordination and delivery of services (Mulhall, 2009).

Access to Healthcare and Services in the VA

According to Mulhall (2009), female veterans report less satisfaction with the medical care they receive than their male counterparts. Female veterans also appear to have inhibited ability to access preferred providers, such as a doctor specializing in women's health. Furthermore, female service members' health may be negatively impacted by the lack of acknowledgement of the unique healthcare needs of women by their commanding officers. The results of the Department of Defense survey conducted in 2008 indicated that females might be less likely to communicate healthcare needs to their commanding officers (AWV, 2013). As a result, female veterans' health can be negatively impacted. Compounding the challenges of reporting gender specific health issues to commanding officers is the tendency of some females to remain silent in order to appear strong and adhere to military cultural norms.

Theory of Transition

Transition is a time of shifting roles, questioning values, and redefining personal identity (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). The greater the life transition, the more salient these paradigm shifts are to a person. There are commonly four major areas to consider when assisting individuals in their transition: self-concept, coping skills, support, and their unique situation (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). These four factors are referred to as the "four S's", self, situation, social supports, and strategies. Previous researchers have suggested the use of Schlossberg's 4-S transition model as a resource for assisting veterans in managing their transition concerns (Stein-McCormick, Osborn, Hayden, & Van Hoose, 2013).

When discussing the self, those working from transition theory are referencing the individual assets and inner strengths a person brings to a transition event. Role salience and balance, resilience and adaptability, and self-efficacy and meaning making are areas that are fundamental to address when working with a female veteran on her internal resources and how she can utilize these in her career transition (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012).

Another common difficulty military individuals experience in their transition is identifying and marketing the skills they acquired through their military experiences (Smith, 2008). According to Felder (2008), the task of accurately describing one's military skills to an employer can be overwhelming. Career practitioners can assist these individuals in identifying their transferable skills, including job training and expertise, self-confidence, and leadership roles. Identifying transferable skills will assist a veteran in setting realistic career goals. In addition, exploring the job market can often be an overwhelming task for military individuals

transitioning into the civilian job market. This said, it is important for career counselors to be informed of different organizations interested in recruiting candidates with a military background (Smith, 2008).

The situation specific to the transition is another significant determinant of the process a person will experience. The trigger that initiated the transition, the developmental level of the individual involved, the various personal roles that are impacted, and the individual's perception of the transition are all variables which influence a transitional experience, as well as the manner in which it is handled (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). For instance, a female veteran who chooses to leave the military may experience the transition to civilian life from a different perspective than a female veteran who was discharged from the military. It is also important to take into consideration other life circumstances and concurrent stressors which may be impacting a veteran's transitional experiences as well (Schlossberg, 2011). Examples include familial relationships, finances, retirement, and relocation.

As previously indicated, research indicates that female veterans have fewer social supports in comparison to male veterans (Mulhall, 2009). Therefore, when exploring a female veteran's experience of her transition into civilian life, this aspect of her life may be particularly important to take into consideration. Given that social support is critical to an individual's sense of well-being, it is particularly useful during a period of transition (Schlossberg, 2011). However, not all social support is necessarily positive. Therefore, it is essential to also assess for the type and extent of social support being received (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). Examples include peer and family relationships, spouse/marriage partner, support groups, and an individual's spirituality.

Practitioners can support a successful career transition for female veterans by creating opportunities for clients to connect with other veterans (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011). Veterans often report that the friendship and support of other veterans is critical to effectively transitioning to civilian life. One resource available to facilitate mentorship and connection is Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus. As stated on their website (www.joiningforcesmentoringplus.org; BPW, 2014), "Joining Forces Plus is an evidence based response to qualitative and quantitative studies of female veterans of all ages and eras," as well as a resource that practitioners can utilize when working with female veterans. Joining Forces Mentoring Plus provides practitioners with numerous free online career development instruments, as well as access to female veteran mentors. An additional resource for assisting female veterans to connect with mentors and experts from various careers is the Business and Professional Women's Foundation (<http://bpwfoundation.org>).

org/index.php/issues/female_veterans/; BPW, 2012).

Strategies refers to the manner in which an individual copes with the transition. Coping may be intended to modify a situation, control the meaning of an issue, or an attempt to manage stress as a result of an event (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). Similar to social support, coping skills are not inherently negative or positive in nature. Examples of strategies include volunteering, joining a professional association, journaling, attending conferences, and creating a job search plan.

Conclusion

As noted, the number of females in the service is increasing and their roles are shifting (DiRmaro & Jarvis, 2011; Mulhall, 2009). Research also suggests that female veterans are less represented in high ranking military positions, earn less than their male counterparts, experience higher rates of homelessness and divorce, and are more likely to be single parents in comparison to their male counterparts. When females join the military, they enter a male-dominant setting, and because of this occurrence, many individuals under-estimate the stressors female soldiers experience in their role as military members. It is helpful for career practitioners to be aware of these difficulties and concerns, and utilize various approaches when working with this population. Schlossberg's 4-S transition model is one resource which emphasizes four key areas that can assist veterans in their transition: self-concept, coping strategies, social support, and understanding their unique situation. While working with a veteran, career practitioners can frame their questions according to the Schlossberg's 4-S transition model and utilize specific resources such as Joining Forces Mentoring Plus and the Business and Professional Women's Foundation to assist veteran clients in obtaining the resources necessary for a successful transition.

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Chapter 9

A PARADIGM SHIFT: Strategies for assisting military spouses in obtaining a successful career path

by Pamela McBride and Lori Cleymans

Military spouses encounter multiple challenges obtaining jobs and building their careers. Frequent moves result in insufficient time for career planning, education, and the inability to build seniority. Furthermore, military spouses often take whatever job they can get, in fields of little or no interest, and find themselves with limited potential for professional growth. Even with hiring initiatives for military spouses, they tend to earn less than their civilian counterparts, and tend to be underemployed. This article examines the challenges military spouses encounter and provides strategies for career practitioners to help military spouses.

Introduction

Military spouses have experienced challenges obtaining satisfying jobs and building ‘good’ careers. Frequent relocations with little advanced notice result in insufficient time for career planning, education, and on-the-job experience. Constant moves also make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish seniority in the workplace. Furthermore, military spouses often take any job they can get, in fields of little or no interest, and find themselves with little to no potential for professional growth and development within an organization. It is recommended that career development practitioners working with military spouses understand employment and education data related to this population, how they are similar to and different from civilian spouses, and how military spouses view their situations.

In the 2013 survey of military spouses conducted by the Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Spouses, in partnership with the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), today’s average military spouse is a 33-year-old female who has, “some college or bachelor’s degree and more likely to have children in the home. She is less likely to be employed and makes about 38% less than her civilian counterpart” (Maury & Stone, 2014, p. 1).

In 2004, the Rand Corporation conducted a study, *Working around the Military: Challenges to Military Spouse Employment and Education* (Harrell, Lim, Castaneda, & Golinelli, 2004), military spouses said that frequent moves, deployments, their active duty spouse's working long hours, and living in areas with poor labor markets have negatively affected their career opportunities.

A subsequent 2010 Rand Study, *Measuring Underemployment among Military Spouses* (Lim & Schulker, 2010) presents data stating that the military spouse tends to take on additional family responsibilities due to the active duty spouse's work commitments. These extra responsibilities tend to negatively affect the military spouse's ability to obtain employment. Furthermore, frequent moves impact a military spouse's ability to grow in a career. "Despite social and institutional support to buffer the effect of these moves on military families, each move could disrupt the progression of a military wife's career if her job is not easily transferable" (p. 26).

Despite these discouraging factors, military spouses still embrace the challenges of their lifestyles, and because of it, they build a set of skills that would be an asset to any employer. Adaptability, flexibility, project management, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, leadership, organization, coping skills, and initiative are just a few that come to mind. Unfortunately, many of them may not recognize the value of these skills and therefore are unable to communicate it.

Understanding this background will go a long way in building the level of trust and rapport needed to guide military spouses. A shift in the paradigm along with shifts in the job market will improve the outlook of landing great jobs and building satisfying careers over the long haul. Our insight as military spouses and career development professionals will provide career practitioners with specific strategies to help military spouses stop 'starting over' with every move and start building new careers for military life and beyond.

The strategies that will be discussed include: creating a career lattice, increasing marketability with each move, understanding the range of professional educational opportunities, learning and speaking the job market lingo, documenting accomplishments, and using social media for career development and networking.

Create a Career Lattice

The job market is unstable. In recent years, most individual's careers have been mixed with multiple job changes within and outside of their career fields, along with periods of unemployment, training, or education, and in some cases, entrepreneurship. Workers are doing what it takes to

make ends meet. This approach mirrors that of many military spouses over the years. Whether they want to work or have to work, and regardless of the career field, their goal has been to get a paycheck. This is not the approach they would like to take; rather, they feel forced into it. It is recommended that career development practitioners reassure military spouses that there are other options. With certain intentional steps, they can create a satisfying career.

When working with military spouses, we recommend the introduction of the idea of creating a career lattice to replace the idea of climbing the career ladder. The career ladder symbolizes a vertical journey up the hierarchy of an organization or career field. In other words, as seniority increases, so does the possibility of promotions and salary. This approach was never a feasible one for most military spouses since they do not stay in any location long enough to obtain seniority in the workplace. Furthermore, other than the military and arguably, federal civilian employers, organizations are becoming flat. That is, they have removed most ‘middle managers’ between the management level and the staff level employees. Therefore, there are a very limited number of opportunities to climb the ladder.

The career lattice symbolizes a career path that contains moves in multiple directions – laterally and vertically. In other words, one’s career evolves through a variety of positions and experiences that are not necessarily progressively higher in professional level, but instead, are more diverse and well-rounded. This approach is one that can absolutely work for military spouses, since in many cases, this is the very nature of their backgrounds. During this discussion, it is recommended that career development practitioners assist military spouses in recognizing the value in the variety of jobs, volunteer work, and entrepreneurial ventures they have obtained. Then, pull together those experiences to demonstrate their value to employers based upon the type of positions they are seeking. You could also use this approach as a career planning tool to help them identify positions that will add to their diversity of experience. Career OneStop has excellent samples of career lattices across several industries as well as detailed instructions on creating them. For more information, please visit <http://www.onetcenter.org/ladders.html>

By introducing the career lattice approach and how to intentionally use it, practitioners will help military spouses understand that they do not have to start over at every duty station. Instead, they can leverage the skills they already have to explore multiple work options for their next several jobs, and to create a path that moves them toward a satisfying career.

Increase Marketability with Each Move

A considerable amount of military spouses will come to career practitio-

ners with a resume that contains a steady work history in the same field, but they want to do something ‘more.’ They realize that they do not have to repeatedly start over, but they also do not feel confident enough to apply for positions at the next level. In this situation, there are two things that can happen.

First, the career practitioner can review and discuss the resume. Do all the work experience entries sound like the same job? If so, help your client revise them one at a time to make each of them more distinct. Ask questions such as the following:

What were your major accomplishments at this job?

What important skills, knowledge, or training did you gain in this job?

For what two or three things did your employer need you to accomplish daily, weekly, or monthly?

What did you create or accomplish for the first time?

For what tasks or information were you the go-to person?

Also, encourage military spouses to include volunteer experience on their resumes. Military spouses are known to volunteer countless hours for numerous causes, big and small, and not give themselves credit for these experiences. It is important for them to recognize the value of these experiences. These experiences can fill skills gaps, add depth and breadth to work experience, and enhance their professional development.

Career practitioners understand the need for strong accomplishment statements and are able to help clients reveal these. It is recommended that career development practitioners utilize their counseling skills to probe for content, facilitate brainstorming, and help military spouses take ownership for their ideas. With this ownership, military spouses will become more confident in their unique contributions to each workplace and be better prepared to discuss them when interviewing.

Secondly, to further build upon this confidence, he or she can plan for increased marketability with each job based upon whether they want to move on to another career or move up in the one they have. Emphasize that military spouses should not only aim to get a job that enhances their professional background, but also aim to identify specifically, how they will make themselves more marketable before moving again. Career practitioners can also work with military spouses to plan short-term and long-term development goals.

In the short-term, after working in a new job for 30-90 days and gaining an understanding of the expectations, military spouses can identify what they need to learn more of in order to exceed those expectations. Military spouses tend to have a drive to exceed rather than meet expectations.

Then, they can set out to find opportunities to fill those gaps through free internal training or low-cost external training, strategically designed volunteer work, special assignments, or becoming the lead on a group project.

When it comes to long-term goals, do not be surprised if military spouses are resistant to setting them. They know that Uncle Sam could move them at any time, to any place, and without much notice. Help them understand the wide range of professional and educational opportunities and ways in which they can find ones that are flexible enough to be completed anywhere such as webinars and online courses. It may also be helpful to remind military spouses that the goal is to be more marketable when they leave this position than when they arrived. Taking time to plan and document their increased marketability is critical to their success.

Understand the range of professional educational opportunities

When a military spouse moves to a new duty station, he or she may experience difficulty finding employment. This can lead to resentment of the situation and dissatisfaction with the location and the job market. According to the survey conducted by the Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and MOAA (Maury & Stone, 2014), 79% of military spouses surveyed had moved across state lines or abroad within the past five years. This leads some military spouses to give up on their job search since it is difficult to find employment.

Many times, spouses will experience negative self-talk such as, “If the same job is not available in this location, then there is nothing for me and my career suffers.” Helping military spouses understand the variety of opportunities to gain or maintain their experience is imperative. There are multiple avenues to explore in order to continue career growth such as gaining certifications and licenses, obtaining a degree or advanced certification, taking professional development courses, or joining professional associations.

Various career fields value certifications which can enhance a military spouse’s ability to find employment at the next location. The Certification Finder at www.careeronestop.org/certificationfinder offers an extensive list of career fields that need certifications, as well as the agencies and organizations which offer them. Additionally, there is www.careeronestop.org/shorttermtraining. This site is useful in finding certificate programs at nearby schools.

Joining associations is another resource where military spouses can gain certifications, and remain up-to-date with industry news. By actively participating in a professional organization, clients can gain experience, exposure among peers, and are seen as an expert in the field. To find as-

sociations, conduct a search for associations using Weddles, <http://www.weddles.com/associations/>, or use the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) at www.bls.gov/ooh

Marine Corps spouses have an excellent opportunity for free courses through the Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) library system with Universal Classes. These courses will allow participants to earn continuing education units in a variety of courses such as accounting, career coaching, photography, business skills, animal care, healthcare, web development, and many more. Marine Corps spouses can visit their MCCS libraries for registration information and access code.

Often times, military spouses earn a degree in a field that is not portable. The mobile lifestyle can hinder gaining formal education since credits may not transfer, or the military spouse is moving in the middle of a semester and is unable to complete the course. At times, military spouses will earn a degree, without conducting research in advance, to see if it is a growing field, or if those jobs will be near multiple military installations. It is recommended that career development practitioners encourage military spouses to take the time to research using sites such as:

College Navigator - <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> - find colleges/universities and understand the programs available

Occupational Outlook Handbook - www.bls.gov/ooh - research career options

O*Net – www.onetonline.org – research career options

Military One Source – www.militaryonesource.mil – research military installations and their locations and the potential occupations in the surrounding area

By gathering this information, military spouses can make more informed decisions regarding the type of degree they should work toward, ensuring they are more satisfied with their career choice, and able to maintain a career.

Learn and Speak the Job Market Lingo

Service members and their spouses know better than anyone that the military has a language of its own. They are used to translating military terminology to non-military family and friends and probably have a good laugh over the miscommunications. However, what they may not think about during the job search is that other organizations have their own languages too. Unfortunately, miscommunicating or failing to communicate their skills is no laughing matter since it could result in not landing the job.

Military spouses will appreciate being reminded of their frustration as a new spouse when they first experienced difficulty following conversations full of military lingo and had no choice but to learn it. However, employers do have a choice, and they will not choose to learn unfamiliar language on a resume. They will just move on to the next one.

Although military spouses likely will not have military terminology on their resumes (unless they worked as a federal civilian, contractor, or volunteered on a military installation), this is a good example of how critical it is to speak the same language as the employers and/or the language of their intended career field. The only way to learn those buzzwords is to research the job market. By showing military spouses up front how easy it is to find this information in job announcements, organization web sites, and even on social media sites such as LinkedIn, career practitioners will help military spouses alleviate their anxiety of being expected to tailor resumes to what might seem to them as a never ending chore.

When military spouses are looking for jobs, it is almost always a high-anxiety time. Either they are juggling 'regular' life (which might include a deployment or homecoming) and having to pack up their entire household to relocate, or they have just hit the ground running after relocation and are trying to get everyone's life back in order. The thought of researching the job market and learning the lingo just adds two more cumbersome things to be juggled. Quite frankly, it could just go by the wayside. It is recommended that career practitioners be empathetic about all the things military spouses may have going on and if needed, allow them a few sessions of venting, organizing their thoughts, prioritizing, and yes, convincing them that this can and should be done.

Another consideration for practitioners is that military spouses may come to them with plans of searching in the federal job market, the non-federal job market, and in the entrepreneurial arena. Again, once they realize the importance of learning and using the right language for each situation, and that each situation will differ, they may feel overwhelmed and cut their goals short in order to achieve something. While narrowing things down is an admirable approach, we suggest encouraging them to work on one area at a time, rather than give up something; because realistically, they will find themselves in the same situation with the next relocation and the new knowledge may come in handy then.

Document Accomplishments

Working with any client who has either been out of the workforce or has a multitude of jobs can be challenging. Military spouses are no different when it comes to not recognizing their accomplishments and documenting them. However, what sets them apart is that when you become a part

of the military family, you lose your identity to some degree. The spouse is no longer called Sharon or Mark; they are now Sergeant Whitley's wife or Lieutenant Connolly's husband. At the military hospital, a spouse is asked, "What are your sponsor's last four?" This means they want to know the active duty spouse's last four digits of their social security number. Additionally, relocation can take its toll. Always having to leave friends or family, losing connections, and having to start over can leave military spouses feeling adrift. With this loss of identity comes the perception that past work experiences or volunteer positions do not really matter and they are not worthy of mentioning. Understanding this feeling of identity loss can help career practitioners boost the confidence of military spouses so they can see the value of their past accomplishments.

As you build this rapport, it helps to encourage the military spouse to develop and maintain a career portfolio. This may not be a portfolio presented at an interview, but rather a simple collection of important documents including past resumes, letters of recommendation, employment verification forms, position descriptions, school transcripts, licenses and certifications, honors and awards, community/volunteer history, professional memberships, and performance evaluations. There may be more items depending upon the career field. However, this will cover the bulk of information needed for almost anyone. A good resource for how to create a career portfolio can be found at the Florida State University's site at <http://www.career.fsu.edu/images/pdfs/guides/portfoliopreparation.pdf>

Additionally, focusing on transferrable skills can bring to light the amount of skills military spouses have gained. By understanding transferrable skills, the military spouse can see a trend so that they can work toward developing a career instead of a series of miscellaneous jobs. A nice checklist of multiple transferable skills can be found at Rogue Community College's career site at http://www.roguecc.edu/emp/Resources/transferable_skills_checklist.htm. Using a career portfolio will help military spouses see their career lattice, how they have built a range of accomplishments that will fit with multiple employers, and witness the trends of their accomplishments.

Use Social Media for Career Development and Networking

Military spouses tend to think that with all of their moves and a lack of work experience, they do not have a professional network to use for building their career. You can help them understand that the online presence they have through social media can be used to their advantage with a few modifications.

We suggest that military spouses have at least one social media plat-

form that is solely used for professional networking. It may take a lot of convincing to get them to focus only on themselves; not the children, the husband, the unit, the hobbies, or anything unrelated to the career they want. Once your client understands the importance of using social media professionally, career practitioners can help military spouses build a strong online presence.

Below are some recommendations for how to be specific about some of the things that make a social media page professional:

- **A headshot of the individual in professional attire.** In some fields, like creative ones, it might be okay to not wear a professional business suit, but refrain from casual and sportswear.
- **A profile that highlights their skills and areas of expertise.** Whether it is a professional profile (such as LinkedIn) or a few phrases (think Twitter), military spouses need to know what products or services these sites offer for free and which services require a fee.
- **Quotes, comments, and posts related to their work.** Inform military spouses that whether someone reviews their posts one at a time because they are a follower or reads through numerous posts because they just discovered the military spouse, what they read will help them form an opinion about the military spouse as a professional. Remind them to refrain from unprofessional, unrelated to the client's career, and inappropriate comments.

Use the social media page to network with others. Help military spouses understand that the focus is to build professional relationships. If they simply schedule generic posts or read posts from others, there is no relationship. Interact. Be engaging. Answer questions and ask questions. Remember, it should be an opportunity for two-way communication. Keep it positive. All communication online should refrain from negative talk about a previous or current employer. Additionally, regardless of how the military spouse feels about their current location, it is best to avoid posting negative comments about their new community. An employer who is proud of their city or state may not appreciate someone posting negative opinions online; and in general, employers do not want to bring negative energy into their work environment.

Conclusion

Military spouses are a very talented group. Understanding that the many unavoidable lifestyle challenges do not have to deter them from having great careers can help military spouses avoid employment barriers. Not only do military spouses not give themselves the professional credit they deserve, neither do others, including employers. Thankfully, military spouses have career practitioners who want to help them shift that paradigm and close the communication gap by taking advantage of the

valuable workplace skills that grow out of those very same challenges. Once the military spouse identifies those skills, applies sound career planning, and job search techniques like the ones we have suggested, and learns how to communicate what they have to offer, they will be ready and able to make the right career moves again and again, no matter where the military takes them.

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Chapter 10

MENTAL HEALTH and VETERAN VOICES ON EMPLOYABILITY

by Amy Stevens

Much discussion is available about recent war veterans and the possibility of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) having an impact on service members' lives. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of mental health concerns that may exist among veterans by providing a brief review of military culture and information about common mental health concerns related to military service. "Veteran Voices" are provided from social media with permission from authors to assist in understanding how veterans view their own mental health challenges.

Veteran Voices:

*"I was thinking about just this topic this morning, about how therapists talk to other therapists about us and how to treat, but rarely actually ask us questions or talk **with us** rather than **to us**.... I was also thinking about how much more they would learn if they could be a fly on the wall of some of the social media sites/pages where vets talk with other vets.... which really show how much we trust each other more than we trust them with our stories."*

*"While there is tons of media attention on disabilities the **truth** is that veterans are not dangerous, are very able and PTSD, MST and TBI are not issues that need to be avoided or feared, just understood. It is always a delicate balance between letting the civilian world know about these issues without alarming them into avoiding employment of veterans."*

Military Culture

Although most veterans will say that they want to work, those with mental health issues also struggle with self-identity, self-esteem and possible physical challenges that are life changing. For those uninitiated into the military world, it is important to acknowledge that service members are elite. Only one-half of one per cent of Americans served during the past decade (Pew Research Center, 2011). Tough criteria are used to select those who are chosen to enter the greatest military forces in the world, and many of those are screened out through initial military training, boot camp, and other check points. There is nothing like the raw power and adrenaline that soars through the veins on graduation day. Powerful. Strong. Pain is just weakness leaving the body. Part of a team. Shoul-

der to Shoulder. Never leave a battle buddy behind. That battle energy continues overseas and in the barracks state-side. This is the pride of the military.

Veteran Voice:

“Veterans still have the tools they got in boot camp. Something happens that they don’t care about those tools when they are sick. They lose their motivation. People who aren’t vets don’t have the same tools. That’s the difference between veterans and civilians. I was a Corporal and was field promoted to Platoon Sergeant over three squads. I know I am a leader. I just have to get back there.”

Leaving the Military Causes Mental Pain

Then comes the time to leave the military, whether through injury, retirement, family problems, or end of enlistment. The military person has been acculturated to a high standard. They are used to working 24/7 and knowing that if they do not do their assignment correctly, a buddy might die. Also, most have typically been in charge of others as well as managing budgets and equipment. The end of their expected career leaves a loss that is like the loss of a loved one. There is a distinct period of agony, grieving and readjustment while deciding what to do next in one’s life.

Veteran Voices:

“I always thought I would have a military career. It was hard to take that part of my life was over. I served with honor and did so much. Now no one wanted to hire me. I was damaged goods.”

“When I was first discharged, I felt depressed, defeated. It took a long time, 4-5 years to get to where I am now. My sister, my mom, they didn’t understand about my diagnosis. It wasn’t until I met my wife that I had someone to talk to who really listened. Now we have our own house, I’m back in school and we are planning to have children. I still have episodes almost every day but things are better.”

Mental Health Diagnosis

The diagnosis of mental health injury may occur on active duty or much later. Many individuals suppress discussion of changes in their cognitive thinking. It is much easier to discuss broken legs, busted up knees or back. Those are honorable injuries. Yes, they say stigma about mental health is less these days but that is a lie. It’s not. Mental health treatment on active duty is better than it used to be, but the last thing anyone wants is a mental health profile in their military medical record. Few are going to voluntarily seek help while still wearing the uniform. The service member who acts out because of their mental health problem is likely to be diagnosed and discharged quickly as a behavioral problem or a personality disorder. This includes those who develop substance abuse is-

sues. Other personnel who have nightmares and anger outbursts at home but function relatively well in the workplace are not so easy to identify. A mental health profile marks you during a time when down-sizing in the military is occurring. Some service members have only known the military as their work place. They worry that if they lose their flight status or security clearance, they will not be able to work outside the military. Many veterans go without adequate treatment and support as a result.

Veteran Voice:

“Many, if not most, of my friends were able to use their clearances to land jobs after discharge making six figures, easily. I was in no state of mind to go to work right away and my clearance expired. Now I’m in a situation where I need to go to work and my skills are outdated.”

Combat Stress Injuries and other Trauma

There is a new category in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM-V) labeled Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders which covers psychological distress which may or may not include anxiety or fear based symptoms. PTSD is now in this section and it is not just about fear of death. Trauma is normal shock due to anything which would upset anyone. Most people go through normal stages of recovery and move on with their lives. PTSD is when memories and emotions are stuck for an extended time and affect social and occupational functioning. Closely related diagnoses include Anxiety and Depression. The source of mental stress can come from many directions. Not all mental injuries are related to being in direct combat. Many people never go outside the wire, nor directly confront the enemy. The individual who stands guard duty in the tower or drives a truck on convoy is vulnerable and shudders every time a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) screams overhead. Then there are the nasty jobs: picking up remains after a suicide bomber does his job in the mess (dining) tent, and preparing bodies for burial. Even back home, combat experiences can impact a service member’s life. A Sergeant feeling responsible for a young soldier who died because he/she did not train them well enough, or the man or woman left behind stateside due to family issues who feels guilty that it should have been them rather than someone else who died in combat.

Veteran Voices:

“I wasn’t prepared to see inside the coffin. There was just an empty uniform with the medals pinned on. All that was left of the soldier was this little blue bag pinned to the bottom. I guess that was all the parts they could find. It’s hard not to remember it.”

“I left my last job in part because my supervisor didn’t accept PTSD as a real condition. I decided it was time to change careers and am going to

school full time, however the school I'm going to doesn't make accommodations for people with PTSD because it isn't listed as a learning disability. I've been told on many occasions that it can't be that bad because I look ok."

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Scientists are rapidly gaining knowledge about concussion and TBI injuries. It is not uncommon to find service members who have been in accidents or combat where head injuries have occurred. Being blown up by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) is one of the signature wounds of current conflicts. A difference due to modern medicine is that many more people are saved, but may have horrific injuries. What has been neglected until fairly recently is the Mild TBI where there is only a brief concussion and/or knockout. Service members jump back up in spite of temporary hearing loss and go back to their buddies. However, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is now proving that rattling the brain is causing internal injuries not previously identified (Grady, 2011). Advanced treatment is now available at VA facilities.

Veteran Voices:

*"I suffered significant injuries to my brain. It feels weird not to be able to work full-time any more, but I do what I can with the abilities I still have. Headaches, chronic pain, and other debilitating symptoms have become a way of life for me, and I do what I can to cope and adapt, but I am definitely operating in a far **lower gear** than I was before. One of my favorite sayings is: **They may have slowed my roll, but I still be rollin!** It is what it is."*

*"They only gave me 10 per cent for my multiple TBI's, and now the VA is trying to say that I just suffered a couple of **mild concussions** that I should have just magically **gotten over** by now even though the TBI that fractured my spine has caused issues with my eyesight, hearing, vestibular system, memory, concentration, mood, social interaction... and there were visible signs of injury/abnormality that showed up on both SPECT imaging and MRI."*

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

It has been estimated that about 26,000 sexual assaults happened in the military in 2012 (DOD, SAPR, 2013). This includes one in five women and two in 100 men who experienced some level of MST. Most service members in the past did not report their assaults because of the lack of prosecution of perpetrators and fear of reprisal. This is being slowly changed by new policies and legislation due to brave advocates who have spoken publically to Congress and the press (Farris, Schell, & Tanielian, 2013). The most common diagnosis after rape or severe sexual harass-

ment is PTSD due to MST. In the past, veterans may not have reported their assault and have been discharged with personality disorders, anxiety or depression but later filed claims for compensation from the VA. From fiscal year 2008 to 2012, 15,862 veterans filed VA disability benefit claims for PTSD related to MST. During this same time period, a far smaller number of veterans brought disability benefit claims for major depressive disorder (331), anxiety disorder not otherwise specified (116), and generalized anxiety disorder (57) related to MST. A great concern among MST survivors has been that VA approval of claims for MST clearly lags behind other PTSD claims. Many veterans are not getting the benefits they are entitled to (SWAN, 2013).

Veteran Voice:

“I was rated at 70 per cent for PTSD due to MST. I filed for an increase based on unemployability. I found out tonight that I was approved for 100 per cent disability for unemployability. Why do I feel like this is bad news? I feel sad that I’m too messed up to work.”

Depression – The Biggest Suicide Risk

Veterans diagnosed with depression are at much higher risk for suicide and substance abuse than those diagnosed with PTSD. This is because depression is often more gradual with less defined features. It can also be mixed in with other mental health diagnoses. Early treatment is important. One of the easiest ways to recognize depression is to look for common symptoms such as loss of interest in things a person used to enjoy, isolation from family and/or peers, difficulty in relationships, irritability, or low energy (NAMI, 2009).

Veteran Voices:

*“I wish I could say that I am happy every day but I’m not. It goes up and down. My thoughts of suicide are what they call **fleeting**. I have been told that I am bi-polar but I really don’t know. I just hope I don’t get so weird that I do something like that shooter guy at Ft. Hood.”*

“As difficult as jobs can be, I can say for sure that my PTSD was under much better control while I was working. Staying home was great at first, but I became more and more reclusive. Until one day I realized I hadn’t been out of the house in months. It’s very hard to crawl out of an agoraphobic hole.”

Substance-Related Disorders

When troops come back from overseas, it is not uncommon to indulge in alcohol excessively. This problem is often ignored, as drinking is part of military culture and most veterans will ratchet down to a socially acceptable level of drinking within a few months. As long as there are no arrests, troops will party on. However, alcohol may be used for mask-

ing symptoms or self-medicating for mental or physical pain, so it can be a serious issue. Employability is one factor discussed in reasons not to over-drink. Few employers will hire you with a DUI on your record. Additionally, the issue of prescription abuse is prominent. Many troops are given medication for legitimate injuries but not adequately managed for their pain. Addiction recovery programs are available but often wait-listed (Saxton, 2011).

Veteran Voices:

“I stopped drinking because I could see that it wasn’t helping anything but I know that I still don’t fit in. I can’t be around children much. I keep seeing those kids in Iraq in my mind. I just feel so angry sometimes and there’s nothing I can do about it.”

“I got pulled over by the police for DUI but I wasn’t drinking. I couldn’t get into a program at the VA and I ran out of pain pills for my back. I was buying them off the street. It got out of control.”

“They had me on 26 medications at one time. The pain gets so bad that literally the only thing there is left to do is to lay face down in bed in my pillow. I don’t sleep well at night (nightmares, clench/grind my teeth, seizures), so I intentionally wake up at 0530 and catch up on sleep during the day. I haven’t found a doctor I trust to manage any more medication than what I am on. I feel impaired on or off the medication.”

Mental Health Treatment

Getting mental health treatment is difficult for many veterans during and after their service. Sometimes, when a PTSD diagnosis is made, the service member may continue in their regular duties. It typically results in a medical discharge, which is why most personnel will hide it if they can. If returned to duty status, it remains in your record for all to see. It is not confidential as any diagnosis is documented in medical records. Then, in spite of great effort to hire more mental health staff, aftercare through the Veterans Administration (VA) still does not meet the demand. It is not uncommon to wait many weeks for an appointment in a mental health clinic or even months for a program acceptance (Zoroya & Hoyer, 2013). Treatment is typically medication supplemented by a 12 week group. Many veterans report feeling over-medicated and discontinue medications due to the grogginess. Other veterans who have co-occurring medical conditions may also be on pain medications. Veterans can end up with cocktails of multiple pills designed to help with sleep disorders, side-effects, and pain. No wonder they have difficulty focusing on daily tasks! There are expanding treatment options. Some of the newer, more positive treatment options include access to out-patient Vet Centers. These are separate from the VA Hospitals and are more like going to a regular

mental health professional in the community. You can drive up to the front door rather than battling parking decks at large hospitals. The Vet Centers are limited to treating only combat veterans and those veterans who have experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Individual, group and couples counseling are provided. Specialized residential programs at national VA locations are also available. For example, there are eight locations in the country that provide Women Trauma Recovery Programs (WTRP) In-patient. There are 22 locations that provide PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Programs (PRRP) Intensive Inpatient programs. Additionally, local treatment is available at Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). These are small, medical clinics which have social workers on-site. Veterans are likely to receive tele-health (video-based) mental health services where their psychiatrist will meet with them online to update their medications. Finally, especially in more rural communities, the VA will pay local mental health providers to provide services. Often this is through county or state mental health clinics where the veteran can go to a hometown public clinic for medication and treatment.

Veteran Voice:

“They are changing my medication again. It made me too sleepy so I stopped taking it. But the voices in my head got so bad that I couldn’t do anything. I dropped all my classes at school. Now I’m going to the VA for my meds but I found a counselor outside the VA because I feel like I really need to see someone on a weekly basis. The VA couldn’t provide that for me. I didn’t want just another group.”

Homelessness

It is not uncommon for veterans having mental health issues to slip into homelessness or near homelessness. This includes anyone with an unstable living arrangement, including living in extended stay motels or couch-surfing at a friend’s house. Such veterans get financially off-track and they can quickly lose employment if their car is repossessed. They can fall behind on rent, mortgage, and utilities, resulting in further decline of mental health. A nation-wide agenda to reduce veteran homelessness and provide more programs and support is available. The entry points are through the VA Homelessness Hotline and community agencies which are funded to provide assistance through Services Support for Veteran Families (SSVF).

Veteran Voices:

“I am treated like I’m stupid and don’t know what’s good for me. Doctors talk behind my back, they mention homeless despite the fact that I have a long history of stable living arrangements/apartments and I live in the same place now I have lived in for the past three years, all paid out of my own pocket.”

“I, too, did better in general when I worked regularly ... I was on a schedule, I got out and interacted with people.... but at some point I overdid it, I was working two part-time jobs and at 48 years old I went back to school ... It was as if all the time I was doing well, it was all building up inside and one day it was just a complete meltdown ... even with therapy, even with meds all that that goes with treatment ... it hasn't been the same as before. I think one day it all just catches up with you.”

Veteran Compensation and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Just like physical injuries, there is compensation available through application to the VA for mental health injuries. The claims process is lengthy and often the veteran goes through denials before being approved and has limited income during this time. For the veteran struggling with mental health issues and lack of employability, this is a key time when they are more likely to become homeless. Generally, levels of compensation are based on whether there is interference with occupational and social functioning or whether continuous medication is required to manage symptoms (38 CFR). The most common rehabilitation program is to be sent to college to earn a bachelor's degree. Information about how these programs work is confusing. Service officers from organizations such as DAV, VFW, and American Legion try to help.

Veteran Voices:

“There seems to be something inside us that wants to be healthy, successful, positive and whole. We don't want to feel or be perceived as broken. But the truth is we are broken, something was taken away from us and for so many of us it has been a long term struggle that has gone unrecognized and untreated. We have spent our lives 'soldiering up' and limping along ... I try to look at these (VA compensation) claim approvals as a little bit of a victory, with the government recognizing our injury, giving some validation to our struggle and allowing us to continue living with one less thing to worry about. “

“I initially inquired about the program about two years ago and I was told that I could not use it unless I exhausted all of my 9/11 GI Bill benefits. Tomorrow I am going to my local VA to locate the person who can go online to see if my (application) was even received. I could have been employed in a new career by now if the initial information I received at a briefing was accurate.”

Employability:

The struggle with employability and mental health is often trying to balance treatment and/or working. Untreated, veterans can go through periods of unemployability because of absences due to medical appointments, decreased cognitive functioning, and performance issues. It may seem like all is going well for a while but then the veteran may experi-

ence a setback. Clinicians will often refer to *baseline* levels of functioning, but these may be difficult to determine. The client may be high-achieving in school or the workplace, but then suddenly come crashing down. For veterans who expect to excel, this adds to the shame and difficulty of recovery or stabilization. As a result, it is not uncommon to see some veterans go through multiple jobs, which is reflected in their resume. Many end up in jobs well below their potential, working part-time or becoming self-employed. Some quit trying to work and just collect a compensation check for the rest of their life.

Veteran Voices:

*“While training facilities are mandated to accommodate all disabilities, employers are less so. Becoming employed may be more likely now than in the past, but **maintaining** the employment is not. The effects of the mental disability will become more manifest resulting in suspension/termination. It’s much easier to accommodate a physical disability than a mental one.”*

“Having my job is honestly part of my recovery. It keeps my son and me with some sort of schedule. It’s a simple job. Sometimes I get embarrassed because I think I should be in a higher position, or just doing more.”

Resources and How You Can Help Veterans

The number one thing most veterans want is respect and understanding of their service. Most have sacrificed much of their lives to serving under hard times and away from their support systems. Cognitive or mental health disabilities may mean they need a job coach or an academic advisor easily accessible. Accommodation plans need to be in place for the best of times as well as the worst of times. This includes time for treatment. They may also need a case worker or advocate helping work through the administrative challenges of getting help for themselves. Below is a partial list of resources available for veterans. The VA is always the #1 referral.

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Resources

DOD Safe Helpline: Military Sexual Trauma. 1-877-995-524.

Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-33 (HAVEN) or 1-800-334-2836

Homeless Veterans Programs: 1-877-424-3838.

Military One Source: Active Duty or Guard/Reserves. Free non-clinical local community counselors. Website: www.militaryonesource.com. Phone: 1-800-342-9647

Military Family Life Program: Active Duty or Guard/Reserves. Free non-clinical On-site contract counselors. Website: www.healthnet.com. Phone: 1-888-755-9355

Military Records Request: Verify military service or obtain medical records. www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/

Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF): 1-877-424-3838 (4AIDVET) Financial support for homeless and near homeless veterans.

Tricare (Value Options) Active Duty or Guard/Reserves or Retirees. Health Insurance. Phone: 1-800-700-8646

Veteran Administration Benefits Line: 1-800-827-1000. Apply for benefits on-line: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/fdc/>.

Vet Centers: 1-800-905-4675. Free counseling is for Combat Veterans or survivors of Military Sexual Trauma. Covers all mental health issues including PTSD.

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Chapter 11

THE REALITY OF VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT: The National Guard and Federal Reserve

by Ted Daywalt

Abstract

This article explores the major cause of recent veteran unemployment. While there has been much speculation in the press that young veterans are experiencing difficulty finding work due to being in the military, having gone to war, or not having transferable skills, there is a more fundamental underlying reason impacting overall veteran unemployment due to a Department of Defense policy. The call-up policy that was implemented on January 11, 2007 had a direct impact on creating unemployment for the National Guard and the Federal Reserve, which led to high veteran unemployment in the veteran cohort. The unemployment rate has improved, but the underlying cause is still present.

Listening to the mainstream press, one would think the majority of veterans are unemployed, physically disabled, have severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other psychological concerns, or lack civilian work skills. Fortunately, this is not the case and is confirmed by data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). When discussing veteran unemployment, a problem arises when the press, Congress, and government agencies speak about veterans as a single entity. By doing so, a lot of information is missed.

There is no standard definition of a veteran (Moulta-Ali, 2014). This is because the answer to *what is a veteran?* depends on which earned benefit one is discussing. Each time Congress passes a new benefit for the military and veterans, they redefine which current or former military personnel can qualify, be it for medical benefits, the G.I. Bill, disability, or death benefits. This causes confusion for those who do not understand the military system. In any discussion about veteran employment, it helps to identify which veterans are being referenced. Veteran unemployment issues can be divided into one or more of the following categories:

Transitioning military Veterans (those who have completely separated from the military, but are not retired from the military)

Veterans who are retired from the military

Wounded warriors/disabled veterans
National Guard
Federal Reserve.

These distinctions are important. The Department of Defense (DOD) manpower requirements report (U.S. Department of Defense, 2013) projected the 2014 strength of the National Guard and the Federal Reserve (NG & FR) at 53 per cent of the total fighting force. (The Federal Reserve is composed of the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, and Marine Corps Reserve.) With the accelerating drawdown of the active duty forces, the percentage may go to 60 per cent of the American total fighting force in the near future.

Any increase of unemployment in the NG & FR numbers greatly affects the ability to fight and defend the United States. The last reliable unemployment number for the National Guard from the National Guard Bureau (NGB) was 20.59 per cent (U.S. Department of Defense, 2012). As the NGB no longer publishes the National Guard unemployment rate, anecdotally, it is estimated that the unemployment rate for the National Guard is now around 10 per cent. In this article, all of the veteran classifications mentioned above will be treated as a single cohort, which is how the Department of Labor tracks their numbers. Furthermore, for the purposes of this article, the NG & FR will be singled out because this is where the real veteran unemployment problem has existed in the past. Surprisingly, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), the overall veteran unemployment rate as a cohort has always been lower than the national unemployment rate, dating back to World War II. A comparison chart of the last 20 years is provided on the VetJobs website (VetJobs.com, 2013). This is not to say that veterans are not experiencing difficulties in finding work. Many are having problems in this employment recession. However, as a whole, the veteran employment rate has historically done quite well when compared to their civilian, nonveteran counterparts.

The same holds true today. For April 2014, the BLS report indicated that the overall veteran unemployment rate was 5.6 per cent with a national unemployment rate of 5.7 per cent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014c). The Department of Labor's current employment statistics (CES) report, which is what is generally quoted by the press, had the April 2014 overall veteran unemployment rate at 5.6 per cent with the national unemployment rate at 6.3 per cent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). From the numbers, veterans obviously are having better success obtaining employment than their nonveteran counterparts.

For the last seven years, the story of veteran unemployment in the na-

tional press has generally highlighted the unemployment rate of young veterans, implying their participation in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and lack of civilian work skills has impaired their ability to successfully find civilian employment. Other press reports indicate that veterans were experiencing difficulty finding employment due to not having transferable skills. This is not the case.

The BLS reports (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a) have shown the 18 to 24 year old veteran unemployment rate was comparable to their civilian counterparts until 2007, when the unemployment rate for the 18 to 24 year old veterans rose sharply and doubled their civilian counterparts. The chart below presents the BLS annual unemployment rates for 2000 through 2010 (compiled from the BLS website) . Note that the 18 to 24 year old veteran unemployment rate rises dramatically in 2007.

Unemployment Rate Among 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 year olds Nonveterans and Veterans				
Age	Nonveteran 20-24	Veteran 20 – 24	Nonveteran 25 – 29	Veteran 25 -29
2000	7.2%	8.0%	4.2%	3.0%
2001	8.3%	9.6%	5.0%	4.2%
2002	9.6%	11.2%	6.5%	5.8%
2003	10.0%	11.0%	6.6%	6.8%
2004	9.4%	13.6%	6.1%	7.2%
2005	8.7%	15.6%	5.8%	6.5%
2006	8.1%	10.4%	5.1%	6.5%
2007	14.5%	22.3%	5.1%	6.4%
2008	11.6%	14.1%	6.5%	6.1%
2009	14.6%	21.2%	10.6%	12.1%
2010	15.4%	20.6%	10.7%	14.9%

Why did the rate for the youngest cohort double in 2007? It was a change in the call-up policy for the NG&FR by the DOD. During a press conference on January 11, 2007, Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, and General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, announced that the policy on the use of the NG&FR was changing (Daywalt, 2012). The Pentagon’s policy on the NG&FR had been that members’ cumulative time on active duty for the Iraq or Afghanistan wars could not exceed 24 months. This cumulative limit was lifted; the remaining limit was on the length of any single mobilization, which could not exceed 24 consecutive months. What this meant was a member of the National Guard or Federal Reserve could be mobilized for a 24-month tour in Iraq or Afghanistan,

be demobilized and allowed to return to a civilian working life, only to be mobilized a second time for as much as an additional 24 months for a total of 48 months in any 60 month period. In reality, most members of the NG&FR were called-up for 12 to 18 months, released back to the civilian work force, and then recalled again six to nine months later.

From the above BLS chart, in 2006, the 18 to 24 year old unemployment rate was 10.4%. After one year of the new policy, their unemployment rate in 2007 more than doubled to 22.3%. This was employers saying they would not tolerate having their employees taken for long periods of time. It is common sense that an employer cannot function with its employees being taken away for long periods of time.

Ever since 2007, VetJobs has received reports from all over the country that as the DOD would announce the call-up of a particular state National Guard unit or Federal Reserve unit, employers, under the guise of the recession, would begin laying off employees who were members of the NG&FR before they received their orders. By laying off the employees before they receive their orders, the employers are not subject to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the law that protects the employment rights of members of the NG & FR (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). In essence, employers have found a way to get around USERRA. Keep in mind that the bulk of the National Guard and much of the Federal Reserve are composed of young service members. Were it not for the high unemployment rate in the NG & FR, the national veteran unemployment rate would probably be about 4.5 per cent, instead of 5.6 per cent. There are definite reasons why the support for the NG&FR as currently operated by the DOD is not receiving strong support from employers.

Historically, employees participated in a National Guard or Federal Reserve program on weekends, and most used two weeks of their vacation time to participate in their active duty training. The change to a policy which permits DOD to call-up NG&FR participants for a year or more makes it difficult for employers to plan and depend on having their human capital available to fulfill their corporate mission. While large patriotic organizations, such as Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, Humana, Sears, and many utilities and municipalities, actively support the call-up of their NG&FR employees, it is much harder on smaller firms, especially those firms with less than 300 employees and organizations in rural areas. An overwhelming percentage of those who participate in the NG&FR are employed in small to mid-sized organizations (Quigley, 2007). Ironically, press reports indicate that the federal government, including the civilian arm of DOD, is a leading violator of USERRA (CBS News, 2008).

It should be noted that most organizations prefer to let their junior employees participate in the NG&FR. Holding a management or executive position in an organization or federal agency and being subject to a 12 month or longer call-up is impractical. Organizations (for-profit, non-profit organizations, and government entities) have a fiduciary responsibility to their shareholders, board of directors, or tax payers to run an efficient and, if applicable, profitable operation. Organizations cannot do so if they are unable to count on having their employees, their human capital, readily available. While for those in business, this is just common sense, those making the decisions at the DOD on utilizing the NG&FR seem to have missed what corporate America was saying – organizations do not want their employees taken away for long periods of time. Given an organization’s fiduciary responsibility, the current policy regarding the use of the NG&FR is disturbing to human resource executives, as it puts them in a quandary. One senior vice president of human resources of a major for-profit organization explained it this way: “If I have three final candidates for a position who are all equally qualified, and one mentions they are active in the National Guard or Federal Reserve, with the current call-up policy, I now have two final candidates, especially if it is for a critical position in the organization.” Another senior executive in a large national organization commented that in light of the current call-up policy, they will, under USERRA, continue to support their current employees who are active in the National Guard or Federal Reserve, but they will no longer actively seek out candidates who are affiliated with the National Guard or Federal Reserve (Daywalt, 2011). They just simply cannot afford to do so. This is a major contributing reason why many of the unemployed veterans have been in the NG & FR.

Anecdotal information indicates that the National Guard is singled out more than their Federal Reserve counterparts because they are activated not only for the wars, but also for state emergencies, causing them to be called away from their civilian employment much more than their Federal Reserve counterparts. For example, when the Georgia National Guard returned in August 2010 from their fifth call-up since 9/11, there were heavy rains in Georgia and extensive flooding in Macon and Columbus in September and October. The governor of Georgia activated two Georgia National Guard units to assist with the flooding (Daywalt, 2011). Unfortunately, many of those called up had recently come back from Afghanistan. The result was many were terminated in their civilian jobs or had their civilian employment threatened. Many USERRA complaints ensued.

In addressing the integration of veterans employment outreach, members of federal agencies do not always appreciate or understand that civilian

employers primarily hire a new employee to meet a specific work need, which means that the candidate should have the requisite skills, education, experience and cultural fit to fulfill the requirements of the job.

The current call-up policy has long-term negative consequences for members of the NG&FR. Employer support for the NG&FR is necessary to make the system work. Three credible studies conducted by Workforce Management Magazine (Workforce Management Magazine, 2007), the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM, 2006), and Business and Legal Reports (BLR) (BLR, 2004) demonstrated upwards of 60% of employers would no longer hire active members of the NG&FR due to the current call-up policy. These attitudes continue today in the corporate world.

The unemployment problem in the National Guard is reflected in the unemployment rate of returning National Guard brigades. Many press articles have reported rates as high as 50 per cent which is what happened to the Oregon National Guard (CBS News, 2011).

Members of the NG & FR do not lose jobs while they are deployed unless their employer goes out of business. Overwhelmingly, most members of the NG & FR lose their jobs in the 60 to 120 days prior to deployment because NG & FR deployments generally are announced four to six months before the deployment date, but the NG & FR members do not get orders in hand until about six weeks before deployment. Employers have been noted to terminate members of the NG & FR after the DOD announces a call-up, knowing that most receive their orders four to six weeks prior to actual deployment (CNN, 2012).

Some Pentagon officials like to say that most NG&FR members who served more than one call-up do so voluntarily. While this may technically be correct in certain cases, many of those members are volunteering because they cannot find meaningful employment equal to their education and experience, or more frequently, cannot find a job at all due to their participation in the National Guard or Federal Reserve (CNN, 2012). Members of the NG & FR have found that their participation is working against them in the civilian work place. A classic example was the 877th brigade in Augusta, Georgia, a light brigade which had 140 of their members lose their jobs prior to deployment. A CNN one hour special on the brigade titled *Vets Wanted*, which aired May 13, 2012, found that only 8 of the 140 had found a job after being back five months. The bottom line here is employers are not saying they will not support the current call-up policy. Employers want to support the military, but they also have to remain in business. An employer cannot function efficiently when their most important asset, their human capital, is taken away. If

the NG&FR and veterans in general were an untrained work force, their overall unemployment rate, as reported by the Department of Labor (DOL), would not always be lower than the national unemployment rate. The real story is that most veterans are finding work once they are completely separated from the military.

What the current DOD call-up policy has done is effectively made many members of the NG & FR third class citizens with difficulties obtaining employment, or difficulties obtaining a job equal to their skill set and education. The young veterans of today have over 200 skill sets sought by employers which are taught in the military. For the most part, those veterans who completely separate from the military are finding work, evidenced by the low overall veteran unemployment rate. If the statement were not true, their unemployment rate would be higher. However, remaining in the NG&FR hinders veterans ability to find meaningful employment.

The obvious solution is to change the call-up policy. However, DOD is reluctant to do so because it needs members of the NG & FR to meet their various missions around the world. Other solutions would be to bring back a draft, expand the active duty forces, and reduce the use of the NG & FR. In today's political climate, these are non-starters. Solutions that would help members of the NG & FR include (Daywalt, 2011):

- Providing funding to purchase franchises,
- Improving the ability to obtain certifications and licenses,
- Compensating employers when a participating employee is called-up,
- Employing more NG & FR in federal agencies,
- Implementing employment mentoring programs,
- Encouraging state level hiring programs,
- Hosting career fairs for members of the NG & FR,
- Utilizing employment counselors at the state National Guard level,
- Implementing federal and state tax breaks for hiring members of the National Guard and Reserve, and
- Reporting of NG & FR hiring by organizations and federal agencies.

In conclusion, there is no silver bullet that will solve the NG&FR unemployment problem, which is the most prominent veteran unemployment concern. The issue is too large both in the number of individuals affected, and in terms of the geographic dispersal of participants in the NG & FR. This issue is both a local and national problem. Various levels of response will be required to help solve the problem. While there is no easy solution, any potential solution must somehow gain the support of the employers, while at the same time, provide members of the NG & FR with the ability to have a meaningful civilian career. A more

balanced way to utilize the NG&FR needs to be found. Overall, the real story is that most veterans are finding employment, as long as they are not active in the National Guard or Federal Reserve.

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Chapter 12

CAREER COUNSELING STRATEGIES and CHALLENGES for TRANSITIONING VETERANS

by Robert A. Miles

Abstract

Assistance provided by career development professionals in a variety of settings can be an important factor in a veteran's transition from military to civilian life. This article is intended to contribute toward fulfilling this potential by examining issues that arise in career counseling with the current population of veterans. It will demonstrate that widely accepted career development concepts and strategies can be adapted and suggest additional information that is necessary to work with this population.

Introduction

The Veterans Administration has adopted and researched numerous treatments for mental health issues facing many new veterans, but is not systematically addressing the question, "What happens after therapy?" except for veterans with service-connected disabilities who are eligible for career counseling as part of their vocational rehabilitation. Colleges, universities, and other schools struggle to administer complicated benefits and provide support for returning veterans with diminished staff. President Obama, Congress, and many employers are committed to offering employment to returning veterans, but the promise of a job is not sufficient, especially for younger veterans who usually have limited work experience and postsecondary education before enlisting. Career counselors can offer veterans a holistic perspective in their return to civilian life as they navigate benefits available to them and receive necessary medical treatment.

This article intends to demonstrate to career counselors and other practitioners that familiar concepts can be adapted to assist transitioning veterans. It will provide career counselors with examples of widely used career development strategies that can be applied to counseling veterans and suggest information they may need to work more effectively with veterans. Career counselors also should be aware of their role among professionals providing mental health services to the current generation of veterans.

The discussion of career counseling process is based on the author's experience of more than 30 years as a career counselor at an urban community college in Connecticut, the last ten years of which he was responsible for reporting and monitoring VA educational benefits. As a veteran who served in Vietnam and a certified counselor, he has combined different sets of skills and experiences to assist returning veterans and prepare career counselors to meet the needs of this population.

Career counseling interactions with veterans often consist of a single session; though in some settings, veterans can return to continue working with the counselor. Because of the author's experience, many examples refer to college situations, but are intended to apply to practitioners in all settings.

Applications of Career Counseling Theories

Career development is important to veterans (and others) because meaningful work can add a sense of purpose to their lives and life-long choices about education and employment cannot be left to chance. A trained career counselor can add meaning, for example, to writing a resume—a task that seems straight-forward to many—by asking veterans to *tell a story* about successful experiences while on active duty and teaching them to identify skills learned and qualities that were developed. A counselor can help a veteran look for patterns of skills to apply to occupations quite different from the military experience and deepen a sense of accomplishment of active duty experiences. Career counselors can employ these and other strategies to facilitate the transition from military service to civilian life.

In a 2002 publication by the National Career Development Association (NCDA), Engels and Harris established principles for career counseling of veterans and their family members by stating, "*Helping military personnel see their military service as one part of their overall, continuous life-long career could afford increased stimulation and incentives for personal life-career ownership and personal life-career responsibility.*" (Engels & Harris, p. 256) They list ten valuable implementation strategies which define a holistic approach for career counselors to apply to military personnel and veterans.

Veterans' issues can be understood through the lens of widely used career development theories. The new NCDA monograph, *Career Development for Transitioning Veterans* (Stein-McCormick, Osborn, Hayden, & Van Hoose, 2013), and a recent presentation by Hayden (2012), which focuses on veterans with disabilities, apply the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) approach to career counseling with veterans. The eclectic hope-centered approach holds promise as a framework to

provide career development services to veterans. It is based on hopefulness, which “relates to envisioning a meaningful goal and believing that positive outcomes are likely to occur should you take specific actions” (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2011, p. 13). Amundson’s work on metaphors, an important part of the hope-centered approach and expanded elsewhere, is a helpful guide to use of language in career counseling. Asking a veteran to explore the meaning of an image can take a counseling session in a new direction.

The shift from military service to civilian life often is described as a transition, a term commonly used by career counselors to understand life changes. Schlossberg’s work, described in Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006), is particularly relevant to returning veterans. Their work has been cited in numerous articles and serves as the framework for some of the best research on veterans’ transitions. Schlossberg’s model of moving in, moving through, and moving on can be explained quickly to make sense of moving back and forth between the stages in a major life change. The NCDA monograph (Stein-McCormick et. al., 2013) presents a worksheet based on Schlossberg’s *Four S’s*: situation, self, supports, and strategies, to help veterans assess their assets and understand their difficulties in the transition from military life.

A career counselor can normalize the change from veteran to civilian as a career change by referring to Super’s developmental stages and explaining that we often recycle through earlier Career Development Stages in making a career change (Super, 1984). Veterans, whether a 24 year-old Marine or 45 year-old retired First Sergeant, may benefit from a discussion about returning to initial decision-making steps after their experience in a setting where the military made many of their career decisions. This can encourage veterans to explore different options before committing to a new career choice. To enhance its value with veterans, Super’s career rainbow could be updated by adding a *band* for military experience, which could also include experience as a military spouse.

Happenstance Learning Theory, developed by John Krumboltz, is another career development concept relevant to veterans in transition. They can benefit from suggestions in *Luck is No Accident* (Krumboltz & Levin, 2004) to help them understand their military experiences and become comfortable applying *planned happenstance*, a concept many veterans will recognize from their military experience, especially if they were deployed to a war zone.

Applying Career Development Practices to a Career Counseling Session: Initial considerations

When meeting with a veteran for the first time, a career counselor must

first assess the veteran's readiness to proceed with career decision making, perhaps using a CIP framework, which suggests "*gaining an understanding of the life context through an appraisal of a client's states of urgency, complexity, and capability*" (Peterson, Lumsden, Sampson, Reardon & Lenz, 2002, p. 105), or make an intuitive assessment.

Career counselors must be alert to the possibility of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). According to a Pew Research study (2011, p. 10), "*some 37 per cent of all post-9/11 veterans (and 49 per cent of post-9/11 veterans who served in a combat zone) say they have suffered from post-traumatic stress.*" A career counselor can inquire if the veteran has a service-connected disability, indicating that it is relevant to making career decisions. Because mental health issues may develop after discharge and many hesitate to seek treatment at the Veterans Administration [VA], asking about the number of deployments to combat zones can be helpful due to the increasing incidence of mental health issues with exposure to combat. Counselors also may ask specific questions based on behavioral symptoms of PTSD, such as whether veterans have recurring thoughts about a traumatic experience, while clearly stating their level of training on mental health issues. Referrals to an appropriate clinical facility at the VA or elsewhere may be necessary.

Questions required on the application for VA educational benefits, such as educational goals and initial program of study, can be part of a career counseling session. A counselor who does not administer the benefits or works in a different setting can ask the veteran how he or she answered, or would answer, the questions. To emphasize the importance of career and educational planning, counselors can remind veterans of VA requirements that they must choose a degree program before applying for educational benefits and notify the VA of any change in their academic program.

Assessment of interests, skills, and values is central to career counseling; working with veterans is no different. Especially in an initial, and perhaps only, session, it is helpful to see career counseling with a veteran as a non-linear process, rather than following a sequence of self-assessment steps. After developing rapport, the counselor would start with the issue most important to the veteran, usually a discussion of interests or current skills.

Assessing a veteran's interests and developing options

Discussing interests often arises first as veterans face decisions about their plans. A former Army squad leader, for example, could consider options related to working with people after reviewing a summary of

the six RIASEC Holland themes, which describe people-work environments (Holland, 1985). A diagram of the hexagon can be a worksheet to show the relationship between military experience and possible career options with the counselor circling one or two themes that capture the military experience, often Realistic for many who served in combat arms or Investigative for Air Force or Navy service members with extensive technical training, and arrows pointing to future options.

The Veterans and Military Occupations Finder (Messer, Greene, & Holland, 2013), recently developed to use in conjunction with the Self-Directed Search (SDS), provides Holland codes for most military training specialties and translates these codes into civilian occupations. The counselor needs to be alert to secondary interests and skills and those taken for granted. A description of the Enterprising and Social themes could remind the former squad leader of leadership skills developed and used in stressful situations and times when squad members sought help to talk about problems, such as separation from family members.

Further discussion could lead to an exploration of options in business, perhaps in a Realistic setting that would take advantage of military experience. Careers related to Social interests would be directly opposite from familiar military experiences and, therefore, require more exploration. The counselor and veteran can discuss steps to decide between the two possibilities, such as informational interviewing and volunteering, and encourage the veteran to enroll in a career planning course. Enrolling in an introductory course of a college program related to the prospective career direction can also be helpful.

Primary tasks at this point are to identify options, encourage the veteran to be open to new possibilities, and motivate him or her to overcome obstacles that may arise. If enrolled at a college, the veteran may choose to start in a general studies curriculum that can be changed later. Participation in college activities can help to make these decisions. Veterans often see themselves in a new way by mentoring other veterans, tutoring other students, or leading a student organization. Continuing discussions with a counselor can relate this new self-understanding to possible career opportunities. A self-scored assessment, such as the SDS, or an inventory with a report that requires more interpretation, such as the Strong Interest Inventory, can be offered to veterans interested in a more in-depth discussion of interests.

Assessing skills

Asking for examples of specific accomplishments leads to a discussion of skills developed in the military. In a recent report, 60 per cent of veterans indicated that “*explaining how military skills translate*” was one of

their greatest employment challenges (Prudential Financial, 2012, p. 4). Teaching veterans to translate military skills into terms that contribute to their career decisions and prepare them to seek employment usually is an essential task in career counseling of veterans. As in writing a resume, guiding veterans to describe their experiences can bring up issues that require additional counseling or, perhaps, a referral for therapy. Seeing that they have developed a range of transferrable and soft skills also can help veterans recognize the value of their military experiences.

Richard Bolles provides alternative approaches to identifying skills in *What Color is Your Parachute*. The chart showing the relationship between career and skills (Bolles, 2014, p. 238) is helpful to distinguish between activities, tasks, and skills, and the process it outlines to find skills in stories of accomplishments is especially relevant for veterans.

Addressing Change of Values

Veterans' values change, sometimes drastically, as a result of their military service. Many realize after they are discharged that they are different people, especially if they have experienced combat. Discussing a fundamental change of values and the importance of values in making decisions can help a veteran who is preparing to return to civilian life. The section in *Parachute, Finding Your Mission in Life*, raises spiritual questions, which can be helpful for some veterans. Terms used by career counselors, such as *values* and *interests*, can help veterans understand that others have faced fundamental life changes. Applying terms they have used with other clients can help counselors become more comfortable in working with veterans.

Discussion of career decision-making

Career counselors typically focus on decision-making. Newly discharged veterans need assistance in separating short-term and longer-term goals, and balancing multiple roles. Veterans enrolling in colleges, like many other new or prospective students, need to know that programs, such as short-term job training and one-year certificates, require an immediate commitment. Associate's and Bachelor's degree programs, on the other hand, start with core courses required for all programs, which provide the veteran time to adjust to school and decide on a program of study. Veterans with families may have to consider balancing a part-time job and their education to supplement their educational benefits.

Referring to terms from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and offering to administer the assessment can help explain different ways of perceiving situations and making decisions. The booklet, *Introduction to Type and Reintegration: A Framework for Managing the Transition Home* (Hirsh, Hirsh, & Peak, 2011) describes the four MBTI dichoto-

mies, provides valuable background for career counselors who use the MBTI, and offers reading for veterans interested in more in-depth information.

Implementing career decisions by seeking employment

The Prudential study found that finding employment is the most frequently cited concern (69%) of returning veterans (p. 4). Career counselors and other practitioners assume a variety of roles with veterans to prepare them to seek employment that is similar to assistance offered to other clients in their work setting. Some veterans, however, may choose to or need to consider alternatives to employment, at least temporarily, because of their disabilities. Deciding on and finding rewarding unpaid work is important to some veterans in their transition to civilian life.

Information and practical advice in *What Color is Your Parachute* (Bolles, 2014) remains an indispensable resource for practitioners to offer job-seekers. The emphasis on informational interviewing suggests that developing contacts for veterans who are making career decisions is as important as employer commitments to hiring veterans.

Bolles will directly address veterans' issues. He indicated in a personal communication (April 28, 2014) that he "*added a whole new section to [his] annual edition of Parachute, due in bookstores and online as of August 12, 2014. The section, called A Ten Minute Crash Course for Returning Vets required three months of investigation, research, and interviews.*"

Collaboration with other counselors

To address the complex needs of today's veterans, career counselors must collaborate with other professionals in their institution or agency, particularly in the VA. Counselors in a college setting, for example, can establish a relationship with local VA vocational rehabilitation counselors who develop educational plans for veterans with service-connected disabilities. Veterans benefit when college counselors can suggest courses and program changes to their VA counselors. Consultations between college counselors and VA therapists are less common, but can be crucial in a crisis or potential crisis. The VA has initiated programs to staff its mental health professionals at colleges, but much more can be done to promote communication among care providers from various disciplines. As a Rand Center report, *Invisible Wounds*, states, "*Programs that account for multiple aspects of service members' lives may be more effective than programs that attempt to address specific domains independently*" (Karney, Ramchand, Osilla, Caldarone, & Burns, 2008).

Discussion of Essential Information about Veterans: Career counseling and military culture

The author has observed that career counselors without military experience encounter what seems to be an insurmountable wall of military culture and terms that separate military and civilian worlds. Veterans report that the public does not understand military service. A Pew Research study found that 73 per cent of veterans believe the public does not understand the benefits of military service, and 84 per cent report a lack of understanding about the problems of their service (Pew Research Study, 2011, p. 38).

A counselor who is a veteran undoubtedly has an initial advantage in developing rapport with returning veterans, but those who are not veterans can learn about military culture and the seemingly endless military terms to work effectively with veterans. Counselors new to working with veterans can learn quickly the importance of rank and branch of service. Marines, for example, will correct anyone who refers to them as “*soldiers*.” Counselors should follow good counseling practices to develop a relationship and clearly state what they know and how they can help. Similar questions arise for counselors working with clients of different races or ethnic backgrounds. Openness and honesty about personal values is essential; counselors should decide whether they sincerely can say to veterans, “*thank you for your service.*”

Different populations of veterans

Recognizing that different populations of veterans have distinct needs and face different issues upon discharge from active duty is essential in career counseling. A National Guard sergeant will return to a home unit after a term of active duty and continue bridging the two cultures, whereas his active duty counterpart is discharged alone, often feeling isolated from those around him, after depending on bonds with a small group of comrades forged in intense experiences. The May 2014 **VetJobs Report** states: “*A challenge for the National Guard & Reserves (NG&R) is finding jobs. They have been called up so many times many employers shy away from hiring members of the NG & R*” (Deywalt, 2014). In testimony before a House committee, Theodore Deywalt, CEO of VetJobs, documents the problem of unemployment in the National Guard and cites units with unemployment rates of 60 per cent (Deywalt, 2012).

Younger veterans who were discharged after one or two enlistments often present challenges because they typically have minimal work experience, a mediocre (or poor) high school record, and no post-secondary education before enlisting. Some resume their education or training with clear goals and are highly motivated, but many, especially those with physical

or mental health disabilities, do not have a clear direction. An unknown number resume their education to take advantage of generous monthly payments and fail or drop out of school.

With their military work history and extensive education and training, officers and enlisted personnel who retire after twenty or more years of service face issues and have assets comparable to other clients changing careers after considerable work experience, though military experience presents additional factors to consider. Counselors also need to know that veterans with a less than honorable discharge are disqualified from many benefits, but they still are veterans and the discharge can be appealed. These individuals face obstacles similar to workers who were fired from a long-term job.

Other important information

A counselor working with veterans must be familiar with information on the discharge form (the DD form 214), the transcript of college credits awarded for military training, the new on-line COOL credentialing service (Kuegler, 2013), and extensive information for service members and veterans on the My Next Move link for veterans on O*Net (www.onetonline.org). Counselors who are not veterans should be clear that they do not share this experience, but can turn this into an advantage by explaining to veterans that they need to describe their skills in terms that civilians can understand.

Importance of Educational Benefits

A working knowledge of educational benefits is essential to counseling veterans about their plans, even for counselors not working in an educational setting. VA benefits have become more complicated as legislation established benefits for different populations of veterans, National Guard members and reservists, and dependents. Guard members and reservists who have been activated and veterans with service-connected disabilities have a choice of benefits and should consider their educational and career plans before deciding.

Requirements of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, such as requiring students to attend more than half-time, make it imperative for veterans to consider their educational and career plans before applying for benefits. Because the certifying official in most colleges works in the registrar or financial aid office, and is not in a position to advise students, colleges should ensure that a counselor is familiar with veterans' benefits and publicize the counselor's role in assisting veterans.

Awareness of mental health disabilities

Career development practitioners should be familiar with the symptoms of PTSD and TBI. Reading accounts of the Iraq and Afghan wars, such

as *The Forever War* (Filkins, 2008), and the struggles of returning veterans, such as *Thank You for Your Service* (Finkel, 2013), can sensitize counselors to veterans' experiences. It is important to remember that approximately three-quarters of new veterans do not have a disability.

Preparing Career Counselors to Work with Veterans

Starting in their graduate programs, career counselors can benefit from learning about veterans' issues. The career development course, for example, can include veterans' case histories, and instructors, most of whom are not veterans, can consider inviting veterans to speak to their classes. Textbooks for graduate-level career development courses can be improved by including case histories of Post 9/11 veterans. NCDA can consider assisting faculty to develop materials on veterans for their courses. It is recommended that counseling programs consider training counselors on the implications of PTSD and TBI on daily life and work. In addition, leaders in our field can facilitate this process by refining their concepts toward the needs of this population and including examples of returning veterans in materials written for the general public.

There is a need for materials that introduce counselors who are not veterans to military culture to understand the journey from new recruit and basic training through deployments and discharge. Training developed by the Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP) in collaboration with the American Council on Education is available on-line (www.deploymentpsych.org), and in workshops for college and university counselors. It is an important initiative to bridge the gap between civilian and military cultures. NCDA has added a link to the CDP training to its web-site. Ideally, this training would be adapted for career development practitioners. Military culture can also be included in multi-cultural training and classes to prepare all counselors to work more effectively with veterans.

Conclusion

The new generation of veterans, especially those who have served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, presents challenges for career counselors and other career practitioners. This article has sought to demonstrate that career counselors can readily adapt basic career development concepts and practices to assist veterans with their transitions from military service to civilian life. At the same time, most career practitioners can benefit from having additional information about this population of veterans and the military culture in which they were immersed. Veterans encounter stress in their transitions, in part, because they are returning to a civilian culture that has become separate from, and perhaps wary of, the military culture they are leaving. Counselors working with veterans should be open to learning about an increasingly distinct mili-

tary culture and the bewildering array of military terms.

With the change to a volunteer military and the Vietnam-era generation of counselors retiring, few counselors now are veterans. Many returning veterans are filling this gap by choosing to help their peers, with some earning degrees in social work and counseling. Counselors working with veterans can learn about military experience and familiarize themselves with military culture, but colleges and other settings, as well as NCDA and other professional associations, could consider making this a priority. Designating and training counselors, preferably with career development experience, for veterans to contact will improve their success rate in educational programs and employment. Increasing numbers of career development practitioners are committed to assisting veterans with their transition from military service to productive civilian careers. The need to assist veterans is great as the military continues to downsize and increasing numbers of veterans seek further education and employment. With preparation, career counselors and other career development practitioners can offer their unique contributions to these returning veterans.

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Chapter 13

DEVELOPMENT of the VETERANS and MILITARY OCCUPATIONS FINDER™ (VMOF™): A New Career Counseling Tool for Veterans and Military Personnel

by **Melissa Messer and Jennifer Greene**

John Holland's RIASEC theory posits that most people and occupations resemble a combination of six personality types. Our veteran population is facing many unique career challenges, such as high unemployment rates and transitioning to the civilian workforce. In attempt to address these challenges, a new resource, the Veterans and Military Occupations Finder™ (VMOF™), was developed utilizing Holland's typology. The VMOF includes two sections, the Military Occupations Index and the Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk. The Military Occupations Index lists Military Occupational Classifications (MOCs) along with a corresponding two-letter Holland Occupational Code (HOC). The Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk lists MOCs along with corresponding civilian occupations and two-letter HOCs. In order to gain a better understanding of typical military users, the Holland codes and occupational aspirations of 28 active and retired members of the military were analyzed. In females, S (Social) was the most common code, followed by I (Investigative), C (Conventional), and E (Enterprising). For males, R (Realistic) was most prevalent, followed by S (Social), E (Enterprising), and I (Investigative). It is important to note that the pattern among males reflects the pattern found among the occupations in the VMOF, whereas the pattern among females is consistent with previous findings about RIASEC gender differences. Given this evidence, recommendations for career professionals working with the veteran and military population are discussed.

John Holland's RIASEC Typology

John Holland's RIASEC theory has been described as the most comprehensively studied career theory (Brown & Lent, 2013; Nauta, 2010; Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005). Arguably, no theory of career development has had a greater influence on the practice of career counseling and education than Holland's (Rayman & Atanasoff, 1999). The concept of

this theory is that most people resemble a combination of six personality types. Each of the six types is defined by a specific set of interests, preferred activities, beliefs, abilities, values, and characteristics. The six types are known collectively as RIASEC types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.

Figure 1 [see Appendix] describes each of the six RIASEC types.

One of the unique features of the theory is how easily it can be applied to a variety of populations. A recent review of the literature related to Holland's theory from 1953-2007 revealed 746 citations related to its use with specific populations and 1,299 citations regarding applications of the theory (Foutch, McHugh, Bertoch, & Reardon, 2014). Within the extensive body of literature on Holland's theory, there is a considerable amount of empirical data to support Holland's RIASEC typology among persons and environments. Specifically, studies have been conducted with several different age groups, ethnicities, and genders (e.g., Betz & Gwilliam, 2002; Darcy & Tracey, 2007; Edwards & Whitney, 1972), as well as various other groups including high-risk middle school students, high school students, and college students (e.g., Gottfredson & Holland, 1975; Osborn & Reardon, 2006; Zener & Schnuelle, 1976). A number of studies have also been conducted with international samples (e.g., Leung & Hou, 2001; Tuck & Keeling, 1980).

From his theory, John Holland developed several assessment instruments (e.g., Self-Directed Search [SDS; Holland & Messer, 2013a]; Vocational Preference Inventory [VPI; Holland, 1985]) and accompanied resource materials (e.g., You and Your Career [Holland & Messer, 2013c]; Occupations Finder [OF; Holland & Messer, 2013b]; Educational Opportunities Finder [EOF; Messer, Holland, & PAR Staff, 2013]). These instruments and resource materials are direct products of Holland's theory of personality types and environmental models, and they facilitate the use of the theory when working with clients.

Application of RIASEC Theory with Veterans

Although the instruments and materials developed by Holland can and are successfully used with a variety of clients, over the last several years, it has become clear that our veteran population is facing many unique challenges. One such challenge is evident in the high unemployment rate, which was 12.1 per cent as of 2011 (Stein-McCormick, Osborn, Hayden, & Van Hoose, 2013), and cited as high as 20.4 per cent for post-9/11 veterans between the ages of 18 and 24 in 2012 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). One major source of this challenge may be related to finding ways to apply skills developed in the military to civilian occupations. In an attempt to address the challenges veterans face transitioning to the civilian workforce, a new resource, the Veterans and Military Occupations Finder

(VMOF; [Messer, Greene, & Holland, 2013]), was developed utilizing Holland's typology. Similar to the other instruments and resources mentioned, this tool is a direct product of Holland's theory of personality types.

The VMOF can be used to ascertain which civilian occupations closely resemble specific military occupations and the corresponding assigned Holland Occupational Code (HOC). Generally speaking, it is often helpful to explore a client's prior work history to examine what they liked and disliked about their experiences. Using Holland's typology when examining these work experiences may help uncover patterns and/or discrepancies between a client's own Holland code and the code of specific occupations. This is equally, if not more important, when working with individuals with prior military work history. It may be challenging for these individuals to express details about their work history, especially if working with a counselor or other professional who lacks familiarity of military occupations. The VMOF serves as a crosswalk which provides counselors or other professionals with useful information regarding the Holland code types related to specific military occupations.

An individual could also use the two-letter Holland code associated with a military occupation (found in the VMOF) to explore a wide range of occupations in the SDS Occupations Finder (OF). For example, when using the VMOF, the position of Common Ground Station (CGS) Analyst in the Army is associated with the Holland code of I (Investigational) and E (Enterprising). By using the OF, an individual will find more than 40 occupations with IE as the first two-letters of a three-letter code. This includes occupations such as Medical Scientist (IER), Systems Analyst (IER), Safety Manager (IES), and Logistics Engineer (IEC).

It is also recommended that users explore the codes of their occupational aspirations. Occupational aspirations can be described as the occupations individuals have always thought about doing. To find the Holland Code associated with occupational aspirations, individuals would use the Alphabetized Index of the OF to search for occupational aspirations and determine the matching code for each. The aspirations code can then be used to compare to the code (or codes) identified in the VMOF and to explore other potential civilian occupations in the OF.

Users can also take this one step further by calculating their Aspirations Summary Code, the average of all codes associated with their occupational aspirations. It can be obtained by weighting the code letters of the user's expressed aspirations according to their position in the three-letter code (as 3, 2, or 1) and then summing the results from each letter across aspirations. See **Figure 2 [Appendix]** for an example of how to

determine an individual's Aspirations Summary Code. The Aspirations Summary Code in this example is SRIAEC (underlined letters are tied). The codes of SRI and SRA and their combinations (e.g., ISR, RSI, ARS, RSA, etc.) can now be used to explore other occupations with those codes.

Development of the Veterans and Military Occupations Finder

Recently, the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) initiated My Next Move for Veterans (<http://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>), a program for U.S. veterans who are current job seekers (O*NET, 2013). This online resource is designed to help veterans find civilian careers that are similar to the occupations they held in the military. A crosswalk between Military Occupational Classifications (MOCs) and O*NET occupations was created for the My Next Move for Veterans program that directly links MOC titles to O*NET occupational titles (O*NET, 2013). This crosswalk was utilized to develop the VMOF.

An expert panel provided feedback throughout the development process. The panel included five members who have either military experience and/or experience counseling clients with military histories. Feedback provided by the expert panel led to significant improvements in the original conceptualization of the VMOF. First, it was determined that only "active" military positions (as identified in the O*NET crosswalk database) would be included. Next, the panel recommended that one index would focus on providing HOCs for all MOCs for which reliable information could be obtained (the Military Occupations Index), and a second index would focus on the crosswalk between the MOC and O*NET occupations (the Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk). Using these two indexes, users can locate HOCs for military occupations and their corresponding civilian occupations. This allows users to better understand how they might apply the skills and abilities they developed in the military to potential civilian occupations with similar responsibilities.

The Military Occupations Index lists active MOCs from each of the five branches of military: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy. MOCs are listed alphabetically by branch, and each MOC includes a corresponding two-letter HOC. The two-letter HOC listed in the Military Occupations Index provides a description of the military occupation. For example, the code IE for the Army MOC of Information Systems Technician means that Information Systems Technicians resemble the Investigative type most closely and the Enterprising type somewhat less. In this way, the codes describe an occupation by showing its resemblance to two personality types.

The two-letter HOC codes were assigned to each MOC by the authors and reviewed by the expert panel for accuracy. Military occupations were only included in this index if information about the occupation, such as work environment and responsibilities, could be obtained. For more information on the resources used to obtain occupational information, see Messer, Greene, and Holland, 2013.

The Air Force Military Occupations Index includes 168 military occupations. Air Force MOCs include a number denoting the skill level of the individual within the broad occupation code, which is represented in this section of the index with an “X” in the MOC column [see **Figure 3, Appendix**]. This section includes an additional skill level column which shows all available levels for each occupation code (1 = Helper, 3 = Apprentice, 5 = Journeyman, 7 = Craftsman, 9 = Superintendent, 0 = Chief Enlisted Manager). The Army Military Occupations Index includes 283 military occupations, the Coast Guard Military Occupations Index includes 81, the Marine Corps Military Occupations Index includes 430, and the Navy Military Occupations Index includes 80 military occupations. An example of the Army Military Occupations Index can be found in **Figure 4 [Appendix]**. **Table 1 [Appendix]** illustrates the breakdown of the number of occupations in each RIASEC category within each branch of the military. In all branches, with the exception of the Coast Guard, the most common code was R (Realistic), followed by E (Enterprising), and I (Investigative).

The Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk lists active MOCs from each of the five branches along with corresponding civilian occupations and two-letter HOCs [see **Figure 5, Appendix**]. Moreover, eight-digit O*NET codes can also be found in the crosswalk. These codes can be used to locate additional information for an occupation on the O*NET web site (O*NET, 2013). Users can search the O*NET crosswalk (www.onetonline.org/crosswalk) to explore occupations that correspond to their military positions. Under the military section, select the branch and then type in the MOC. The crosswalk search provides detailed information, including educational requirements, skills, activities, and related occupations.

The Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk includes information about civilian occupations taken from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) database (2013). In this crosswalk, the HOC provides a description of the corresponding O*NET civilian occupations. For example, the Army occupation of Aircraft Electrician is linked to the civilian occupation of Avionics Technician, which was assigned the HOC RI. This means that Avionics Technician, a civilian occupation which is similar to Aircraft Electrician, resembles the Realistic type the most, fol-

lowed by the Investigative type. The two-letter HOCs were assigned to each O*NET civilian occupation in the same manner as the codes in the Military Occupations Index.

The Air Force Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk includes 153 military occupations with their corresponding skill level, civilian occupation, and two-letter HOC based on the civilian occupation. The Army Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk includes 392 military occupations, the Coast Guard Crosswalk includes 120, the Marine Corps Crosswalk includes 461, and the Navy Crosswalk includes 82.

Table 2 [Appendix] illustrates the breakdown of the number of occupations in each RIASEC category within each branch of the military. In all branches, with an exception of the Coast Guard, the most frequent code type for matched civilian occupations was R (Realistic), followed by E (Enterprising), and then both I (Investigative) and S (Social) came in third. This is a close match to the pattern that was identified when examining the Military Occupations Index of the VMOF.

Once the indexes were compiled and all two-letter codes were assigned, the expert panel reviewed the VMOF and provided feedback on the HOC assignments. Finally, two independent quality assurance specialists reviewed the VMOF to ensure the accuracy of the indexes.

Holland Codes within the Military/Veteran Population

As noted previously, both indexes of the VMOF contain many R (Realistic), I (Investigative), E (Enterprising), and S (Social) occupations. This information is very useful when thinking about the type of work experience veterans as a whole have had and as a result, work experiences they might not have had. The lack of experience and exposure to occupations that are associated with the other Holland types (i.e., A [Artistic], C [Conventional]) may have an impact on an individual's Holland Code and their Aspirations Summary Code, and therefore the type of options they consider when transitioning. This may even be more of an issue for women than men. When examining the most common Holland code types in women, S (Social), C (Conventional), and E (Enterprising) were found to be the most common types among a census matched standardization sample (n = 879); while men from this sample (n = 860) were found to have much more consistency with the prevalence found in military positions with I (Investigative), R (Realistic), and S (Social) being the most common (Holland & Messer, 2013a).

In order to gain a better understanding of these potential patterns, the Holland Codes and occupational aspirations of 28 active and retired members of the military were analyzed. **Table 3 [Appendix]** presents demographic information for this sample. **Table 4 [Appendix]** illustrates

the breakdown of participant Holland Codes, by males, females, and the total sample. This was calculated for their high point code (first letter of their Holland Code), for the second letter of their Holland Code, and the third letter of their Holland Code. It is important to note that for females, there were more S (Social) codes for the high point code than would be expected in this sample, with males having I (Investigative) as their most common high point code. These patterns are consistent with previous findings about RIASEC gender differences (Darcy & Tracey, 2007). R (Realistic) and C (Conventional) codes were most common for the second letter for males and females, respectively. S (Social) was the most common as the third letter for males, with I (Investigative) being most common for females. In addition, the high point code of their first listed occupational aspiration was also examined. Interestingly, there are distinctly more I (Investigative) occupations among both the males' and females' occupational aspirations than in their Holland Codes.

When examining the prevalence of each of the code types, regardless of position, and also considering their occupational aspiration code, for females, S (Social) was found to be the most prevalent (30.6 per cent), followed by I (Investigative) and C (Conventional) (both 22.2 per cent). For males, R (Realistic) was most prevalent (23.7 per cent), followed by S (Social) and E (Enterprising) (both 21.1 per cent). It is important to note that the pattern among males is similar to the pattern found among the occupations in the VMOF, whereas the pattern among females is consistent with previous findings about RIASEC gender differences (Darcy & Tracey, 2007). However, R (Realistic), I (Investigative), E (Enterprising), and S (Social) are still overall the most frequent codes and aspirations among this sample.

Conclusions

The higher prevalence of (R) Realistic, (I) Investigative, (E) Enterprising, and (S) Social types associated with military occupations, in addition to the data results illustrating a similar pattern of codes among a sample of military personnel and veterans, suggests that career counselors and specialists working with these clients should become familiar with these personality types, including common occupations and fields of study associated with each. It may also be helpful to explore trends among these occupations, the necessary training, and specific employers hiring for these types of positions. Some useful resources for obtaining this information include CareerOneStop (www.careerinfonet.org). Under the *State Information* is information about occupational trends at the state level, including each state's largest employers and links to state-specific career and labor market information (U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2014). O*NET (2013; www.onetcenter.org/overview.html) also provides state-specific employment trends, wages,

and job opening information for each occupation in the database. Lastly, it is important to note that women military personnel and veterans will likely have a larger discrepancy between their Holland Code and the codes of typical military positions and similar civilian occupations. Because of this, they may experience more difficulty than men transitioning to the civilian workforce and may be more likely to seek career counseling. They may also need additional help examining their aspirations and how they can relate their previous work experiences to their current occupational aspirations.

Summary

Overall, the VMOF can be a useful tool when working with both male and female veterans. This tool, along with the SDS and other Holland-based resources, allows for easy application of Holland's RIASEC theory in practice. The information provided here regarding prevalence of code types and differences among males and females can enhance career counselors' and specialists' understanding of this group of clients and may aid in their effectiveness of working with the veteran population.

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APPENDICES on the following pages:

Table 1

Table 2

Table 3

Table 4

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Table 1: Frequency of Holland Code Types in the Military Occupations Index

Branch	Number of Occupations	R		I		A		S		E		C	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Air Force	168	92	54.8	25	14.9	5	3.0	11	6.5	28	16.7	7	4.2
Army	283	96	33.9	77	27.2	10	3.5	20	7.1	68	24.0	12	4.2
Coast Guard	81	21	25.9	17	21.0	2	2.5	16	19.8	24	29.6	1	1.2
Marine Corps	430	181	42.1	31	7.2	16	3.7	46	10.7	198	45.8	18	4.2
Navy	80	49	61.3	15	18.8	1	1.3	6	7.5	4	5.0	5	6.3
Average	209	88	42.1	33	15.8	7	3.3	20	9.6	52	24.9	9	4.3

Table 2: Frequency of Holland Code Types in Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk

Branch		R		I		A		S		E		C	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Number of Occupations													
Air Force	153	69	45.1	18	11.8	5	3.3	17	11.1	93	21.6	11	7.2
Army	392	140	35.7	110	28.1	5	1.3	69	17.6	56	14.3	12	3.1
Coast Guard	120	20	16.7	22	18.3	2	1.7	16	13.3	54	45.0	6	5.0
Marine Corps	461	232	50.3	51	11.1	16	3.5	59	12.8	71	15.4	32	6.9
Navy	82	50	61.0	2	2.4	1	1.2	15	18.3	8	9.8	6	7.3
Average	241	102	42.3	41	17.0	6	2.5	35	14.5	44	18.3	13	5.4

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics

Table 3	
Demographic Characteristics	
Characteristic	N (%) or M (SD)
Gender	
Male	19 (68.9)
Female	9 (32.1)
Age	
Mean	30.3 (8.4)
Range	20 - 47
Education Level	
< 12	2 (7.1)
12	5 (17.9)
13-15	4 (14.3)
16+	13 (46.4)
Did not report	4 (14.3)
Military Status	
Active Duty	21 (75)
Reserves	4 (14.3)
Retired	3 (10.7)
Note. N = 28.	

Table 4: Frequency of Holland Code Types Within an Active Military/Veteran Sample

	Overall Sample (n = 28)		Males (n = 19)		Females (n = 9)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High Point Holland Code						
R	3	10.7	3	15.8	0	0.0
I	6	21.4	6	31.6	0	0.0
A	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
S	12	42.9	4	21.1	8	88.9
E	5	17.9	4	21.1	1	11.1
C	2	7.1	2	10.5	0	0.0
Second Letter of Holland Code						
R	7	25.0	7	36.8	0	0.0
I	2	7.1	1	5.3	1	11.1
A	2	7.1	1	5.3	1	11.1
S	4	14.3	4	21.1	0	0.0
E	5	17.9	4	21.1	1	11.1
C	8	28.6	2	10.5	6	66.7
Third Letter of Holland Letter Code						
R	4	14.3	3	15.8	1	11.1
I	6	21.4	2	10.5	4	44.4
A	3	10.7	2	10.5	1	11.1
S	7	25.0	6	31.6	1	11.1
E	5	17.9	4	21.1	1	11.1
C	3	10.7	2	10.5	1	11.1
High Point Code of First Aspiration Code						
R	5	17.9	5	26.3	0	0.0
I	9	32.1	6	31.6	3	33.3
A	1	3.6	1	5.3	0	0.0
S	4	14.3	2	10.5	2	22.2
E	7	25.0	4	21.1	3	33.3
C	2	7.1	1	5.3	1	11.1
Total Across All Letters of HOC and Aspiration Code						
R	19	17.0	18	23.7	1	2.8
I	23	20.5	15	19.7	8	22.2
A	6	5.4	4	5.3	2	5.6
S	27	24.1	16	21.1	11	30.6
E	22	19.6	16	21.1	6	16.7
C	15	13.4	7	9.2	8	22.2

Figure 1. Description of each of the six RIASEC types.

Realistic (R) types like realistic occupations such as mechanical engineer, landscape gardener, sound technician, cook, exterminator, plumber, locksmith, or safety inspector. They usually have mechanical and athletic abilities, like to work outdoors and with tools and machines, and like to work with things more than people.

Investigative (I) types like investigative occupations such as biologist, surgeon, veterinarian, airplane pilot, translator, pharmacist, or actuary. They usually have mathematical and scientific ability, like to work alone, and like to explore and understand things or events rather than persuade others.

Artistic (A) types like artistic occupations such as writer, graphic designer, fashion designer, public relations representative, editor, or architect. They usually have artistic skills, enjoy creating original work, and have a good imagination.

Social (S) types like social occupations such as teacher, counselor, nurse, librarian, speech therapist, or home health aide. They usually like to be around other people, are interested in how people get along, and like to help, teach, and counsel people more than engage in mechanical or technical activities.

Enterprising (E) types like enterprising occupations such as salesperson, contractor, entrepreneur, human resources specialist, lawyer, manufacturer, or lobbyist. They usually have leadership and speaking abilities, are interested in money and politics, and like to persuade or direct others more than work on scientific or complicated topics.

Conventional (C) types like conventional occupations such as accountant, cashier, fire inspector, data manager, or proofreader. They usually have clerical and math abilities, like to work indoors and organize things, and like to follow orderly routines and meet clear standards, avoiding work that does not have clear directions.

Figure 2. Determining an Individual's Aspirations Summary Code.

From Self-Directed Search (SDS) Professional Manual (5h ed.).
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Code letter	1st position (X 3)	2nd position (X 2)	3rd position (X 1)	Total score
R	2	0	0	= 2 x 3 = 6
I	0	2	2	= (2 x 2) + (2 x 1) = 6
A	0	2	2	= (2 x 2) + (2 x 1) = 6
S	4	1	0	= (4 x 3) + (1 x 2) = 14
E	0	1	1	= (1 x 2) + (1 x 1) = 3
C	0	0	1	= 1 x 1 = 1

Figure 3. Example of the Air Force Military Occupations Finder Index
 From The Veterans and Military Occupations Finder.
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The Military Occupations Index
Air Force Occupations

MOC	Military Title	Skill Level (X)	HOC
2A3X1	A-10, F-15, & U-2 Avionics Systems	1, 3, 5	RI
2A3X1	A-10, F-15, & U-2 Avionics Systems	7	RI
1A7X1	Aerial Gunnery	0, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9	RE
4M0X1	Aerospace and Operational Physiology	0, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9	IR
2A6X2	Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE)	1, 3, 5, 7	ER
2A6X2	Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE)	9	ER
2A5X1	Aerospace Maintenance	1, 3, 5	RI
2A5X1	Aerospace Maintenance	7, 9	RI
4N0X1	Aerospace Medical Service	1, 3, 5, 7, 9	RS
4N0X1	Aerospace Medical Service	0	RS
2A6X1	Aerospace Propulsion	1, 3, 5	RI
2A6X1	Aerospace Propulsion	7, 9	RI

Figure 4. Example of the Army Military Occupations Index

From The Veterans and Military Occupations Finder.
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Army Occupations		
MOC	Military Title	HOC
15R	AH-64 Attack Helicopter Repairer	RI
15X	AH-64A Armament/Electrical/Avionics Systems Repairer	RI
15Y	AH-64D Armament/Electrical/Avionics Systems Repairer	RI
145	Air and Missile Defense (AMD) Crewmember	RI
14Z	Air Defense Artillery Senior Sergeant	ER
14J	Air Defense Command, Control, Communications, Computer and Intelligence Tactical Operations Center Enhanced Operator-Maintainer	IR
15Q	Air Traffic Control (ATC) Operator	IC
94D	Air Traffic Control Equipment Repairer	RC
15K	Aircraft Components Repair Supervisor	EC
15F	Aircraft Electrician	RI
15Z	Aircraft Maintenance Senior Sergeant	EC
15H	Aircraft Pneumatics Repairer	RI
15B	Aircraft Powerplant Repairer	RI
13E	Cannon Fire Direction Specialist	RC
60H	Cardiologist	IS
795	Career Counselor	E5
88H	Cargo Specialist	RC
19D	Cavalry Scout	RE
15U	CH-47 Helicopter Repairer	RI
56M	Chaplain Assistant	SE
74A	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN)	IE
74D	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist	IE
740A	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Warrant Officer	IE
35Y	Chief Counterintelligence/Human Intelligence Sergeant	EI
68Z	Chief Medical NCO	SE
46Z	Chief Public Affairs NCO	EA
60R	Child Neurologist	IS
60U	Child Psychiatrist	IS

Figure 5. Example of the Military to Civilian Occupations Crosswalk for Army
 From The Veterans and Military Occupations Finder.
 Lutz, FL: PAR. Reprinted with permission.

Army Crosswalk

MOC	Military Title	O*NET Code	O*NET Title	HOC
155G	0-5A/EO-5B/RC-7 Pilot	53-2011.00	Airline Pilot, Copilot, and Flight Engineer	RI
51Z	Acquisition	11-3061.00	Purchasing Manager	EC
51C	Acquisition, Logistics & Technology (AL&T) Contracting NCO	43-3061.00	Procurement Clerk	CE
67J	Aerosomedical Evacuation	11-9111.00	Medical and Health Services Manager	SE
15R	AH-6A Attack Helicopter Repairer	49-3011.00	Aircraft Mechanic and Service Technician	RI
15X	AH-64A Armament/Electrical/Avionics Systems Repairer	49-2091.00	Avionics Technician	RI
15ZF	AH-64A Attack Pilot	53-2012.00	Commercial Pilot	RI
15Y	AH-64D Armament/Electrical/Avionics Systems Repairer	49-2091.00	Avionics Technician	RI

Chapter 14

UNDERSTANDING TRANSITION GPS (Goals Plans Success): The Uniformed Services Transition Assistance Program, by Lori Cleymans and Shawn P. Conlon

Abstract

In recent years there have been many statutory and regulatory changes to the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provided to transitioning service members. While offering transition assistance has been a long-standing practice of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, the recent statutory changes mandated participation by all service members, with certain exemptions, and further prescribed specific content. The new policy now requires service members to produce evidence of meeting specific requirements that are aligned with their stated post-service goals. This paper summarizes all mandatory and additional aspects of TAP as they exist in March of 2014.

President Barack Obama signed Executive Order No. 13,518, Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government, in November of 2009 to spur Federal Agencies to hire transitioning service members and veterans. In addition, the Executive Order charged the Secretaries of Defense, Labor, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security to improve the existing Transition Assistance Programs (TAP). Congress passed the Vow to Hire Heroes (VOW) Act of 2011, House Resolution 674 in November of that year, directing further changes to TAP. In addition, the Department of Defense (DoD) issued policy regarding the new TAP. While offering transition service was a longstanding practice of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, the VOW Act mandated participation by all service members, with certain exemptions, and further prescribed specific content. The DoD policy, an outgrowth of Executive Order 13,518, requires service members to produce evidence of meeting specific requirements that are aligned with their stated post-service goals. The result of the new law and policy is the overhauled TAP, now known as Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success), or T-GPS, which encapsulates all of the mandatory classes required by law, standards service members must meet, and additional available classes and services. While TAP overhaul was a joint effort of several Federal agencies, the principal participants in T-GPS are the DoD, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Labor (DoL) and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Mandatory Components of T-GPS

The mandatory portions of T-GPS include a series of classes and briefs that service members must attend and standards they must meet.

Classes and Briefs.

VOW mandates that all service members attend T-GPS, participate in pre-separation counseling, attend VA benefits briefings and attend the Department of Labor Employment Workshop (DOLEW). Service members retiring after 20 years of service or certain Reserve component service members may request exemptions from attending DOLEW. Prior to VOW, TAP services were available, but not required, and many Service members opted to forego participating in TAP. In addition to the VOW mandated classes, there are also classes directed by the DoD policy. They include an overview of the transition process, a cross-walk of military occupation to civilian occupation combined with a gap analysis, resilience training, budget preparation, and, for Active Component Service members, information on continuing service in the Reserve Component.

Pre-Separation Counseling.

Pre-separation counseling is an information session designed to provide Service members facts about how their personal situations will change after they leave the military. They learn where they may find information about a variety of topics such as health care, relocation assistance, Federal veteran's benefits, state veteran's benefits, and career change and employment assistance, to name a few. Completing pre-separation counseling is often the first step in the transition process. During pre-separation counseling, service members are introduced to the concept of the Individual Transition Plan (ITP), and are invited to begin thinking about their individual goals and objectives for their upcoming civilian life. They capture those goals and objectives on a document that serves as a basis for the classes and activities to follow.

VA Benefits Brief I and II.

The services offered to veterans by the VA are many and complex. In order to help transitioning service members understand their benefits, the VA conducts two briefing sessions during T-GPS. The first session, known as VA Benefits Brief I, covers education benefits, including the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill, so that service members can understand how those programs work, what they pay for, how to qualify and how to apply. The brief then continues with a discussion of the myriad other benefit topics such as health care, disability ratings, pension benefits, retraining benefits, home loan guarantee, burial benefits, life insurance, and many more.

The Benefits Brief II is a practical application period in which Service members are exposed to and guided through the eBenefits portal (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>). They are shown how to navigate the benefits application process and how to access information online. This hands-on session helps service members get acquainted with the VA process.

Military occupation crosswalk and gap analysis.

The Military Occupational Codes (MOC) Crosswalk helps service members break down the communication barrier so they can clearly express how their experience relates to the employer's needs. Service members learn the skills needed to analyze their military skills and experience, research civilian occupations, and translate what they have accomplished in civilian terminology.

In addition to analyzing their skills, service members can determine what skills, training, or education they are missing in order to obtain the job they desire. This Gap Analysis serves to show each person what they need to accomplish prior to leaving the military.

There are multiple resources available to assist service members in analyzing their skills and translating them to civilian occupations. One resource is the VMET (Verification of Military Experience and Training). This document can be obtained by any service member at www.dmdc.osd.mil/tgps/. The VMET provides

- Occupation codes to use on O*Net.
- Related civilian occupation job titles to help create their resume.
- Course descriptions from their military training to help relate the material learned to civilian employers.
- Occupation descriptions of all the jobs the service member held while in the military.
- Additional qualifications for extra skill sets they have acquired through their time in the service.

In addition to examining their VMET, the Service members use the O*NET My Next Move for Vets at www.mynextmove.org/vets/site to research occupations and determine the right fit for their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Service members can use the Crosswalk function in the site to identify military occupational codes and the civilian equivalent. Since many service members want a complete occupation change, they can use My Next Move for Vets to see required education, the average salary, and the growth potential of target occupations. Once the service member understands their current skills, the requirements for a future occupation and the gaps between the two, they can develop a plan on how to bridge those gaps and document it on the ITP.

Resilience training.

Any change is difficult and can cause stress, and leaving the military is a big change for service members. To address the stresses involved in transitioning from the military to the civilian sector, the new T-GPS includes the Resilient Transitions module to teach service members how to recognize the effects of stress, how to build resiliency, and where to go for help.

Service members learn how to recognize the signs of stress taking over their lives so they understand what they are feeling. Of course, recognizing the effects of stress overtaking their health is only part of the solution. Service members then learn strategies to work through the stress they are experiencing.

Leaving the military also impacts the family members who also may be stressed and overwhelmed with the changes and fear of the unknown. Service members learn that it is essential to involve their children as much as possible with the changes and to keep an open line of communication at all times. By acknowledging the stress involved in a transition and the negative effects of stress, service members can develop a plan to help them with a successful transition.

DOLEW

The DOLEW is an intensive, three day learning experience that provides an overview and practical application in the job search and hiring processes. Covering topics such as resume and cover letter creation, the interview process, and negotiating job offers, the DOLEW is akin to a compressed version of an undergraduate career development course. Service members work in small groups and individually to explore the various aspects of employment in the civilian sector they are about to re-enter.

The workshop begins with service members exploring attitudes and myths about the hiring process, and then moves to dealing with the stress that may arise when dealing with transition. Next, service members identify their skills, including their transferrable skills, their motivations and their values and learn how to identify and evaluate potential occupations using Bureau of Labor Statistics data and other tools. Finally, they learn how to create a job search plan.

The next portion of the workshop places a significant emphasis on resume creation, and all service members complete at least a first draft of a resume, followed by interview skills and job offer analysis. Service members should have a good overview of the employment process when they finish the workshop.

Service members leave the DOLEW with a *Gold Card* which provides them access to follow-up services at American Job Centers located throughout the nation.

Financial education and budget preparation.

The financial education portion gives service members a broad overview of many financial topics. It includes topics such as understanding credits scores, developing a spending plan or budget, evaluating compensation packages, retirement issues, and taxes.

The module begins with aligning transition goals with financial resources, and continues with creating a current budget. Service members can then compare their goals to their current spending plan. After that, they insert future desires into the spending plan. The aim is for them to create a comparison between current financial requirements and resources and future requirements and resources. The process of transitioning can change service member's financial position significantly, and by addressing future requirements and resources, they are confronted with their future fiscal reality and can make better informed plans. The culmination of this work is a spending plan for the first twelve months after separation.

Continuation of service.

The continuation of service brief describes to service members how to continue to serve in the Reserve or Guard component of their individual service. There are advantages to continued Reserve or Guard affiliation, and the brief covers those and offers information about how to pursue the various options.

Career readiness standards.

In addition to mandatory participation, the T-GPS requires service members to meet Career Readiness Standards (CRS). Some CRS must be met by all service members, and some CRS are dependent on their post service plans. All service members must meet the following CRS:

- Conduct a self assessment of interests and skills
- Prepare an individual transition plan (ITP)
- Prepare a 12 month post-separation budget
- Register on the joint DoD/VA eBenefits web site
- Receive information on continuing to serve in the Reserve component
- Conduct a crosswalk and gap analysis between military and intended civilian occupations
- Receive information on certifications and licensures
- Receive a *Gold Card* from DoL for obtaining services from American Job Centers

- Complete a job application package
- Resume – Federal or private sector
- Two job applications or a job offer letter
- Reference list – professional and personal
- Individualized Components of T-GPS

Classes and briefs.

Following completion of the mandatory portions of TAP, service members are invited to continue with additional training based on their individual goals and needs entered on their ITP. There are three specific individual training forums available: Accessing Higher Education, Career and Technical Training and Entrepreneur tracks.

Accessing higher education individual track.

Service members who desire to pursue higher education to obtain a 2-year or 4-year degree may attend the Accessing Higher Education individual track to help prepare them to meet the appropriate CRS. The track content walks service members through the process of deciding on pursuing higher education based on goals, assessed skills and interests, military occupation, and other factors. It gives them an overview of academic credit for military learning that academic institutions might accept based on recommendations from the American Council on Education and on the Joint Service Transcript. Service members also learn about the variety of degree programs available.

Then, students learn how to research schools and programs using the College Navigator tool from the Department of Education, <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. They discuss methods of funding education, and the application and admission process. Throughout the track, they have abundant practical application and are given time to work on meeting CRS. The Accessing Higher Education track is facilitated by DoD instructors.

Career and technical training individual track.

Many service members desire to return to civilian life and enter occupations for which they must obtain some career and technical education without necessarily obtaining a degree. Those individuals can attend the Career and Technical Education track, offered by VA. Similar to the higher education track, the Career and Technical Education track affords service members the opportunity to explore, evaluate and decide on training and certificate program and prepares them to meet CRS.

Entrepreneurship individual track.

The Small Business Administration offers entrepreneur training through its two day Boots 2 Business track. Boots 2 Business exposes service members to the basics of conceiving, opening and running a small busi-

ness. After the two day class the SBA offers an eight week intensive distance learning course to help Service members more rigorously prepare for business ownership.

Career readiness standards.

Service members who intend to pursue higher education or career and technical education once their service is complete must also meet the following CRS

- Complete a self assessment of interests and skills
- Compare institutions of higher education or career and technical training
- Produce an application or an acceptance letter
- Confirm a counseling or advising session with the institution

Capstone

The culminating feature of T-GPS is Capstone, when the service member meets with transition counselors and staff to review evidence of meeting the Career Readiness Standards consistent with the member's Individual Transition Plan. After demonstrating CRS attainment, the Service member's commander verifies in writing that the CRS were met. If the service member needs more work, the commander refers him or her to installation transition staff for additional preparation or performs a *warm handover* to the appropriate VA or DoL staff who can continue to offer services and support after transition.

Future Enhancements

There have been tremendous changes in the transition program, and there are more changes in store. During 2014, the services are incorporating a life cycle approach to the transition process. They are spreading learning opportunities throughout the time in service to allow a longer span of time for service members to work toward attaining CRS. While this effort is still being designed and developed, it is intended to provide learning over time rather than in a crush of time near the end of service.

Summary

There were many upgrades and changes to the TAP program as it transitioned to the new T-GPS. The goal remains to give service members broad exposure to topics and material essential to them, as well as to provide additional, individualized information for those who want more.

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Chapter 15

LIFE BEYOND WAR: Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Student Veterans

by **Kaye Horne Whitley** and **Paul F. Tschudi**

Abstract

Two symposia were held to identify recommendations for serving student veterans enrolled in higher education. Administrators, educators, veterans, and student veterans participated in the symposia. All participants had experience with student veterans and represented four- and two-year colleges or universities from both rural and urban locations. The group focused on supporting the mental health needs of student veterans, which resulted in 12 recommendations that were shared by a webcast with other colleges and universities.

Introduction

The HSC Foundation and The National Veterans Center partnered with The Graduate School of Education and Human Development's Department of Counseling and Human Development at The George Washington University on a project to improve support for post-9/11 veterans with disabilities enrolled in higher education programs. The project resulted in twelve recommendations.

Methodology

Two symposia were conducted, one in October 2012 and another in March 2013. Approximately 15 university and college representatives, veterans, and advocates participated in each symposium. A cross-section including both four- and two-year schools and both urban and suburban schools attended. Session topics focused on veterans' needs, challenges in serving the need, practices that have been successful, and gaps in services and resources needed to provide services.

A professional facilitator guided panel and group discussions. The findings and recommendations from the first symposium informed and guided the development of the agenda for the second symposium. After a comprehensive discussion, it was determined that the most overarching issue facing student veterans is mental health needs.

This paper captures recommended suggestions to provide the best possible accommodations to student veterans as they transition from the military to civilian life on a college campus. Further, the recommended

solutions could serve as an excellent model for a veteran friendly campus.

Post 9/11 Veterans in Higher Education

Veterans are enrolling in higher education at record rates (O'Herrin, 2011). Given the demographic and experiential differences that veterans bring to college campuses, it is not surprising they may need different or additional accommodations. Unlike college students enrolled in traditional 4-year universities, veterans tend to be older, are more likely to be married, may have children, experienced one or more traumatic events, and been placed in situations that demand maturity and responsibility (American Council on Education, 2008). Many of the returning veterans have a physical, emotional, or cognitive disability (Ely, 2008; O'Herrin, 2011). Campuses need to understand the issues faced by veterans for them to be successful in higher education (American Council on Education, 2008).

Veterans are ethnically diverse, with non-Hispanic whites accounting for two-thirds of veterans under 39 (American Council on Education, 2008; Radford, 2009; O'Herrin, 2011). The proportion of female veterans is on the rise as well. Thirty years ago only 4% of the veteran population was women, whereas today it is approximately 14%. The active military and veteran population comprises around 4% of the undergraduate population in the United States, of which 75% are veterans (Radford, 2009; O'Herrin, 2011). The veteran population has a very different demographic profile than that of their traditional, non-military student counterpart. Of the 62% of veteran undergraduates 33% are married with a child, 15% are married with no children, and 14% are single parents. An additional 35% are unmarried with no children and 3% are dependents (Ely, 2008; Radford, 2009).

In addition to demographic differences, veteran undergraduates select colleges for different reasons. Seventy-five percent of veteran undergraduates look at location as the primary factor, followed by program or degree at 52% and cost at 47% (American Council on Education, 2008; Radford, 2009). It is not surprising that cost is not the primary factor that veterans consider because the new Post-9/11 GI Bill pays tuition to the level of the highest in-state tuition cost of public universities in a state (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2008; Shankar, 2009). This means that veterans can select any public school without worrying about the cost of tuition.

Veterans also make different decisions about the type of school they choose. Veterans attend two-year institutions at much higher rates than their non-military, traditional student counterpart. Forty-three percent of

veteran undergraduates attend a two-year school compared with 32% of non-military, traditional undergraduates. Thirty-four percent of veteran undergraduate students attend a public or private not-for-profit, four-year university, compared with 54% of non-military, traditional undergraduates (Radford, 2009; O' Herrin, 2011). Given the over representation of veteran undergraduates at two-year colleges, it important to ensure that two-year institutions are included in discussing best practices for veterans on campuses.

The proportion of veterans seeking associate degrees is also much higher than that of non-military, traditional students. Nearly half of veteran undergraduate students are seeking an associate degree, compared to only one-third of non-military, traditional undergraduate students (Radford, 2009). Again, this highlights the importance of including two-year institutions in creating veteran friendly campuses.

Another difference of note is the full-time/part-time attendance choices of veteran undergraduate students. As discussed previously, student veterans often have more responsibilities, such as a spouse and children, which impact their ability to attend college at a full-time rate. Less than a third of veteran undergraduate students attend college full-time for even part of the year and more than a third only attend college part-time for part of the year (Radford, 2009).

Military to College Transition Challenges

Unfortunately, demographic differences are not the only challenges for student veterans. Combat experiences and emotional wounds create challenges for veterans enroll college. To recommend or propose solutions for assisting veterans in their transition to higher education, it is necessary to understand challenges that include emotional wounds, complications in accessing money for tuition from the GI Bill, and not understanding academic planning and structure. Additionally, the military culture leads to barriers such as not recognizing or accepting the need for help, lack of awareness of available resources, reluctance to take up scarce resources, equating help with failure, and the stigma associated with seeking help. These challenges were the basis for the recommendations. In the webcast presenting the results of this study Tschudi stated:

The vast majority of college campuses are not prepared for the influx of veterans entering their institutions. Most of these campuses have had to "learn as you go" when it comes to creating the systems and resources that student veterans need. Though raw data have been difficult to gather, anecdotal evidence demonstrates that those universities that provide the most comprehensive support programs to promote the overall well-being of their student veteran population have the highest graduation rates of

their student veterans. (Tschudi, 2013)

Recommendations

Based on the identified mental health needs of student veterans, the following recommendations would be the initial step for providing the best services at institutions of higher learning.

Develop a Plan to De-stigmatize Support Services

Veterans must be made aware of available services and encouraged to use them. Efforts should be made to better understand the culture of veterans and to make accessing services more comfortable. Additionally, offices on campus should become more flexible about documentation required to establish eligibility for services. As part of this effort, simple steps should be taken to change the labels used, such as avoiding large signs that advertise mental health services and using words with less stigma associated with them, such as “counselor,” instead of “therapist.”

Information should be included in the student veteran website on mental health resources as a means of showing that the student veteran’s organization and student veteran leadership on campus support the need for these resources. University personnel need to be educated about the signs of distress in their student veteran population. Additionally, it is essential that all university personnel be aware that, like others, veterans are individuals, each of whom has unique experiences, backgrounds, and needs.

Provide Welcoming Initial Environment and Warm Hand-off to Resources

Veterans need to feel welcome when they first walk into a support center or other office designated to assist veterans. Consequently, it is critically important that staff understand the issues veterans face. Ideally, someone in the center should be a veteran or student veteran to send a strong signal that the center is veteran-friendly. In addition, those who initially see veterans need to provide a warm hand-off to other resources as needed. To create a welcoming environment, at least one designated person in each student service office should be a veteran or someone who has had additional training on the unique needs and culture of the student veteran. Providing the name of a contact person may be the key that the veteran needs to reach out for assistance.

Hire Learning Specialists

Many veterans enter college without having been enrolled in school in years; therefore, they need access to specialists who teach basic skills to ensure academic success, such as how to organize homework, study for a test, and write a research paper. Depending on the campus resources, creating a separate credit or non-credit class for veterans which teaches study skills, time management, stress management, self-awareness, life

skills, and service learning opportunities might be beneficial.

Provide Adequate Accommodations for Veterans with Mental Health Challenges

Student veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) symptoms may need additional accommodations, such as a private room where they can take an exam. This can be accomplished by referring them to the Disability Services Office or a Disability Counselor on their campus.

Hire Experienced and Trained Counselors

While many colleges and universities have mental health counselors available on campus, relatively few have counselors who have experience with veteran issues, and even fewer have counselors who are veterans themselves. In an ideal world, veterans could receive counseling services from those who have “walked in the same boots” and have firsthand experience with veteran issues. To that end, colleges and universities should look to hire more counselors who are veterans. It is likely not realistic, however, for all schools to hire veteran counselors, and in some cases state laws may make it impractical. For example, a state university may not be able to require that applicants for counseling positions be veterans, but the job advertisement may be able to note that a veteran is preferred.

For the many schools that will be unable to fill counselor positions with veterans, attempts should be made to hire counselors who have training or commit to training the counselors currently employed to serve student veterans. Counselors should have an understanding of the unique issues that veterans face and/or substantial experience working with veterans or within the military culture. These training programs must be rigorous, teaching counselors about military culture, terms, benefits, and other issues, because veterans will quickly see through any counselor who attempts to “fake it” when it comes to understanding military culture. Using the counseling session is not the time to educate the counselor. At a minimum, schools need at least one counselor who understands military issues to serve as the main contact person for veterans. For schools that do not have enough counselors with military experience or knowledge, consideration should be given to bringing in trained student veterans who can talk to other veterans on a peer-to-peer basis. In addition, a local V.A. medical center may offer to send a mental health staff member to the campus on a designated schedule one or two days per week.

Provide Mentors

Veterans who leave the military often feel they have lost a “safety net” of officers and non-commissioned officers who functioned as mentors.

Consequently, schools should consider setting up an informal peer mentoring system for student veterans. Among other benefits, these mentors can help to diffuse the stigma associated with accessing mental health services. The mentors themselves would also benefit from the opportunity to continue serving

Establish Support Groups

These groups are an efficient way to help multiple students simultaneously and can also serve as a good entry point for those who might need additional help. Some schools have such groups, but many more need to put them in place or use them more broadly. Anyone with appropriate training can facilitate a support group, including a student veteran. The goal is to provide social connections, by sharing stories that they may not be willing to share with loved ones or non-veterans, helping student veterans understand that they are not alone and that others are dealing with the same kinds of issues. Understanding this reality immediately instills a sense of hope. Support groups also allow veterans to cultivate a network of individuals who know them on a deeper level. The group process often takes on a life of its own as veterans learn to connect with each other and start to build their own identity in the civilian world, which can be different than their identity in the military world. Of course, some individuals may need more help than the group can provide. For these individuals, the group may be the impetus they need to seek assistance, as it is sometimes easier to hear that one needs help from a peer than from a counselor or group leader.

The success of any support group will depend on whether people show up on a consistent basis. In some cases, it may make sense to set up time-limited support groups that meet for a defined number of weeks or months. Several organizations help schools and universities to set up and maintain support groups, including Student Veterans of America, which promotes a peer-to-peer support model, and Vets for Vets. Creating an informal drop-in group may be the first step in determining the needs of the student veteran population.

Invest in Hiring and/or Training Support Group Leaders

The success of a support group also depends on having a talented leader who knows how to make participants feel welcome and comfortable opening up to others. Schools should consider providing training on effective leadership of peer-support groups. The training should focus on getting individuals to come together to discuss and share ideas. Interestingly, the most effective way to teach these individuals to lead a group is to have them start as a participant in a support group. Counseling and psychology internship students on campus or from a nearby university may seek opportunities to work with veterans on campus and be open to

the additional training and experience. Having student veterans and non-veterans train together would help bridge the gap between the veterans and mental health professionals and offer the mental health professionals a clearer understanding of the challenges veterans face and the strengths they have gained.

Provide a Drop-in Center

For some veterans, becoming part of a structured group may initially seem intimidating. As a result, schools also need to consider having a drop-in center with trained peer counselors. The center can help a reluctant veteran take the first step toward accessing support. Initially, the veteran may simply get a cup of coffee or play pool with a fellow student. Over time, he or she may begin to open up to peers on an informal basis and agree to try a structured group or see a counselor. In essence, the drop-in center represents another potential entry point, one that requires no commitment beyond just showing up. This type of informal, peer-to-peer social network may be the best entry point for many veterans to see firsthand the benefits of being understood by others and accessing available resources. The drop-in center also provides an opportunity for veterans to exchange ideas on study habits, form study groups, and become tutors for each other.

Have Multiple Entry Points to Group Resources

While a drop-in center may be the best entry point to reach veterans on a social level, schools need multiple entry points for veterans (drop-in centers, informal groups, formal groups, counselors), as different individuals will feel comfortable with different venues. No single solution will be right for every student. The goal should be to provide multiple, comfortable options for veterans as well as other student populations. Each college needs to anticipate points where veterans may contact the college and train the staff at each point. Staff at these entry points should be aware of off-campus resources, such as Vet Centers, VFW, and the USO, in order to refer student veterans, if needed. These off-campus resources should be familiar with the on-campus resources as well.

Establish a Central Information Resource

While multiple entry points are needed, a central resource also is needed to collect information on different veteran-related activities going on at the school. Schools should take notice that the existence of too many activities could lead to diluting interest in individual programs and services. A central resource can help to coordinate and support the various activities and events, help to identify duplicative efforts, and bring different offices of the school together to work collaboratively. An institution-wide committee on student veteran affairs would help to manage the support services for student veterans. This need is being recognized, and a recent

study indicated that 71% of respondents representing colleges and universities indicated they had a central office (Cooke, 2009).

Unfortunately, the idea of cross-department collaboration tends to be foreign in many schools, as political issues may encourage department leaders to not share information. With respect to veterans' issues, however, this mindset needs to change, as school and department leaders need to have an open, collaborative approach focused on the common goal of supporting student veterans across the institution, not just in one particular school or department. A national student veteran organization can play this clearinghouse role at large universities, working to promote communication, collaboration and coordination across various departments (such as the schools of medicine, business, and law), each of which also has its own group supporting veterans. It typically makes sense to have each separate school-specific group determine needs of its students; for example, the business school group will focus on helping veterans secure a job, while the medical school group may focus on helping them find the right residency program. This organization may not be active on smaller campuses; therefore the college should identify an office to be the primary contact for veterans' issues to serve veterans, faculty, and staff.

Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Student Veteran Orientation

Schools need to have an effective orientation process that makes veterans feel welcome in a new, unfamiliar environment. Unfortunately, many colleges and universities offer little assistance to veterans when they first arrive on campus, particularly smaller schools that may not have a full-time person who works with the VA. While all schools have a certifying official, smaller ones often assign someone to this role on a part-time basis, with other responsibilities frequently taking precedence.

Large schools with multiple undergraduate and graduate programs should tailor their veteran-specific orientation to the specific sub-populations of veterans present at the school. Some options for content areas in the orientation might be a panel of current student veterans, faculty and staff veterans, and veteran alumnae who have found successful careers after graduation. The content of these sessions may vary across schools and departments, but overall, an orientation that is supportive of veterans is paramount to their mental health and necessary to ensure a successful beginning.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in August of 2009, combined with the troop drawdown, contribute to record numbers of veterans entering higher education. Many of these veterans will have

mental, emotional, and physical disabilities, and many campuses are not equipped to accommodate them. For veterans to be successful on campuses across the nation, institutions must provide appropriate support and resources. In the closing remarks of the webcast that shared the recommendations presented in this paper, Tschudi stated:

We understand that developing a comprehensive system of support for a student veteran population on a campus may be costly and challenging. We also appreciate the fact that some campuses have only a few student veterans while others have hundreds or even thousands so each situation needs a unique and appropriate response. However, making adjustments on any level will benefit. We can be the seeds to our student veterans' success if we simply pay attention, listen, educate ourselves and offer a safe, welcoming environment – our veterans deserve no less (Tschudi, 2013).

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Chapter 16

CAREER and LIFE TRANSITIONS of VETERANS ENROLLED in COMMUNITY COLLEGES and PROGRAMS DEVELOPED to MEET THEIR NEEDS

by Robert A. Miles

Abstract

Colleges and universities have devoted more resources to meet the needs of a growing population of student veterans and research has increased understanding of the new generation of veterans, but community colleges face distinct challenges that are not fully discussed and most research has focused on veterans in four-year institutions. This article surveys studies that compare the responses of two-year and four-year institutions to their student veterans and reviews recommendations to provide better services for veterans, focusing on suggestions related to career and life transitions of veterans at community colleges.

Introduction

More than one-third (36%) of 308,000 undergraduate, post-9/11 veterans in fall 2012 were enrolled in community colleges (Queen and Lewis, 2014). A percentage this high indicates that veterans are deliberately choosing to attend community colleges because the Post-9/11 GI Bill pays tuition up to the level of the highest tuition at a public university in the state. With sufficient support for returning veterans, community colleges offer a valuable transition from military service to civilian life. The current literature, however, is weighted heavily toward researching the experience of veterans in four-year institutions and the responses of those institutions to this student population. This article will refer to differences between veterans at two-year public colleges and four-year institutions, and survey information on programming relevant to community colleges, with a specific interest in veterans' career and life transitions. It will provide some perspective on challenges confronted by community colleges during the five years since passage of the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Recommendations from the Life beyond War white paper (Whitley, Tshudi & Gieber, 2013) will be discussed as they apply to community colleges.

The transition of post-9/11 veterans to college campuses has received increasing attention in the past two or three years. In August 2013, President Obama outlined 8 Keys to Success for colleges to follow. The American Council on Education (ACE) added extensive information to its web-site (<http://www.acenet.edu/higher-education/Pages/Military-Students-and-Veterans.aspx>). Reports such as *Invisible Wounds of War* (Taniellian, T., et. al. 2008) have borne fruit with information on PTSD and TBI for veterans (and others) who have endured traumatic experiences, as well as materials to prepare college staff members for veterans returning to their campuses. A Washington Post/Kaiser poll (Washington Post, 2014), published while this article was being written, added to and updated the profile of Post 9/11 veterans.

Individual colleges, including community colleges, have received some funding to develop resources. The Veterans Training Support Center at Edmonds Community College (WA), for example, has published, among other resources, *Promising Best Practices: Veteran-Supportive Institutions of Higher Education* (Lovitt, 2013), which lists 50 best practices to support returning veterans with the names of colleges in the Seattle area that have adopted them.

Research into Veterans at Community Colleges

Research in the past five or six years has defined issues facing this new generation of veterans as they enroll in higher education. A Prudential Financial publication (2012) provides the best information available to date on veterans' career and employment challenges, which has clear implications for community colleges that need to understand this population of veterans. When asked about their greatest challenges to transitioning from military to civilian life, the greatest concern (69%) was finding a job (p. 4). Programs that prepare students quickly for employment appeal to many veterans.

"Figuring out what's next" (50%) was one of a cluster of challenges cited in the Prudential report. Of the 44% who indicated they were not ready for transition, 47% indicated they "need time to figure out what to do with my life" (p. 5), which suggests that community colleges need to develop programs to assist veterans with career and educational planning. . . A recent study by the American Council on Education (ACE) (Kim & Cole, 2013) on veterans' and service members' engagement in college life is limited to four-year institutions because, as explained in a footnote, "there is a separate survey of two-year institutions, called the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, [but] it does not yet include a student veteran identifier" (p. 3). This omission needs to be corrected. The Kim and Cole report has important findings that need to be repli-

cated at community colleges. It found, for example, that veterans are less likely than non-veterans to form friendly relationships with other students but more likely to form relationships with faculty members (p. 10), that student veterans spend more time on their course work and are less involved with other activities on campus and external learning opportunities, such as internships (p. 9). They conclude by suggesting that programming for veterans probably needs to be centered on faculty and the classroom.

The two Soldier to Student studies published by ACE (Cooke & Kim, 2009; McBain, Kim, Cook & Snead, 2012) are essential to understanding the response of higher education institutions to the influx of veterans. Fortunately, the numerous tables clearly separate two-year public colleges from four-year public and four-year private institutions. The most recent report on college services for veterans from the National Center for Educational Statistics (Queen & Lewis, 2014) also compares two-year and four-year institutions.

On the other hand, two other important recent publications, *Transitions: Combat Veterans As College Students* (Ackerman & DiRamio, 2009) and *Called to Serve: A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education* (Hamrick & Rumann, 2013) have few references to community colleges; the latter has no listing in the index for community colleges. Nevertheless, both are important resources for community college practitioners with information that is relevant for all colleges. An article in *Transitions* by Ackerman, DiRamio and Garza Mitchell (2009), for example, effectively captures challenges of combat veterans in adjusting to college in interviews with veterans and urges campuses to develop specialized support services for them.

The description of challenges in the *Life beyond War* white paper (Whitley, et.al. 2013) is a helpful introduction to recommendations that can serve as a foundation for planning veterans' services. Statistics in the *From Soldier to Student II* (McBain, et.al., 2012) report verify that community colleges are not providing the same level of services for veterans as public four-year public universities and face more constraints than their four-year counterparts in meeting the recommendations because of more limited staff and space resources.

Examples of Programs at Community Colleges

Brief profiles of the following four community colleges, written in collaboration with veterans' coordinators at the colleges, describe the variety of responses to their student veterans, practices to support veterans, and some challenges faced by the colleges. The list of colleges clearly is limited. No colleges, for example, from California are included, where

many schools with exemplary veterans' programs are located. Extended descriptions of successes and challenges at other colleges would help to expand upon the information in statistical reports.

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (Asheville, NC)

A-B Tech has committed a full-time Veterans Coordinator to certify benefits and serve 176 veterans receiving VA educational benefits. [Veterans' enrollment totals do not include the VRAP training program.] She is the initial contact for veterans and refers them to support services. A part-time Veterans Café staffed by volunteers has been open in computer labs when classes are not scheduled, but the college president, who is a Vietnam veteran, recently announced that a new drop-in center will open in the fall. The volunteer mentoring program is recruiting student veteran mentees and mentors from the community. A college-wide meeting of administrators met in fall 2013 and agreed to start professional development on veterans' issues for faculty in spring 2014.

Gateway Community College (New Haven, CT)

Gateway currently enrolls 200 veterans receiving GI Bill benefits. The Veterans Coordinator, who also is Director of Career Services, clearly is the person for veterans to contact. A half-time assistant, a veteran, also certifies benefits. The college shares a VA mental health professional funded under the VITAL Initiative and a VA Veterans Center representative is available weekly. It was the first college in the state to commit to the 8 Keys to Success. Orientations for new veterans are scheduled every semester, and faculty professional development at least once a year. A Veterans Oasis drop-in center is located across from the veterans' office.

LaGuardia Community College (Long Island City, NY)

At LaGuardia, continuing education has had an office for veterans which includes the Veterans Upward Bound program and has a full-time director. The veterans' office in the division of the college that offers credit courses is expected to open this year with a temporary staff member. While the VA reported over 400 veterans receiving benefits at the college in the most recent semester, college records indicated that it certified half that total. Veterans enrolled in continuing education appear to have more resources than those in credit programs, where there is a need for programs for staff and veterans.

National Park Community College (Hot Springs National Park, AR)

NPCC enrolls just over 100 veterans receiving VA benefits. The Veterans Center is directed by a veteran who has a graduate degree in Mental Health Counseling and partners with other offices to provide support services for veterans. The Center serves as a drop-in oasis. The college

is starting a veteran student group that will be the foundation for a mentoring program. Support groups are offered each semester for veterans facilitated by employers with mental health training. An orientation is not necessary for the small population as an information packet is sufficient. The director recognizes that a planning committee and professional development are needed.

Discussion of Recommendations

The older student population at community colleges accounts for many differences in veterans' experiences and institutional programming. Implications of this difference can be inferred from the article in a 2002 publication from the National Career Development Association (NCDA) (Luzzo, 2002), starting with the tendency for older students "to be much more concerned with managing the stress associated with competing work, family and community responsibilities" and to be at "different developmental levels" (p. 335). Luzzo cites Super's belief "that adult students are more likely than younger students to be engaged in recycling, the process of re-experiencing earlier stages of career development" while, at the same time, "build[ing] upon previously learned principles of career exploration and planning" (p. 337).

As colleges have adjusted to the complexity of the Post 9/11 GI Bill and advising veterans on their options, better information has been developed for returning veterans and college staff working with them. Many community colleges struggle to provide adequate staffing to meet with their veterans and coordinate services within the college, though the Soldier to Student II survey found that almost 74% of community colleges reported having "an office exclusively dedicated to serving service members and/or veterans" (McBain, et.al., 2012, p. 54). This figure increased for all colleges from 49% in 2009 to 71% in 2012 (McBain, et.al., p. 9). The VA has contributed staffing to some colleges, but, unlike after the Vietnam War, federal funding apparently is not available to hire college staff, though the VA provides funding for work/study veterans.

Reviewing recommendations from *Life Beyond War* (Whitley, et.al. 2013), this author believes that hiring learning specialists and counselors specifically to work with veterans is not feasible for many community colleges and not always necessary because many veterans prefer being assimilated with the general student population. Training current staff on veterans' issues, however, is essential, and college leadership needs to understand the importance of this training with somewhat different training offered to faculty, counselors, disability office staff, administrative staff and others. Colleges may decide to designate one member in a department as the primary contact for veterans, rather than train the entire department.

Counseling and career services

Counseling and career services are essential services for veterans, though they usually provide different functions at community colleges, compared with universities. With counseling departments at community colleges often oriented more toward advising than providing clinical services, de-stigmatizing their services may be less important than training for counseling staff on mental health issues, such as PTSD, and other factors that impact on veterans' success. Arranging referrals for therapy and to respond to crises becomes more important in planning for veterans. The McBain survey found that only 16.7% of community college counseling centers have access to a psychiatrist, compared with 67% at public universities, and 65% supported VA services, compared with 80% of university centers (McBain, et.al., p. 53).

Career services need to be included among essential services because research has clearly indicated the importance of assisting veterans with making career and educational decisions, translating their military experience into civilian skills and finding employment. Training career services staff on military terms and culture would assist them in preparing veterans for employment. According to the recent Washington Post/Kaiser Family poll, more veterans understand that their military experience transfers to the civilian job market (81% of all post 9/11 veterans and 76% of combat veterans, agree that military skills are useful) (Washington Post, n.p., 2014). Trained career services staff can help them to identify skills and accomplishments. Assistance with resume-writing and interviewing also is essential.

Hiring learning specialists and counselors specifically to work with veterans is not feasible for many community colleges, as is finding permanent space for a veterans' drop-in center, even though a center undoubtedly is an asset. According the U. S. Department of Education statistics (Queen & Lewis, 2014), community colleges are less likely than public universities to provide support services specifically for veterans. For example, 27% of community colleges provide specialized career services for veterans compared with 42% of public universities. Designating an individual in each department to work with veterans clarifies initial contacts and referrals from other staff.

Other support for veterans

Providing support functions for veterans is a challenge at community colleges. Flexible registration and class scheduling that appeal to veterans and other adult students can interfere with planning orientations for newly enrolled veterans. Student veterans' organizations are more difficult to maintain at community colleges with day, evening and weekend classes and more part-time students. Starting and maintaining support groups,

mentoring, and student veterans' organizations also are more difficult at community colleges than at four-year institutions. Research suggests that peer support is an important strategy to retaining veterans because it builds on military culture that emphasizes small unit cohesion, but more research into the use of support groups at community colleges and sharing successful strategies to provide peer support would be helpful.

College-wide planning

Veterans (and other students) first contact different departments at a college before enrolling. Their first inquiry, for example, may be to the admissions office, an academic department, financial aid, career services or the veterans' coordinator. The college must ensure that each office has appropriate information about veterans and that veterans are referred promptly to the veterans' coordinator. Identifying a single contact person or office has become common practice in most colleges with a significant population of veterans.

This author would add and emphasize the importance of forming a college-wide planning committee to the list of recommendations. Deans or vice-presidents of the academic and student affairs divisions, and perhaps the college chief executive, may need to attend an initial meeting to communicate the commitment of the college to improving services to veterans. A higher-level administrator may need to chair the committee and assist with improving coordination with the VA, other community agencies serving veterans and nearby universities.

Because recently discharged veterans often benefit from starting at a community college, the college also needs to encourage referrals from universities with the understanding that more veterans will be successful and consider transferring after completing their Associate's Degree. Collaboration between community colleges and universities needs to be fostered, probably starting with regular communication between veterans' coordinators and transfer advisors. In addition, researchers at universities could extend their studies to veterans and other community college students. Representatives of the faculty and departments providing services need to meet periodically to coordinate delivery of services, discuss incidents, and plan staff training. The committee does not have to limit itself to veterans' issues. It could discuss and coordinate issues facing other groups of adult students, perhaps by adding responsibility for veterans to an existing committee. Student veterans are committee members at some colleges.

Faculty and staff training

Finally, a recommendation to train faculty and other staff needs to be added to the original list. Almost as many community colleges as four-

year public universities have conducted professional development on veterans' issues for staff and faculty: 55% for staff and 44% for faculty; compared with 61% for staff and 45% for faculty at universities (McBain, et. al., 2012). Colleges share training materials they have developed on the "Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions" (<https://vet-friendlytoolkit.acenet.edu>) developed by the ACE. The Veterans Administration (VA) also now has a "toolkit" (www.mentalhealth.va.gov/StudentVeteran/resources.asp) for colleges on its web-site that includes suggestions for course syllabi.

Colleges also need to address the growing separation between military and civilian cultures that is documented clearly in the 2011 Pew Research study by considering military culture as part of its multi-cultural training. One source of this training, the Center for Deployment Psychology (www.deploymentpsych.org), provides on-site training for college counselors and free on-line training modules.

Conclusion

Starting with the unexpected activation of the National Guard and reserves soon after 9/11, when some guard members and reservists did not have time to withdraw formally from their courses, colleges and universities, like the VA, were unprepared for issues presented by student veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Studies clearly indicate that higher education institutions are making a significant commitment to meet the needs of the new generation of veterans, but veterans compete with other groups of students for attention and resources. In addition, research is needed to evaluate the quality of programs for different groups of veterans in community colleges and other settings to guide practitioners who are struggling to develop programs.

The population of post-9/11 veterans is the most diverse generation of veterans. Their needs are more complex and educational benefits are more complicated; however, resources available to colleges are more limited than after previous wars. Meeting the needs of these veterans requires collaboration and planning within the college, with outside agencies, and other institutions of higher education. Better information has become available for staff working with veterans, but it is unclear whether they have the time to ensure that current information is reaching veterans and appropriate departments on campus.

Community colleges are confronting the same issues in preparing for post-9/11 veterans as other colleges and universities, but offer different advantages to veterans and face somewhat different challenges from four-year institutions. This article is intended to start a discussion about the distinct needs of community colleges in developing programs for

their student veterans. Professional associations, such as NCDA, can assist by continuing to provide information about veterans for career practitioners and encouraging research on community college veterans. Finally, community colleges need more resources beyond what their normal budgets provide and to collaborate with each other locally, state-wide, and nationally.

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Chapter 17

VETERAN SERVICES in HIGHER EDUCATION

Going Above and Beyond by Krysta Kurzynski

Abstract

Veterans transitioning from military service to the civilian culture face unique challenges, particularly within institutions of higher education. As colleges and universities adapt services to meet these needs, it is important to understand veterans as non-traditional students and tailor services accordingly. Professionals in higher education can take these services a step further by embracing some familiar terminology within the military culture such as teamwork, transition, and assistance. This article will highlight services offered at a four-year university which go above and beyond the basic recommendations for veteran programs in higher education.

Introduction

Veteran-specific programs at colleges/universities may not be new to academia, but comprehensive support services seem to finally be catching up with the demand as millions of veterans from the Global War on Terror campaigns have returned to the university setting to utilize the benefits provided through the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill (Hamrick, Rumann, & Associates, 2013). On March 24, 2014, the Student Veterans of America released preliminary findings in the Million Records Project, describing the most recent data on student veteran success in higher education. While the report shows promising improvements in certain areas, a 51.7% rate of program completion (Cate, 2014) indicates that there are still significant challenges which need to be addressed. Improvements in higher education can increase the success of not only student veterans, but also the American economy because veteran unemployment rates decrease as their education level increases (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). To meet the needs of this unique population of non-traditional students, institutions of higher education could benefit from understanding student veteran challenges, developing appropriate solutions, and continuing to refine their services based upon assessment data.

What are the most salient challenges?

Not only are veterans in higher education experiencing a transition out of

the military into civilian life, they are also transitioning into the culture of academia, sometimes simultaneously. A study by the Pew Research Center (2011) reported that 44% of recent veterans describe their adjustment to civilian life as difficult. Some of the reported challenges of readjustment include strains in family relations (48%), coping with post-traumatic stress (37%), and feeling that the American public does not understand the difficulties faced by service members (84%). Add to these challenges, an adjustment to the academic culture, which emphasizes individual accomplishment, independent organization, and a fairly slow pace, all of which are directly opposite of the military culture (Hamrick et al., 2013). Top all of those challenges off with a complicated, strictly regulated system to access VA education benefits, and the scope of transition hurdles become evident.

When compiling the various obstacles experienced during the transition from military culture to the academic world and beyond, institutions of higher education have indicated that frustrations typically arise from the following general sources: financial issues (either personal, familial, or VA policies), social acculturation (orienting to the civilian or academic world), and barriers to accessing physical and behavioral health services (Lang, Harriett, & Cadet, 2013; McBain, Kim, Cooke, & Snead, 2012). While many of these challenges are beyond the scope of college educators or administrators, an appreciation of their genesis is necessary to understand the context of veterans' frustrations, and to develop rapport. Yet, some challenges in higher education have practical solutions that are achievable for burgeoning veterans' programs.

What are the solutions?

While there have been many publications, reports, and studies pertaining to the services for student veterans, the list of recommendations below from the "Life Beyond War" (Whitley, Tshudi, & Gieber, 2013) report is fairly comprehensive, and can serve as a foundational guide for all college programs referring to themselves as "veteran friendly."

Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Student Veterans (pgs. 12-16)

- Develop a plan to de-stigmatize support services
- Provide a welcoming environment and "warm hand-offs" to resources
- Hire learning specialists
- Provide adequate accommodations for veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Hire experienced and trained counselors
- Provide mentors
- Establish support groups
- Invest in hiring and/or training support groups

- Provide a drop-in center
- Have multiple entry points to group resources
- Establish a central information resource
- Develop and implement a comprehensive student veterans orientation

However, once these objectives are achieved, there are other ways in which institutions of higher education can ease the veteran student's transition and provide an environment in which they can thrive. This article will expand upon some of these suggestions and provide ideas for institutions to go above and beyond.

Enlisting and empowering a supportive team

Since veterans are used to team operations which rely heavily on trust and dependability, having a constant source of support that truly understands their culture is a key component of a program's success. Ideally, the supportive team should include high-level administrators, contacts across campus departments and community organizations, and their peers.

Veteran programs across the country have seen an expansion in the number of staff members grow along with their population of veterans (McBain et al., 2012). While it is not necessary to employ only veterans in this office, having at least one veteran is ideal (Whitley et al., 2013). When hiring subsequent staff members, institutions should consider embedding a counselor into the team. For instance, at John Carroll University, the Veterans Affairs office has two full-time staff members: one is a retired Army officer with 20 years of military experience, and the other is a licensed counselor (civilian) with experience in career counseling and military transitions. By compiling the team in this way, objective numbers 1, 5, 9, 10, and 11 have each been accomplished: de-stigmatized support services, hired experienced counselors, and created a drop-in center with multiple points of entry which serves as a central point of information. Having a trained counselor on staff allows trust and rapport to be developed from day one as a part of a concerted effort to de-stigmatize support services. Since there is a professional relationship with the student veterans from the first semester onward, they are not concerned about *being seen* as they come to the counselor's office. The Veterans Affairs office is the central source for all their vital information and the students can (and do) drop in to the office whenever the need arises, or just to say *hi*. Lang et al. (2013) correctly described this strategy as an effective method to help "*reduce the bureaucratic obfuscation that may arise by bridging the gap between the structured design of the military and the more amorphous campus environment*" (p. 8).

There is also a growing trend for cooperation between neighboring colleges and universities to assist student veterans in a smooth transition between institutions. For example, in the Cleveland area, there is a consortium which includes four-year schools, community colleges, and both public and private institutions. Particularly for community colleges, it is beneficial to have strong contacts with the four-year institutions in the area so there can be a warm hand-off for those students continuing on to complete a bachelor's degree. There are similar networks in Michigan and New Jersey as well.

It is recommended that higher-level administrators be enlisted to help create and refine policies that specifically target the unique components of veterans in higher education (Hamrick et al., 2013). These efforts can be done as an organized advisory committee, or function within the established practices and protocols at an institution. These administrators can work with the veterans team to outline policies for streamlining enrollment, maximizing transfer credits (from other institutions, military transcripts, CLEP tests, and professional experiences), participating in the VA Yellow Ribbon program (for private schools), navigating in-state tuition costs (for public schools), leaving and returning for active duty/drill time, and creating an understanding with the financial aid office about late VA payments (McBain et al., 2012). If possible, granting student veterans priority registration is recommended (Lang et al., 2013) because their schedules are not as flexible as the traditionally-aged student due to personal, family, or work obligations.

Although the HSC report recommends trained counselors (Whitley et al., 2013), John Carroll University expands that recommendation beyond mental health counseling to other forms of counseling including academic, financial, and VA benefits. Particularly since financial challenges can be immediately and significantly impactful, working with the certifying official, registrar, bursar, and office of financial aid is crucial. It is recommended that these key entities be specially trained on the intricate policies of the G.I. Bill, and how certain decisions may financially affect the student veteran. At John Carroll, this step is taken further by incorporating proactive course-change counseling. Any time a student veteran wishes to make a significant change to their registration load, they are fully made aware of the consequences and available alternatives before making a choice that could result in a large debt from the VA. Additionally, the supportive administration allows John Carroll to extend the option for interest-free micro loans to assist student veterans in covering late book stipends or BAH (basic allowance for housing from the VA) payments. The financial resources provided are not limited to campus-based sources.

Since the plethora of benefits and opportunities afforded to veterans through the VA and other veteran service organizations is quite extensive, it is helpful to create partnerships with external agents to increase communication about these services. Cooperation with agencies at the federal, state, and local community level can be harnessed to provide resources on career development, job fairs, financial education, VA benefits counseling, and family support services, to name a few. For larger institutions, representatives from these organizations are usually willing to facilitate workshops. For smaller colleges/universities, it may be necessary to partner with neighboring institutions to increase participation.

Transition services

A great deal of literature on student veterans highly emphasizes the difficulty of transitioning from the military to academics. Each military branch provides some sort of Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to service members as they are separating; however, these programs have varied widely in their implementation and how they are received by the service member. A large number of veterans are still surprised by how difficult the transition to civilian life is, and only 36% of veterans in one study indicated that this adjustment was *easy* (Prudential Financial, 2012). Although the Department of Defense has recently taken great strides to re-vamp the TAP curriculum into a new Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success) program, recently separated veterans can still benefit greatly from structured transition services within higher education to alleviate social acculturation challenges. The structured transition services within John Carroll University incorporate several specific components. One of the most effective tools to assist in their transition is peer support (Lang et al., 2013). The HSC report recommendation list includes assistance from mentors and support groups (Whitley et al., 2013). In order to formalize and further develop the leadership that was naturally emerging in the student veterans group at John Carroll, a formalized peer mentor program was created and a team leader was trained to work with the first-semester students. Each week, the team leader meets with the members of the new cohort to ensure that they have a peer to talk to, a resource to answer questions, and a mentor to guide them through what will likely be the most difficult semester of their transition. The team leader reports back to the Assistant Director of Veterans Affairs on the number of peer mentor meetings, any urgent or developing issues, and any suggestions for workshops or resources needed. Otherwise, the team leader maintains the trust and confidentiality of his/her peers. This model incorporates the five key ingredients of an effective peer mentor program: social support, experiential knowledge, trust, confidentiality, and easy access (Money et al., 2011). The students meet their team leader on their first day on campus, during the veterans welcome orientation.

Following orientation, an additional tool to continue the transition support is a version of a veteran-only course during their first semester. At many colleges and universities, this takes the place of a first year seminar type class and serves as an excellent continuation of the orientation session (Hamrick et al., 2013). At John Carroll, it takes the form of a 1 credit-hour course which focuses on transitioning and has several objectives:

1. Connecting student veterans with their peers. They discuss their shared experiences both within the military, and now within the classroom setting.
2. Teach practical and necessary skills to be successful in higher education, including how to ask questions of their professors, manage their time, and study for classes.
3. Begin career planning so that they can choose an appropriate major and plan a career path.

The book that is used at John Carroll, *The Strategic Student: Veteran's Edition* (Cass, 2012), was authored by a veteran who now works in higher education, and teaches lessons that are crucial to their success. Each reading section and corresponding assignments are practical ways for the student to develop quality academic and personal habits. The class spends time discussing the prevalence and realities of post combat stress, resilience, post-traumatic growth, and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, the Prudential Report on veterans' employment challenges (2012) indicates that 80% of veterans are most concerned about finding a job that is meaningful to them, so the transition class encourages vocational discernment during the initial semester and continues until an ideal career path is identified. Since having a veteran teach or co-teach a class like this can be important for the students to believe in the lessons (Stein-McCormick, Osborn, Hayden, & Hoose, 2013), the team leader (serving as a teaching assistant) gives credence to the lessons being taught and encourages open dialogue about sensitive topics. A main component of the class is also to actively encourage the students to connect to academic resources such as tutoring, writing centers, and research assistance appointments, and to understand that utilizing these resources is not showing weakness. Rather, the class emphasizes that they are tools necessary to accomplish the mission of obtaining good grades and graduating.

This year, John Carroll was also included in a pilot program for an innovative new platform designed by a veteran specifically for veterans in college. *Uvize* is a web-based, peer mentoring site that is a cross between Facebook and LinkedIn. The unique component of *Uvize* is that the peer network is limited to other student veterans either within their home in-

stitution, or their regional area, and “create(s) a fast mentor network that can connect students with the right veteran classmate, mentor, or advisor when they need it” (Uvize, 2014). Veterans can post questions on any topic and receive an answer from a mentor any time of the day. They can also form sub-groups for academic or personal interests (e.g., engineering study group, wednesday morning work-out group). This tool would be especially helpful for larger campuses and community colleges where students are more likely to be commuters, and are less likely to come in regular contact with each other on campus. Having the web-based platform allows the supportive peer team to be accessible anywhere, any time. Institutions who are interested in the program should contact Uvize support about participation.

The transition support continues throughout the rest of their academic tenure by way of career and individual counseling; however, it is referred to as transition advising, since it always incorporates transitioning of some sort and is more palatable than referring to it as counseling. The transition advisor provides individual appointments to address any behavioral health concerns, paying particular attention to their impact on academic and career success. It has been well documented in the literature that effective counselors be competent in the cultural considerations of veteran students, as well as remain familiar with treatment strategies for PTSD, and have appropriate referral lists (Zinger & Cohen, 2010). Including career counseling and professional development is a crucial component to veterans’ success because both veterans and employers have cited concerns about translating military skills, gaps in requisite education, and adjustment to the civilian workforce (Prudential, 2013; Harrell & Berglass, 2012). At John Carroll, these concerns are specifically addressed during the orientation class, in transition advising sessions, and in a continuing series of workshops around academic advising, financial planning, and professional/career skills development. A concerted effort has also been made to develop relationships with local veteran-friendly employers to increase the opportunities for internships, professional networking, and position openings. Job fairs and employment opportunities are passed along from the partner organizations to the student veterans through the Veterans Department website, Uvize, and via personal communications.

Having a licensed counselor with career counseling experience on staff is very helpful for the students to be able to access these services on campus, at no charge, with flexible scheduling, and from a trusted member of the veterans’ team. If the student is working through a physical or behavioral health challenge, they are also encouraged to register for accommodations through the school’s Office for Students with Disabili-

ties. However, this last step tends to be highly under-utilized because of the stigma associated with the word disability (Hamrick et al., 2013). To overcome this challenge, it is recommended that professionals leverage the rapport developed to address veterans' apprehensions and ask that they trust that accommodations can dramatically improve their ability to achieve their academic and professional goals. When possible, this conversation can also be delivered by the team leader.

Other support services that could be considered to further develop a welcoming environment on campus include faculty awareness training, veterans meet and greet with department chairs (Lang et al., 2013), and creating veteran-friendly courses. Supportive faculty can create new class sections (or modify existing models) to incorporate topics that may be more interesting to today's veterans. For example, a political science class which explores international security and insurgency, or a history class that focuses on religious conflicts in the Middle East. By incorporating relevant topics and a professor who appreciates the non-traditional student needs, veterans may find these classes to be more enjoyable and meaningful to their transition.

Conclusion

While it is understood that student veterans are the epitome of non-traditional students, the services provided to them in higher education must also be outside of the standard operating procedure. Institutions that can find innovative and efficient solutions to the challenges being faced by their veterans will likely see a great increase in their success. Since a veteran's academic success may lead to greater employment opportunities and an overall positive transition back to civilian life, ask yourself if your institution is doing all it can for its student veterans.

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Chapter 18

FACILITATING VETERANS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS: Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) Initiative

by Shannon E. McCaslin, Jessica Thiede, Trisha Vinatieri, Holly Passi, Kristin Bull Lyon, D. Aaron Ahern, Keith Armstrong, and Kai Chitaphong

Abstract

Unprecedented numbers of veterans are enrolling in higher education programs after the passing of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008, a significant percentage of whom could benefit from additional support in their transition from military to academic life. Given this need, there is an imperative to forge partnerships between Federal and community organizations and institutions. Partnerships with college and university campuses provide an opportunity to create community collaboration, to overcome barriers to care, and ultimately, to provide convenient services and resources to support the transition from military service to the college campus. In 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs implemented the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) initiative. VITAL increases access to resources and treatment through on-campus clinical services and establishing connections between VA Medical Centers and academic settings. This article describes potential challenges and needs of military service members transitioning to the college setting and how the VITAL initiative is addressing them. Increasing numbers of Veterans are pursuing higher education. In fiscal year 2012, almost 1 million Veterans and military Service members attended school using VA educational benefits (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012). Post 9/11 recipients comprised 68 per cent of beneficiaries. An additional 59,387 Veterans enrolled in college or vocational training through the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) program (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012). Total enrollment, including both Veterans and civilians, in degree granting postsecondary institutions was reported to be 20.6 million (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Based on these reports, Veterans and Service members constitute approximately 5% of all U.S. postsecondary students. This likely underestimates the total number of Veterans and Service members enrolled in higher education institutions, as many do

not utilize VA educational benefits and may attend school utilizing tuition assistance programs or other financial means and do not divulge Veteran or Service Member status. The number of Veterans attending colleges and universities is likely to increase as current military conflicts wind down and the military continues to downsize.

While Veterans and military Service members arrive on campus with a wealth of knowledge, strengths, and experiences typically not seen within the traditional student population, they may also arrive with unique challenges. Many student Veterans report difficulty adjusting to school after deployment, difficulty managing military versus civilian roles and identity, difficulty relating to non-Veterans, and difficulty managing their educational benefits (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza Mitchell, 2009; Cook & Kim, 2009; Rumann & Hamrick, 2009, 2010). In addition to transitional stressors, a significant number also experience mental health challenges, with depression and PTSD being the most frequently reported (Ackerman et al., 2009; Bryan, Bryan, Hinkson, Bichrest, & Ahern, 2014; Rudd, Goulding, & Bryan, 2011; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010; Vance & Miller, 2009). Academic settings may not be fully equipped to aid student Veterans transitioning to academia. Faculty, staff, and administrators may have limited exposure to military culture, putting them at a disadvantage in terms of understanding and serving student Veterans' needs (Rumann & Hamrick, 2009). This is reflected in student Veteran reports of feeling that their experiences are not understood by faculty (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008). Increasing awareness of these education and service gaps has triggered calls for improved mental health and support services for student Veterans on campus (Ackerman et al., 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently highlighted the importance of collaboration among VA, Veterans, and community partners, such as colleges and universities, in order to best serve Veterans' needs (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2014).

Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) is a VA initiative developed in response to the growing awareness of student Veteran needs. VITAL's mission is to support student Veterans' academic success by partnering with academic institutions. Broadly, VITAL focuses on educating student Veterans about their eligibility for healthcare and resources, providing on-site mental health and social work services, and increasing awareness among campus faculty and staff. This article will provide background on the potential challenges of student Veterans and ways in which VA Medical Centers are partnering with campus faculty, staff, and students to address these needs.

Potential Challenges for Student Veterans

Transition from military culture to the college setting.

Military culture consists of a unique collection of beliefs, practices, rituals, experiences, and power hierarchies that distinguish it from civilian culture (Kuehner, 2013). There is a particular “warrior ethos” within military culture that values strength, resilience, courage, and personal sacrifice for the sake of the group (Bryan & Morrow, 2011). These values are imparted to military personnel beginning in basic training and are reinforced throughout one’s military career. Self-reliance, the ability to overcome in the face of obstacles, stressors, and injuries, emotional control, and respect for authority are also highly valued (Bryan & Morrow, 2011; Kuehner, 2013). Military culture emphasizes close in-group bonding (Bryan & Morrow, 2011), and these bonds are often strengthened through group training activities in which the group succeeds or fails based on collective effort. They are further reinforced in combat situations in which service members must rely on each other for survival in the face of a hostile, unfamiliar enemy.

Given Veterans’ closely held values around competence, resilience, self-reliance, and in-group identification, they are also disinclined to seek help if academic problems arise. Help-seeking is generally incongruent with the warrior ethos and may be perceived as an admission of weakness (Lighthall, 2012). This can be complicated by the fact that potential sources of assistance (e.g., professors, counseling center staff) may be viewed with mistrust and assumed to be unable to understand the Veteran experience. While many Veterans navigate the transition to the academic setting successfully and often excel in this environment (Cate, 2014), for Veterans who struggle, the disinclination to seek assistance can hinder their potential for academic success.

While elements of military culture can and often do instill confidence, discipline, and loyalty in Service members, some aspects of military culture and experience can create challenges for Service members as they attempt to re-acclimate to the civilian setting, and to academic life in particular. When stepping onto campus, Veterans are separated from their group of trusted and battle-tested comrades. Veterans also tend to be older than traditionally-aged college students (Rudd et al., 2011). In the academic setting, they may have difficulty interacting with younger peers, who may have different perspectives and experiences (Lighthall, 2012). Furthermore, Veterans may interact with faculty and staff who lack awareness of the responsibilities and stressors Service members often experience, including family and work commitments, ongoing military obligations, financial pressure, or medical and psychological conditions, all of which may impact classroom attendance and performance

(Rudd et al., 2011).

Student Veterans may be faced with negative stereotypes when returning to academia (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010). For example, they often report exposure to insensitive or uninformed comments and questions about their military service by civilians (e.g., “Did you kill anyone over there?”) and may be exposed to anti-military or uninformed opinions on campus or in the classroom. Unchecked stereotyping or anti-military sentiment can breed mistrust between student Veterans and civilian faculty, staff, and students, resulting in disengagement in the campus community and the limiting of social interactions to Veteran or military Service members only.

Mental health and rehabilitation challenges.

Addressing the multifaceted medical, rehabilitation, psychological, and social needs of student Veterans is paramount to supporting the academic endeavors of this population. Veterans who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq have often endured multiple physical and psychological stressors. These include multiple and extended deployments, dangerous methods of warfare (e.g., improvised explosive devices (IEDs), mortars, and rocket propelled grenades), and environmental exposures (e.g., sand and dust particles, infectious disease, and toxic embedded fragments). The combination of these factors can result in conditions such as back, neck, and knee pain, injuries to multiple body parts and organ systems, chronic illnesses, traumatic brain injuries, psychological/psychiatric comorbidity, and interpersonal impairment.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance use disorders (SUDs), and depression are among the most common mental health concerns among Service members who have served in combat (Hoge, Auchterlonie, & Milliken, 2006; Lapierre, Schwegler, & Labauve, 2007; Milliken, Auchterlonie, & Hoge, 2007; Schell & Marshall, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). Among Veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq who received care from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) between 2001 and 2005, nearly one-third were diagnosed with mental health and/or psychosocial problems and one-fifth were diagnosed with a SUD (Seal, Bertenthal, Miner, Sen, & Marmar, 2007).

Mental and physical health conditions can impact performance in the classroom in a number of ways, including difficulties with sustained attention, learning, and memory; increased negative affect and tension; hypervigilance and hyperarousal; sleep problems resulting in delayed attendance, absenteeism and fatigue; visual problems and sensitivity to light; hearing difficulty and tinnitus; and difficulty sitting for long

periods of time due to chronic pain. Without adequate intervention, these concerns can negatively impact academic outcomes.

Barriers to Care

Barriers to seeking medical and mental health care include mental health stigma and logistical barriers. Veterans have reported greater stigma related to help-seeking than non-military college students (Britt et al., 2008). Further, in a sample of Veterans returning from deployment in Afghanistan and Iraq, only 23-40% of those who screened positive for a mental health disorder sought mental health care, lower rates than seen in the general civilian population. In addition, those participants who screened positive for mental health issues were twice as likely as their peers to be concerned about stigmatization and other barriers (Hoge et al., 2004).

Logistical barriers to care are also important to address, as they directly impact likelihood of seeking care. Such barriers include lack of awareness of available services, where or/how to access them, transportation availability, scheduling (e.g., the ability to take leave from work or school for an appointment), and lack of financial resources for care (Britt et al., 2008). VITAL programs seek to overcome barriers to care through providing outreach, education, and on-campus services.

Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership Program (VITAL)

The VITAL Initiative is a program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) that aims to increase accessibility to VA and campus services to support academic success among student Veterans. There are currently 21 VHA administered VITAL Initiative sites which collaborate with over 105 campuses. The services provided at each campus include those that are integral to VITAL's overall mission, as well as those that address the unique needs of each campus served.

The mission of VITAL is to provide world-class healthcare and improve the overall mental health of Veterans, while supporting their successful integration into college and university campuses through: 1) promoting positive cohesion between Veterans and the entire learning community through campus and community clinical education and training, 2) seamless access to VA healthcare services and on-campus clinical counseling, and 3) providing efficient care coordination of all available services. Other functions of VITAL that fall under the overall mission include raising awareness of VHA health care benefits and facilitating VHA enrollment (including fostering linkages to local VA specialty medical and mental health care); providing case management and consultation services on-campus; coordinating with on-campus and community ser-

vices and programs to ensure accessibility to Veteran-sensitive services; and educating the campus community about challenges facing student Veterans and their potential impact on academic performance, as well as how to work more effectively with student Veterans. With the goal of increasing points of access to the VA and within the university, the VITAL program has brought together an integrated network of VA clinics and interdisciplinary treatment teams, campus allied professionals, and community partners to broaden support and minimize obstacles that impede care.

Enrollment and Engagement in VA Healthcare

Facilitating greater access to VA services and resources is a high priority for the VITAL program. As such, VITAL provides healthcare enrollment services at campus sites. Student Veterans are provided education on VA eligibility, services, and resources, and are assisted through the process of healthcare enrollment. The collaboration between VITAL programs and specialized VA clinics (e.g., Veterans who have served in Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF), Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and New Dawn (OND); pain management, PTSD) also increases seamless access, providing an easy transition from the campus to specialized programs located within the VA medical center.

In addition to collaboration with VA clinics, VITAL employs creative engagement techniques to increase knowledge and access of VA services and resources among the student Veteran population. Outreach events, such as benefits fairs and information booths at student orientations offer students access to VHA and VBA experts on Veteran services and benefits. VITAL staff have also coordinated education fairs, where academic institutions throughout the region are brought together to offer information on respective programs. Sporting and recognition events, graduation ceremonies, Student Veterans of America (SVA) and Veteran National Fraternity events, Veterans Day and Memorial Day Events have all been used to successfully engage Veterans. VITAL programs have also employed peer-to-peer engagement among student Veterans, as these interactions serve as opportunities for student Veterans to learn more about benefits available to them. Given the barriers to care discussed previously, innovative engagement strategies are essential to successfully engage and assist student Veterans.

Coordination of Care with Campus Services

VITAL staff establishes collaborative relationships with campus personnel and programs in order to assist campus efforts in supporting student Veterans. As a collaborative partner, VITAL services are provided in a manner that is consistent with university and college bylaws and man-

dates that govern programming (e.g., Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), campus safety and emergency preparedness plans, etc.). VITAL offers unique resources and expertise to academic systems in the area of mental health, care coordination, education, and benefits. VITAL program staff routinely works with campus support services such as counseling centers, student health, and disability services to shape successful outreach and provide necessary services for student Veterans (VITAL National Clinical Committee, 2014). Partnering with allied professionals and those with vested interest, is mutually beneficial and ensures congruent practice between VITAL and the academic institution.

Engagement with Student Veteran Organizations

As previously noted, the experience of military service makes those who have served in the armed forces a unique group within the general population, and a distinct group on college campuses. VITAL's collaboration with student Veteran organizations is beneficial to the student Veterans, academic institutions, and VHA. Importantly, these groups have similar goals, which involve promoting the success and well-being of student Veterans. Alliances formed between VITAL and student Veteran groups promote utility of VHA and VITAL services through individual testimonials, helping to de-stigmatize help-seeking among their peers. Student Veterans' contribution to the campus community and VITAL program affords opportunities to dispel myths and stereotypes and builds greater understanding of the Veteran experience.

Of the twenty-one VITAL sites, nearly all sites are engaged with Veterans' groups on-campus and work closely with student Veterans on a variety of common goals (VITAL National Clinical Committee, 2014). These partnerships connect VITAL mental health providers with individual Veterans for support, in addition to supporting the voice of the student Veteran population on campus and VITAL program development. Through working closely with student Veteran organizations, VITAL is also better able to assist in recruiting Veterans for focus groups, surveys, community service activities, and campus events, which helps improve the delivery of services to Veterans.

These partnerships manifest differently depending on the institutional culture and needs at each campus. For example, at one VITAL site partnerships have been formed with SVA, Omega Delta Sigma, and several informal Student Veteran Organizations across seven academic institutions. Student Veterans in these organizations have participated in focus groups, the distribution and collection of surveys, and have been given the opportunity to speak to advisory boards and key academic leaders in

Veteran program development. These student Veterans have also assisted with the organization of VHA sponsored events on campus and programming related to Veterans events on campus.

Some VITAL sites routinely involve students in the planning and execution of staff and faculty trainings on Veterans issues. At one site, the Veterans co-present with the VITAL psychologist and serve as experts in the role of teaching staff and faculty about military culture and transitions from the military to the university. The presentations serve as an outlet for Veterans to articulate their lived experiences, as well as to convey experiences to faculty and staff. In addition, with support from VITAL staff and the Office of Veterans Affairs on campus, student Veterans proposed and advocated for the establishment of a Veterans Resource Center on campus, a project that was approved and funded. As illustrated through this example, the reciprocal relationship between student Veteran organizations, VITAL, and academia offers a unique opportunity to build trust with Veterans and support the expression of their leadership and ingenuity within the institution.

Outreach to Student Veterans, Faculty, Staff, and Campus Services
VHA has received increasing demands for training from academic institutions and the community to better understand military Service members' experiences. In February of 2012, the VITAL Initiative formed a committee of experts comprised of former Service members, psychologists, and social workers, with the goal of developing standardized education materials for faculty and staff. Education of, and dialogue with, instructors regarding Veteran-specific issues improves understanding, opens up communication, and leads to effective interactions between instructors and student Veterans in the classroom. Further, basic knowledge about the values and experiences of student Veterans can enrich the learning environment, and promote help-seeking among the Veteran population.

Educating staff and faculty is an essential component of VITAL, as advisors and faculty members are likely to be the first to notice when problems arise for a Veteran. Faculty and staff are part of the natural environment of the university, and as such, are invaluable partners in de-stigmatizing help-seeking behavior by encouraging Veterans to seek assistance as problems arise, rather than waiting until issues have become unmanageable. Through trainings, in-services, and online resources, VITAL staff educates administration, faculty, and staff about military culture, as well as the strengths and potential challenges facing student Veterans. The program also provides consultation to campus services (e.g., writing centers, academic advising, disability services, career center) to

ensure that the services being offered address the unique needs of this population. Given the importance of mentoring on retention, academic achievement, and career success, several VITAL programs have also created faculty mentoring programs for student Veterans (Wallace, Abel, & Ropers-Huilman, 2000). The education and consultation services offered by VITAL programs promote a “Veteran-friendly” campus that eases the transition from military to civilian life and thus, academic success (Ackerman et al., 2009).

VITAL engages with potential academic partners in a number of ways including new faculty/staff orientations; department led “lunch & learn” sessions and featured “talks”; continuing education forums; and tenure-track requirement fulfillment for community engagement. These forums are mutually advantageous as desired information about the Veteran population is shared, and opportunities for concerted care of student Veterans are recognized. The wealth of resources that exists in both VA and partnering academic institutions offers immense opportunity to develop student Veteran programs and care coordination that exemplify best-practice standards, and provide the comprehensive care Veterans deserve.

Outreach and Education to Non-student Veterans and Groups on Campus

Implicit marginalization (e.g., lack of Veteran-specific services) and explicit marginalization (e.g., anti-military comments made by faculty or staff) undermine the academic success and degree completion by disrupting the student Veteran’s engagement in the classroom and larger college community (Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011). Education of, and collaboration with, non-Veteran student groups minimizes stigma and marginalization, allowing student Veterans to integrate into the campus community. At one university, VITAL collaborated with the Women’s Resource Center, Student Health Center, and student organizations to present *Invisible War*, a documentary about military sexual trauma. Following the showing, students, faculty, and administrators shared their reactions to the film, their interest in learning more about Veterans, and their support for student Veterans on campus. Such collaborations not only afford student Veterans the opportunity to educate the campus community about Veteran-specific topics, but also to connect with other students based on those experiences shared across student populations.

Direct Mental Health and Social Work Services

One of VITAL’s core components is the direct provision of clinical services to student Veterans on campus. VITAL sites provide various services that are tailored to the unique needs of their partnering campuses. For example, at one VITAL site psychiatry services are provided to student Veterans on campus, eliminating the treatment barrier of time

and travel (McCaslin, Leach, Herbst, & Armstrong, 2013). Most VITAL sites offer psychotherapy (73%) and more than half focus on delivery of evidence-based therapies implemented by VHA nationally (58%; e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), prolonged exposure (PE), and cognitive processing therapy (CPT); VITAL Survey, 2014). Case management services, including connecting student Veterans with VA and non-VA resources and ensuring follow-up for additional care, are provided by most sites (89.5%; VITAL National Clinical Committee, 2014). Family therapy and couples counseling is offered by VITAL on some college campuses (42.1%), while others focus more on the provision of individual and group treatment (36.8%).

Peer Support and Specialists

Peer mentoring is another service provided by many, but not all, VITAL sites. Whether this is provided informally or through a formal mechanism, peer mentoring is associated with treatment engagement, access to services, and increased sense of hope (Chinman, Salzer, & O'Brien-Mazza, 2012). The University of Michigan Depression Center and Department of Psychiatry and the VITAL Initiative have partnered to conduct a pilot study of the Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE) Program (www.paveoncampus.org), a peer support program in which established student Veterans connect with incoming student Veterans to assist in transitioning to college life. Other VITAL sites have established similar peer mentoring programs to help student Veterans navigate the challenges faced when transitioning from military to academic life.

Summary

Student Veterans are an asset to academic settings. Their military background and experience often translates into a greater sense of responsibility and goal orientation in the classroom. A recent investigation of postsecondary completion rates among Veterans utilizing VA education benefits found that the majority of Veterans (51.7%) earned a postsecondary degree or certificate (Cate, 2014). This is despite unique challenges some student Veterans face including military obligations that may be disruptive to educational progress and service-connected physical and mental health disabilities. Additionally, student Veterans are more likely to be married and balancing family responsibilities with employment and academic responsibilities. VITAL programs provide the opportunity for student Veterans to connect to resources and healthcare and can serve a critical role in supporting the academic success for those who need additional services and support.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has demonstrated an investment in

community connections (e.g., community outreach to OEF/OIF/OND Veterans, homeless Veterans, community programs such as Veterans Justice Outreach; VJO). VITAL extends services into the community in a new and exciting way. By providing both mental health and social work services on campus and working collaboratively with colleges and universities as well as community providers, VITAL is creating new linkages in developing “wrap around” type services for student Veterans in the community. In order for student Veterans to meet their full potential, they not only need the expertise that the VA has to offer, but they also need the expertise that community agencies can provide. Strong relationships between the VA and the community, such as those made through VITAL, can be tremendously beneficial to Veterans. While academic institutions benefit from the experience and strengths that student Veterans bring to the college campus, our entire community benefits when Veterans are able to succeed both academically and in their life goals.

VITAL Site Illustration

Coordination of Mental Health and Medical Care for Student Veterans who served in Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF), Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and New Dawn (OND) Once veterans make contact with VITAL at the university, they are connected with a comprehensive array of services at the local VA Medical Center. To accomplish seamless care coordination, the VITAL site works closely with specialized VA clinics including the New Patient Services Division, the OEF/OIF/OND Clinic, and Mobile Outreach (which consists of a fully equipped medical vehicle with two exam rooms and a medical team including a Nurse Practitioner, LPN and Social Work Case Manager, and the VITAL psychologist). Services offered include VA Enrollment (i.e., verifying eligibility for VA services and establishing new Veterans into the VA Medical Center), Vesting Exams (i.e., initial physicals), and Wellness Clinics (i.e., screening for mental health conditions, blood pressure checks, and flu shots) on campus. These events are coordinated in collaboration with the VA Medical Center and VITAL academic partners to encourage new patient enrollment in VA, minimize barriers of travel and time in accessing care, and facilitate a spirit of collaborative care and community support. In turn, through VITAL outreach, all student veterans are also encouraged to take advantage of services offered through OEF/OIF/OND Post-Deployment Clinics. OEF/OIF/OND Clinics are “one-stop-shops,” which house services such as case management, psychiatry, individual and group psychotherapy, and primary care for Veterans that have served in support of these operations.

The VITAL site provides a seamless transition from initial contact with a new student Veteran to the initial appointment in the OEF/OIF/OND

clinic or new patient primary care clinic. Initial services for new patients include: 1) preliminary blood work, baseline EKG, and X-rays; 2) screens for PTSD, MST, Depression, Alcohol Use and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); 3) examination by a primary care provider who screens for combat related conditions; 4) screening by the mental health clinician to establish a baseline and follow-up care for mental health concerns; and 5) case management evaluation to determine psychosocial stressors and the need for ongoing services. The Veteran is then given a same-day referral to specialty clinics (e.g., PTSD, SUD, TBI, etc.) for second level evaluations and treatment. These screenings are standard for any new VA patient and can serve to elucidate medical or mental health conditions that could negatively affect academic performance. This allows providers to identify treatment plans and recommendations that can help veterans adapt and overcome challenges in the classroom, thus enhancing veterans' potential for academic success.

Online VA resources

VHA has developed internet tools and mobile applications that can support campus faculty and staff. The VA Campus Toolkit provides information and resources intended for campus faculty and staff who are interested in learning more about supporting student Veterans (www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/index.asp). The Community Provider Toolkit is intended for mental health providers within the community such as counselors located on the college campus (www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders). This toolkit provides a broad range of information including how to connect Veterans with VA services and resources, military culture, and mental health and wellness. The VA has also developed a number of mobile applications, some of which are intended for use by mental health providers and others intended for use by Veterans (<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/materials/apps/index.asp>). Find the VITAL site and contact information for VITAL staff nearest to you at: <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/vital.asp>

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Chapter 19

THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL COACHING and RESUME WRITING in SUCCESSFUL VETERAN TRANSITIONS

by Kathryn Troutman and John Gagnon

Abstract

The authors contend that there are substantial benefits to hands-on, individualized, professional assistance to veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce. Reviewing the experiences of a cohort of Navy veterans with aspirations to pursue civilian careers in the federal government or government contracting services, the authors explore what happened when cohort members received professional assistance. In presenting this group's results, the authors seek to begin a discussion – and encourage further study – about the right methods and best approaches to helping veterans transition into rewarding civilian careers.

Introduction

There is little question that many veterans face daunting prospects upon transitioning out of their military careers and into the search for new beginnings in the civilian job market. Some seek professional positions, while others are poorly equipped – largely due to academic deficiencies – to pursue professional employment. Regardless of preparedness, any military separation comes with the possibility of unemployment, which has been linked to suicide within the veteran community (Kramer, 2011). With post-9/11 era veteran unemployment rates hovering near the double-digits (Altman, 2014; Maze, 2013; Mutikani, 2014), the question of improving veterans' tools to successfully compete for jobs becomes paramount.

While veterans enjoy a range of benefits, including the GI Bill, training assistance, and disability aid (Congressional Research Service, 2014), most still face significant obstacles to obtaining civilian employment. One such obstacle is the lack of support for veterans in developing individualized job search strategies, effective resumes, and knowledge regarding job application processes. Due to the lack of assistance in these areas of professional development, many, if not most, veterans rely on a plethora of free information about job search strategies, resume

writing, and job application processes. While some assistance is available at One-Stop Centers and college career centers, much of the advice veterans rely upon for their post-military job searches is hands-off, non-individualized, and non-professional (e.g., Internet blog posts, generalized resume templates, web-based pre-packaged tips and toolkits). Despite the recognized appeal of free job search information – it is, after all, free and accessible – we contend that hands-on, individualized, professional assistance in making the transition to the civilian workforce provides a substantial benefit to veterans. Acquiring professional guidance can often be a “game-changer” for veterans who, as a group, tend to be poorly prepared for engaging in a non-military job search. This paper reviews the experiences of a cohort of Navy veterans with aspirations to pursue civilian careers in the federal government or government contracting services and what happened when they received professional assistance. While many veterans do not possess such clear goals, this group’s results deliver some insight into what specifically worked for this population. In exploring this group’s results, we seek to begin a discussion – and encourage further study – about the right methods to keep veterans out of unemployment lines, out of the VA homeless programs, and help move them into rewarding, quality careers.

Veteran Transitions: Can Professional Assistance Make a Difference?

This study involved a contract by a professional resume writing and career coaching service through the US Navy Fleet and Family Support Service in Naples, Italy in 2012. The service was contracted to professionally assist a group of veterans transitioning out of military service through Executive Review Board early separations, reductions-in-force, and self-selected retirement. The group was comprised of forty-one veterans who possessed an average of 14 years of military experience, many of whom were either higher-ranked enlisted personnel or commissioned officers. None of the cohort members had previously written a resume, and each was unprepared for engaging in a non-military job search. Each member of the cohort desired a new civilian career – with strong preference for federal civilian employment. Unlike the majority of their peers, this cohort, due to the contract, enjoyed the benefit of professional career coaching, resume writing, and the hands-on development of targeted job search strategies (Federal Career Training Institute, 2014). In the following, we explore how professional coaching and resume writing improved the tools these veterans were able to wield in their search for civilian employment.

Study Overview

The service initiated with nine 2-hour long in-person, small group training sessions on conducting federal job searches, using www.usajobs.gov.

gov, and general guidance on crafting employment strategies. Following the in-person sessions, webinar-based trainings were offered to cover additional professionalization and job search topics, such as translating military experience into civilian language, drafting effective cover letters, and successful interviewing techniques. In addition to the live training and webinars, each cohort member received five hours of individualized research, writing, and coaching support for the resume and job search. Each cohort member was required to complete a “Federal Resume Assessment” containing information on their military background and expectations for a civilian position, including salary, geographic location, and military separation date. Once the assessments were completed, cohort members were assigned to professional writers/coaches, who conducted an individualized job market analysis and in-depth interviews designed to analyze qualifications, skills, experience, training, and education. Upon analyzing the responses to interview questions, the writers/coaches delivered specific, individualized “target position” recommendations to each cohort member based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) occupational standards. Once the analysis and recommendation phase concluded, writers/coaches began working with cohort members to draft resumes targeted to their recommended occupational series. This collaborative process placed weight on the professional expertise offered by the writers/coaches and on personal input from the cohort members. Resume drafts highlighted individual qualifications, while eliminating military-speak, and translated skills and knowledge acquired during military service into targeted, civilian-friendly language.

In a survey of the cohort conducted three months after the service’s conclusion, all forty-one cohort members were contacted. Responses were obtained from twenty-six members of the cohort who provided information about the results of their job searches (Federal Career Training Institute, 2014). Of the twenty-six cohort members:

- Eleven (11) were hired into quality career positions with salaries and benefits;
- Ten (10) received interviews or job offers that they turned down;
- Four (4) decided to continue their military service;
- One (1) went to college.
- Positions obtained included: Physical Security Specialist, Senior Technician, Occupational Safety Specialist, Information Technology Specialist, Investigator (Inspector General), Logistician, Management Operations Representative, Process Server, IT Security Professional. It is worth noting that none of the respondents indicated a status of being unemployed. The largely positive outcomes for cohort members – within a mere three-month time period – could demonstrate that professional assistance in developing job search strategies and

targeted resumes may provide substantial value-added for military veterans seeking to transition into the civilian workforce. While this population is too limited – a snapshot, if you will – to draw across-the-board conclusions, the outcomes can be a useful launching pad for a discussion about best practices in military-to-civilian transitions.

Conclusion

Based on our experiences in working with this population of Navy veterans, we believe that professional assistance positively impacted the job search results of cohort members. At the time the service began, none of the cohort members had previously written a resume and each was unprepared for engaging in a non-military job search. The service – which included in-person and online coaching and strategy development, personal interviews, job market analyses, individualized job target recommendations, and professional-level writing – seemed to significantly improve the preparedness of cohort members for engaging in a civilian job search. As such, we believe that this multi-pronged, hands-on, professionally driven approach possesses significant strengths in preparing veterans for the civilian job market.

Further, we believe that more in-depth study – with substantially larger sample sizes crossing all military branches, ranks, and types of military experience – is required to be able to make statistically viable claims, but we see this as a starting point in the conversation. We acknowledge that the data in this paper is only a snapshot, and further, that drawing broad conclusions based on a single, informal study of limited size is questionable. In showing specific results for a specific population, we hope to begin a discussion and encourage further study about the right methods to keep veterans out of unemployment lines and situations of underemployment. Our limited study forced us to begin considering veterans' needs and best practices, such as individualized assistance, that can be deployed in guiding them through the often frustrating journey to quality civilian careers. As such, we believe that professional coaching and writing services for veterans needs to become an area of serious inquiry and action.

Does professional assistance make a difference? We think it just might. Whether through contracted services, professional writing and coaching, or certified resume writers at One-Stop Centers, multiple venues of professional assistance exist that are useful to veterans. If professional assistance does make a difference, what can be done to help veterans get the help they need to find quality careers? In a market in which veterans continue to suffer from unemployment and underemployment, the potential benefit of professional coaching and writing services should not

be discounted. As such, we recommend additional study to determine the benefits of professional coaching and resume writing on veteran transitions.

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Chapter 20

MILITARY TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

by Dick Gaither

Preparing To Make The Move From The Military To A Highly Competitive Civilian Labor Market

The Times, They Are a' Changing

Whether you're a person who is exiting the military because of retirement, suffering through a base closure, are being riffed, or just leaving the military for personal reasons; if you want to work in today's labor market there are three irrefutable facts you have to wrap your brain around:

1. You've got to be ready to make some serious changes.
2. You're going to have to adapt to culture shock.
3. Finding work and making the transition back to a civilian labor force won't be easy for you or your family!

The purpose of this article is to give exiting military personnel a realistic look at some of the challenges they might have to overcome, decisions that need to be made, and job search tips they can use for smoother reentry into the civilian labor force.

Change And Transition Are Inevitable

Former armed services members, and their families, will need to make any number of life, economic, and vocational changes upon exiting the cloistered world of the military. How they deal with change is just one of the critical factors for career transition success. A few of the more observable changes include:

- a. Changes in how they think.
- b. Changes in how they behave.
- c. Changes in how they describe their job duties.
- d. Changes in their lifestyle.
- e. Changes in how they interact with others.
- f. Changes in their self-image.
- g. Changes in who manages their time.
- h. Changes in their levels of power and authority.
- i. Changes in work environments.
- j. Changes in their income and benefit levels.

But, the biggest change of all is the mind-set change needed to be competitive in the ever changing world of work. Veterans need to get ready to compete, in a very aggressive manner, against people who have had years of successful experience in the civilian labor force.

Biggest Challenge - The Competition Is Brutal

At any given time over 20,000,000 resumes are flying through space and cyberspace. It's also estimated that over 50 per cent of the workforce is either actively or passively looking for another job. While veterans served the country, the civilian competition built up networks and employment contacts. While veterans defended Americans against terrorist attacks, the civilians developed a cache of work experiences. While veterans put their lives on the line for the civilians they'll be competing against for jobs, those same civilians were developing relationships that could advance their careers. The message here is simple. Exiting veterans have got some catching up to do. Veterans seeking employment are going to have stiff competition from their civilian counterparts. As veterans we have to make the same commitment to a job search that we made to the country. We have to invest our hearts, souls, and energies to finding work if we're to regain the high ground and smooth the transition back into a civilian job market.

Culture Shock Isn't A Rock Group (Developing A New Mind-set)

Military culture gave us some standard guidelines against which to live a military life. These cultural guidelines have been set and effectively used by America's service men and women for hundreds of years. A chain of command was in place. Strategic decision-making came from the top and it was our job to get things done in a tactical manner. Excuses weren't allowed and quite often failure wasn't an option. In many instances, what we did had life and death consequences for ourselves and others. In the military culture everyone looked pretty much the same and acted the same. You wore the same clothing, had the same haircuts, exhibited the same pride in your step, and showed the same sparkle in your eyes from being able to say you served your country. There was the camaraderie of being able to share common experiences with people who had been in similar situations, had similar military occupations, or lived on the same military installations. In other words, the military culture was a known fact. This isn't going to be true in the world of work.

As an exiting veteran you will have to adapt to different working rules than you've been used to. No longer will your rank be observable, and there won't be any saluting as a sign of respect for that rank. In fact, some new coworkers and subordinates may even show some disrespect for *the new kid on the block*. Your new work mates might be resistant to your entry into the company and even work at odds against you as a way

to defend their own employment domain. You may not end up working with the latest and greatest state-of-the-art equipment...and have to make do with what you've got. You may find that pride in doing a good job isn't always found in the ranks of your coworkers or that loyalty and independent decision-making are not always rewarded.

Because of being new to the civilian labor force you may have to start at the bottom and earn your way back to the top. You might have to learn how to develop a more *give and take* mentality with your coworkers vs. being able to give them an order and wait for it to be executed. You'll probably be forced to deal with inconsistent company policies and procedures and need to develop a new set of social skills as a way to advance your career.

But, even considering all these potential *negative change and cultural factors* there is one thing we do know about America's military veterans: They Do Adjust, They Do Adapt, They Do Survive, And They Do Succeed! You should demonstrate this same *get the job done* attitude when making the transition from a military occupation to civilian one.

Discrimination Can Be A Problem

Like it or not, there are some people who don't *support our troops* and believe exiting military personnel can only do one thing...follow orders! Not fair? You bet! But in the labor market *fair* is where you go to for rides and to eat elephant ears at the end of a summer. Bias against the military has been around since Revolutionary War times and will continue way after the War on Terror veterans return home. But it's considerably less than at some previous times.

Older exiting veterans have got a double whammy. They may have to overcome the stigma associated with military experience...and being considered an older worker. Add in the simple-minded people who discriminate because of race and ethnicity and the problem can magnify even more.

There are only two realistic ways to overcome employment bias. Get a job somewhere else, preferably in a company that competes with the company that discriminated against you, and help your new employer knock the snot out of them...competitively, of course. The second is to anticipate an employer's concerns (age, disability, career changing, questions about leaving the military, etc.) and develop ways to preempt those concerns and counter them in your cover letters, resumes, application forms, and especially during the interview.

Tips for Managing Transition

- Get In The Right Mindset
- Get Ready To Take Risks
- Prepare For Success
- Adopt Temporary Structures
- Avoid Busy Work
- Define Reasons For Distress
- Take Care Of Your Body
- Investigate The Other Side Of Change
- Talk With Successful People
- Avoid Anxiety Traps
- Realize Your Untapped Potentials
- Play Your Hunches
- Realize Transition Is A Process

The Problem With Networking

Yes, it is who you know that counts in today's labor market! The problem with exiting veterans is that they've lost many of the civilian network contacts they had prior to entering the service. These networks need to be rebuilt. A research study by the Association of Job Search Trainers found that employers continue to advise job seekers to develop and use their networks. A common theme throughout the study was: *It's a people-to-people world...even in the information and Internet age.*

- Employers say referral from networks is the number one desired method of applicant recruitment.
- Networking is the number one way that people find job leads.
- 85 per cent of recruiters and employment specialists say that there's more emphasis on hiring through networks.
- Drake Beam Morin studies say 46 per cent of all job seekers say that *networking* is the most effective way to find work.
- A Haldane Associates study shows that 61 per cent of people found their next job by networking.

You can't start building your network too soon. Everyone you come in contact with has the potential of knowing someone who can help develop job leads. Every person you meet should receive a one-to-two-minute introduction that tells them who you are, the type of work you're seeking, the type of experience you can bring, some of your past achievements, and something about your values and life goals. Always ask contacts for the names of two people who might know someone in the field of your interest. You will be amazed at the way referrals can multiply with this method:

Referral Networking Multiplier Effect

1 person = 2 names

2 names = 4 names

4 names = 8 names

8 names = 16 names

16 names = 32 names

32 names = 64 names

64 names = 128 names

128 names = 256 names

256 names = 512 names

512 names = 1,024 names

Vocabulary And Communication Challenges

Words can be your most powerful weapon, or your worst nightmare, in the job-seeking wars. Unless you're seeking a career related to the military, you need to train yourself to talk civilian...your first language. You're no longer a platoon sergeant, You're a first line supervisor. You won't be talking about being an M1 Armor Crewman. You'll talk about being a maintenance mechanic who can diagnose problems and determine the best way to correct them. Before preparing your resume, cover letter, or completing an application form make sure you're using the civilian vocabulary of the field. A couple of ways to do this is to look up your military occupational specialty and military occupational code on www.military.com, <http://online.onetcenter.org/crosswalk/>, or www.destinygrp.com. These web sites will help you translate your military experience into a civilian career vocabulary.

The Challenge Of Applying For Federal Employment

Just because you've put in your time and have a few extra points for military service isn't a guarantee that the Feds will pick you up. There's still the application process to go through...and it can be quite a hair-pulling adventure. For anyone wishing to apply for a federal position, there are any number of articles on the Internet and books like *Ten Steps To A Federal Job* by Kathryn Troutman, or other materials that walk you through the Feds' very detailed process, talk about how to prepare SKA (skills, knowledge, abilities) statements, how to develop a federal resume, alternative forms to use and how to analyze vacancy listings. Some of these types of materials also give you keywords, templates and samples to review.

The Challenge Of Planning & Sequence

Plan your work and work your plan! The problem is what to plan for and when to work the plan. You'll have to set goals and objectives. You'll have to manage time effectively. You'll have to learn the *process* of making career decisions and the sequence needed to perform a successful job

search. You'll need to translate your military experience into civilian life. You'll still need to use tech or training manuals for planning your life and career. They just won't be as precise and detailed as what was used in the military and now they're called job search books. You'll still have to plan to attend training and educational sessions but they're called reemployment workshops. Making a transition requires new found knowledge and finding a new career is as much art form as it is a technical skill.

Unrealistic Financial Expectations Challenge

Too many military personnel walk away from the military thinking that higher pay is in the immediate future. Because there are still so many people un- or under-employed in the U.S., and since the labor market's wage scales are based on supply and demand, civilian pay may end up being lower than what exiting military personnel expect. For the poorly prepared, a pay cut and status reduction are the results of career change. Always remember that everything costs more in the civilian world and there are very few subsidies (housing, food, clothing allowances, etc.). The best way to avoid dollar shock is to formulate and live within a rigid budget and determine your true value in the local labor market.

Credentials And Certifications Challenge

Occupational credentials, such as a license or certification, have increasingly become a common requirement for many types of civilian jobs and almost every school and social support agency is pushing them. Civilian credentialing requirements are typically based on traditional means of obtaining education, training, and experience in the civilian sector. Many of your military certifications might not be valued, or even accepted, in the civilian world because they might not have followed a traditional award process. One thing you need to do is contact VMET and obtain a Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET; DD-2586) record at the Department of Defense. Your VMET form, which lists your military job experience and training history, is useful in preparing a resume or filling out college or civilian vocational training applications. It can also be used to support the fact that you have the experience, skills and abilities to do a job.

The Stereotype Challenge

Lots of employers have false impressions of the military because less than one per cent of the working age population ever enters the service and some employers may not even know anyone who's served. Being aware of the stereotypes up front will help you break them down when you encounter them. Some of the stereotypes include:

- Military personnel do not know how to dress or socialize in the civilian community;
- All military personnel are rigid and lack creativity;

- You only get things done because of your rank;
- The military is not bottom-line oriented, does not think with a profit mentality;
- Military life is easier than civilian life;
- All service members are prone to bouts of depression...and more.

Family Challenges

A spouse, partner, relative or child may not like your transition since it might affect a job, friends, school, etc. This just adds one more level of stress that everyone has to cope with in order to make a transition. Add to that the fact that financial security is in question and the family challenges compound.

Stress-Related Challenges

Stress is a natural byproduct of change...and a career transition is certainly a big change. To minimize future stress, see problems as challenges and opportunities for growth. Have a plan to follow. Don't let little problems turn into big ones. Manage your time effectively. Keep the channels of communication open with important people in your life. Learn how to have fun, enjoy life and relax.

Other Emotional Challenges

Where the head goes the body follows. It's normal to go through some emotional mood swings when readjusting to a civilian life and labor force. Some of the emotional things you'll go through will include the lack of the adrenaline rush, feelings of being on edge or tense, some difficulty concentrating, becoming more irritable or getting angry quicker, sleep problems and feeling depressed, and trouble communicating. These are all normal...for a brief period of time. They become abnormal if exhibited over a lengthy period. Seek outside help.

Career Choice Challenges

There's no more difficult, and important, challenge than trying to determine the type of work to pursue once you leave the military. In most instances you'll be spending more daily time at a job than you will with your family. Doesn't it just make sense to spend the needed time to figure out what type of work will make you the happiest, the geographical area you want to be in, the types of companies you want to work for and the types of people you want to work with?

The business of transitioning from the military to a civilian occupation is the business of decisions. As you work through your military to civilian transition there are a number of critical decisions that you'll have to make...but you've been trained to make critical decision all through your military career.

First Decision - General Direction Towards Employment

Unless you've hit the lottery, or are independently wealthy when leaving military service, you are going to need a job. Your second decision is figuring out what kind of work or career you want to pursue. Even though there are many factors to consider, and decisions to be made, when making a career decision (location, spouse's/partner's career, types of companies who hire people with your skills, financial concerns, etc.) ; there are seven primary options to consider as they relate to the type of work you want to do for the remainder of your working life.

1. Do you want to work in civilian life doing what you did in the military (vehicle mechanic to vehicle mechanic)?
2. Do you want to use the general leadership skills developed (NCO to supervisor) in any career field you choose?
3. Do you want to do something entirely different from what was done in the military (cargo master to electrician)?
4. Do you want to explore the different types of careers that you're best suited for?
5. Do you want to start your own business and be your own boss?
6. Return to school to complete a degree, take some classes that may or may not be career-related, or just use school as a way to reenter a non-military society.
7. Drop off the grid and turn into a slug for while.

There are pros and cons to each of these options but regardless of the option you choose, all military-to-civilian career decisions begin with a Military Crosswalk that uses automated technology for matching military occupation classifications to the corresponding civilian opportunity. These Crosswalks can be found in many different veteran-related websites but the foundation of all of these Crosswalks is the Department of Labor's O*net Crosswalk site: www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC//

Career Options and General Actions That Need To Be Taken

Doing in civilian life what you did in the military (vehicle mechanic to vehicle mechanic)

- Pull up your MOS in O*net's Military Crosswalk.
- Identify your most marketable skills and strengths.
- Research the industry and/or companies for which you'd like to work and determine if you need to upgrade your skills with education and training to make yourself more marketable.
- Initiate a job search if your skills, education and training are adequate.

Using the general leadership skills developed in The Military In Any Civilian Career Field You Choose To Pursue. (NCO to supervisor)

- Pull up your MOS in O*net's Military Crosswalk.
- Determine the job family where you would most like to use these lead-

ership skills: www.onetonline.org/find/family.

- Determine the industry where you would most like to use these leadership skills; www.onetonline.org/find/industry?i=22&g=Go
- Research the industry and/or companies for which you'd like to work and determine if you need to upgrade your skills with education and training to make yourself more marketable.
- Initiate a job search if your skills, education and training are adequate.

Doing something entirely different from what was done in the military. (cargo master to electrician)

- Pull up your MOS in O*net's Military Crosswalk.
- Perform job-task analysis research to determine if you have the skills, abilities, education, personality, values and work experience to perform the civilian job.
- If not, determine what's missing.
- Make the decision to pursue, or not pursue, the skills, abilities, education and experiences needed to compete for the civilian job.

Unsure what type of job or career path to pursue.

- Pull up your MOS in O*net's Military Crosswalk.
- Define a realistic career objective by using free Aptitude-Assessment tools found on the Internet.
- O*net's Ability Profiler: www.onetcenter.org/AP.html
- Job Behaviors: www.jobbehaviors.com.
- Career One Stop Skills Profiler:
www.careerinfonet.org/skills/default.aspx?nodeid=20
- CareerPath.com: www.careerpath.com/
- Free Interest-Assessment tools found on the Internet
- O*net's Interest Profiler: www.onetcenter.org/IP.html
- O*net's Work Importance Profiler: www.onetcenter.org/WIL.html
- Free Personality-Assessment tools found on the Internet.
- Jung Typology Test: www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp
- Adapted Myers-Briggs: www.truity.com/test/type-finder-personality-test
- Explore top five career choices and make a decision to pursue or not pursue. (or)
- Enroll in a career decision-making course (not just a workshop) or consult with a professional career development counselor.

Want To Start Your Own Business And Be Your Own Boss

- Pull up your MOS in O*net's Military Crosswalk.
- Identify your idea for a business.
- Analyze the reason for wanting to start a new business.
- Perform research and an entrepreneurial risk assessment to determine if your personal characteristics/traits match those of successful entrepreneurs.

- A good starting point is the Risk Assessment Quiz:
www2.gsu.edu/~wwwsbp/entrepre.htm
- Take three or four of the many different free tests on the Internet to help people determine if they should go into business.
- Perform market research to determine the viability of your product or service.
- Analyze your financial needs.
- Prepare a business plan.
- Seek out financing if needed.

Go To School

- If you have the luxury of not having to work full time for a while, attending educational classes is one of the best ways to reenter the civilian world. You can build new networks, open your mind to alternative occupations, keep your mind alert, and school gives you a cover story for not returning to the labor force immediately after you leave the military. Some people need this *defusing* time.
- Do a thorough career assessment to determine a vocational objective, explore industries that you can enter with the education and evaluate the cost/benefit financial return on your time and money investment.

Drop Off The Grid For A While

- Although this option isn't one that's advised by most career specialists, some transitioning military (in the civilian world you're called a dislocated worker or career changer) need to get away from everything, take a long vacation, pursue a hobby or interest, spend time with the family, etc....and they can afford this luxury. The problem is that time is your most valuable commodity. It's a good idea to use it wisely.

How To Use A Military Crosswalk To Relate Military Experience To Civilian Occupations

Your MOS Generates A List Of Related Civilian Job Titles. Selecting An Occupation Allows You To Explore That Occupation In A Number Of Different Ways.

1. My Ideal Job Title will be...
2. My Starting Pay will be...
3. My two most important Benefits will include...
4. My Level Of Responsibility will be...
5. My five Main Job Duties will include...
6. The top five Skills I'd like to use on the job would be...
7. The top five Personality Traits required will be...
8. I want to operate these types of Equipment, Vehicles, Tools, and Machines...
9. I want to use these types of Computers and Peripherals...

10. I'd like to use these types of Software...
11. I'd like to use these types of Office Equipment...
12. My job will offer me the following three Challenges...
13. My preferred Working Schedule will be...
14. My ideal job will require this level of Education...
15. My ideal job will be in this type of Industry...
16. I want to work in this type of Job Family...
17. I want to work in this Employment Sector (public or private)...
18. I want to work in this Size Organization / Company (small, medium, large)...
19. I want to work in this desired Location...
20. I want to work for a Supervisor or Manager who exhibits these three traits...
21. I prefer to work with Coworkers who demonstrate these three traits...
22. I prefer to work in an Environment that has these three main characteristics...
23. I'm willing to have this much Travel...
24. I'm willing to accept this level of Stress on the job...
25. My job will allow me to demonstrate these three Personal Values...

Second Decision - Defining The Critical Elements Of An Ideal Job

Everyone would like to have the ideal job. The problem is that people have trouble defining the elements of an ideal job. By developing the answers to the above 25 questions, you'll go a long way towards painting a picture of the key factors needed for a rewarding and successful career.

- Administration & Support Services.
- Arts & Entertainment
- Education
- Farming, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting
- Finance & Insurance
- Government
- Health & Counseling
- Hotel & Food
- Management
- Manufacturing
- Media & Communications
- Mining, Oil, Gas
- Professional Science & Technical
- Real Estate & Rental
- Retail
- Self-Employed
- Service
- Transportation & Storage
- Utilities

Industries are broad groups of businesses or organizations with similar activities, products, or services.

Industries

- Architecture & Engineering
- Arts, Design Entertainment, Media, Sports Education
- Building & Grounds Cleaning, Maintenance
- Business & Financial Operations
- Community & Social Service
- Computer & Mathematics
- Construction & Extraction
- Education, Training & Library
- Production
- Farming, Fishing & Forestry
- Food Prep & Service Related
- Healthcare Practitioners & Technical
- Healthcare Support
- Installation, Maintenance & Repair
- Legal
- Life, Physical & Social Science
- Management
- Military Specific
- Office & Administrative Support
- Personal Care & Service

Job Families: Groups of similar occupations based on work performed and on required skills, education, training, and credentials.

25 Factors That Make Up An Ideal Job

The 100 Best Jobs: <http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/rankings/the-100-best-jobs>

1. Administrative Services Manager
2. Automotive Service Technician
3. Business Development Manager
4. Business process/management consultant
5. Construction Laborers
6. Construction Program Manager
7. Electrical and Electronic Engineer
8. Electrical Engineering Technician
9. FBI Agent
10. Field Service Engineer, Medical Equipment
11. Fireman
12. Government program manager
13. Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Driver
14. Helicopter Pilot

15. Human Resources Manager
16. Automotive Service Mechanic
17. HVAC Service Technician
18. Industrial Engineering Technician
19. Industrial Production Manager
20. Information Security
21. Information Technology (IT) Consultant
22. Intelligence Analyst
23. IT program manager
24. Logistician
25. Management Consultant
26. Network Administrator, IT
27. Network Engineer, IT
28. Operations Manager
29. Pilot, corporate jet
30. Police or sheriff's patrol officer
31. Power Plant Operator
32. Program manager, aviation
33. Program Manager, IT
34. Project Manager, Construction
35. Electronic Engineering Technician
36. Security Guards and Gaming
37. Surveillance Officer
38. Ship Engineer
39. Software Developer
40. Systems Analyst
41. Systems Engineer (Computer Networking/IT)
42. Technical Writer
43. Telecommunications Equipment Installer and Repairer
44. Train Engineer and Operator
45. Training and Development Manager
45. Common Professions

Veterans Choose To Work In Ten Careers With The Lowest Job Satisfaction Ratings

1. Singers
2. Municipal Fire Fighters
3. Aircraft Assemblers - Structure, Surfaces, Rigging & Systems
4. Pediatricians - General
5. College Professors - Communications
6. Educational, Vocational & School Counselors
7. Managers/Supervisors of Animal Husbandry & Animal Care Workers
8. Criminal Investigators & Special Agents
9. College Instructors - Other

10. Therapists, Other

Ten Careers With The Lowest Job Satisfaction Ratings

1. Mail Clerks & Mail Machine Operators (except postal service)
2. Program Directors
3. Municipal Clerks
4. Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Other
5. Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners
6. Insurance Policy Processing Clerks
7. Hotel, Motel & Resort Desk Clerks
8. Food Preparation & Serving Workers (including fast food)
9. Telemarketers
10. Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors

Ten Highest Paying Jobs in America

1. Surgeons \$219,770
2. Anesthesiologists \$211,750
3. Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons \$210,710
4. Orthodontists \$206,190
5. Obstetricians & Gynecologists \$204,470
6. Internists - General \$183,990
7. Physicians & Surgeons, Other \$173,860
8. Family & General Practitioners \$168,550
9. Chief Executives \$167,280
10. Psychiatrists \$163,660

Ten Highest Paying Jobs Without College

1. Rotary Drill Operators - Oil & Gas \$59,560
2. Commercial Divers \$58,060
3. Railroad Conductors & Yardmasters \$54,900
4. Chemical Plant & System Operators \$54,010
5. Real Estate Sales Agents \$53,100
6. Subway & Streetcar Operators \$52,800
7. Postal Service Clerks \$51,670
8. Pile-Driver Operators \$51,410
9. Railroad Brake, Signal & Switch Operators \$49,600
10. Brickmasons & Block-masons \$49,250

10 most often used keywords veterans used to find work.

1. Management
2. Human Resources
3. Security
4. Customer Service
5. Administrative Assistant
6. Maintenance

7. Construction
8. Sales
9. Registered Nurse
10. General Maintenance

Third Decision - Which Websites To Focus On

Information is good but too much information can be overwhelming, confusing and will stop you in your tracks. A major problem with military transition websites is that there are just so many of them...and they all do a reasonable job...and will suck up lots of your time just sifting and sorting through them.

A Few Things To Consider

- **Specialized Help** - There are specialized employment-related websites for officers, warrant officers and NCOs. Then there are specialized organizations for each branch of the service and even more specialization takes place within states and still more by age, race, gender and level of disability. If you fall into any of these specialized groups, just search them out on the Internet. These specialized sites will usually provide you with a little more targeted information and job postings and they can expand your network of people who are like you, but most of them will still use the same traditional veteran employment-related job sites as everyone else does.
- **Market Saturation** - There are only so many, so-called, veteran friendly companies. If every veteran in transition relies on only these for their employment, that small pool of employers will soon become saturated. Sooner or later they'll realize the need to look for a little more diversity in their employees.
- **Small Business Is The Job Creator** - Most veteran employment-related websites are usually not targeting smaller companies or mom and pop businesses...yet these sectors are historically the generators of jobs. If every small business and mom and pop company hired just one transitioning veteran, there would be a shortage of veterans to fill the openings. Don't spend so much time on veteran transition job search sites that you overlook the traditional job search sites and small businesses.

A Few Websites That Will Help You Make The Transition

www.taonline.com/ Claims to be largest source of military transition assistance. Provides job postings, job search guidance, help with job search tools, small business opening, and other resources.

www.military.com/ If it has to do with the military, this is a great place to begin looking. Benefits, buddy searches, transitional support, latest news related to military and veterans, etc.

www.military.com/veteran-jobs/search This is a Monster.com veteran employment center that claims to be the largest veteran job board in the world with a broad array of job search tools, job search advice, military to civilian crosswalks, military friendly employers and much more.

<https://vetjobs.com/> Considered one of the leading job boards for veterans, having reached more than 10 million individuals.

<http://nvf.org/> Nation's only toll-free helpline for all veterans and their families. Has live chat and an online request form, a legal resource center and an employment center with job listings.

www.militaryhire.com/ Its mission is to "serve those who served and recognized as a top site for job seekers. Veterans can sign up for free to search their job database and apply for jobs online.

<http://vetsuccess.gov/> Sponsored by Department of Veterans Affairs. Allows quick access to a wide range of topics and links (small business loans, transition support, medical care, educational info, etc.)

www.hireveterans.com/ Employer matching system, free to veterans, where resumes are posted and employers pay a fee to access them. Has nearly 50 job categories from which to choose.

www.fedshirevets.gov/ Feds Hire Vets is your single site for Federal employment information for Veterans, transitioning military service members, their families, and Federal hiring officials.

www.gijobs.com/digimagsignup/index.html Allows for posting of resumes and applying for work online, gives career advice and tools like military to civilian pay calculator, hot jobs for vets, etc.

<http://hireheroesusa.org/> Nonprofit organization offers a number of free programs, which help veterans and family members switch from the military to civilian workforce.

www.va.gov/opa/feature/amervet/index.asp America Veteran is the official website of the U.S. Government, operated by the Office of Personnel Management to help vets find jobs in the federal government.

www.veteransenterprise.com/ Dedicated to the employment, education, and advancement of America's proud servicemen and women and help connect them with employers who recruit them.

www.militaryfriendly.com/ Focus is on finding military friendly schools, franchises, and employers. Uses a map to locate find job openings near you that have a history of hiring military personnel.

www.nrd.gov/jobSearch/index Central resource that allows Veterans to

access jobs available specifically for them. Enter keywords, your MOS/MOC and/or location to begin your job search.

www.dol.gov/vets/programs/main.htm This is the go to site for all types of veterans program information: employment, transition, job rights, federal contractors, incarcerated veterans, etc.

www.jobstocareers.com/index3.php?c1=9&c4=119&c5=432&c3=veterans&q=Veterans&l=&gclid=CM6vmsSB9bUCFc5AMgod42YAbQ Says they've found veterans nearly 8,000 jobs. Simple site to use. Register, enter in the general type of work sought and location and the site lets you know when something matches.

www.usajobs.gov/ This is the official site for Federal Jobs.

Fourth Decision - To Hide From, Or Deal With, The Financial Gaps of Transition

Unrealistic expectations about financial matters can put added stress on you and your family and negatively affect your ability to cope with a military to civilian transition. The need for accurate financial information is critical for a number of reasons:

- It reduces family anxiety by giving a realistic look at a bare-bones budget that says, *We Will Survive!*
- It shows you how long you and your family can survive unemployment before you have to take some type of survival job instead of a G.O.O.D. (Get Out Of Debt) job.
- It helps the family target places where it can cut expenses or identify ways to generate a little extra income.
- Sooner or later you will need extensive and accurate financial information to negotiate with lenders, educational institutions, or when applying for help from social service support systems. You might as well get it done now! Many of your traditional expenses may change in your transition to a civilian world. Utilities, housing, gas and school expenses may be higher in different locations. Food and entertainment expenses may increase without military discounts. Clothing expenses will probably be more. Because of these variations, it's a good idea to do a really thorough pre- and post-transition analysis of your living expenses in the city to which you plan to relocate. [Note: For further lists of financial planning items to consider in the pre and post-transition periods of a veteran, see the original of this monograph. It is in pdf format. Contact Dick Gaither.]

Play Your Military Strengths Card

The following traits are inbred in just about everyone who's ever served. and are the reason employers hire veterans. Incorporate these in your resumes, cover letters, application forms and especially during the interview. Try to come up with specific examples of when you've demon-

strated each of these traits.

- **Accelerated Learning Curve:** Point out instances of when you had to quickly learn complex new skill and concepts.
- **Conforms To Rules, Structures and Disciplined:** Most companies have a set of extensive rules, policies, guidelines and procedures to follow, methods or processes to use and Demonstrate how military experience and discipline has prepared you to easily fit in with a company's standards.
- **Leadership:** Stress that you lead by example, can delegate, motivate, inspire, and manage behaviors for best results.
- **Teamwork:** Relate your understanding that a blending of individuals is critical to achieving any type of military or company objective.
- **Diversity Oriented:** In a multi-cultural world, you've worked in the world's most diverse work setting--the military.
- **Efficient Performance Under Pressure:** Point out that having to work with tight schedules, meeting deadlines, operating effectively under extreme pressure, multi-tasking and adapting to changing objectives are comparable in both your military job and civilian employment.
- **Accountability:** Highlight that your respect for supervision and successful completion of tasks with measurable results are driven into you daily.
- **Hard Work:** Relate how long hours and doing more than required, under difficult situations for very little reward, was required of you daily in the military and certainly is an asset in the civilian labor force.
- **Technological Savvy:** 92 per cent of active-duty personnel use computers and 51 per cent use LAN systems and understand their operations.
- **Integrity and Character:** The most trusted group of people in America are the people in the military. Point out that you're honest, trustworthy, and can be counted on to keep your word.
- **Global Perspective:** In a global economy the need for people with a wider view of the world is a no-brainer. Come up with a few ways this wider perspective can benefit the employer.
- **Overcoming Adversity:** Coping with stressful situations, harsh environments, dangerous conditions, and loss of personnel are normal daily activities in the military. Be ready to relate examples that relate to the civilian world.
- **Maturity:** If you're young, let employers know that you're mature beyond your years by conveying levels of responsibility during your time in the service.
- **Resiliency:** Individuals willing to work changing shifts, travel, weekends, doing more than just one job and a willingness to relocate for the company are all desirable traits...and something everyone in the military has had to do. Let employers know this.

- **Cope Well With Dynamic Environments:** Show employers that you're accustomed to working in uncertain situations, can adjust and adapt your decisions and act decisively.
- **Safety Orientation:** Military safety training is the best in the world and directly relates to the bottom line in jobs where safety is an issue. If safety's a job-related issue highlight how the military has prepared you to be a safe employee.
- **Trackable Successes:** Virtually everything done in the military, that's relevant to job performance, is monitored, evaluated and documented. Using military performance appraisals, awards listed on your DD 214 and your VMET documentation to prove your viability is always a good idea.
- **Loyalty:** Loss of good workers is a big problem for employers. Stress your loyalty to those willing to invest in you.

Job Search Tips, Techniques And Strategies

Analyze Your Most Marketable Skills

- Everything you do in a job search is going to be linked to your most marketable skills: resume creations, completing applications, making a career choice, prospecting or leads, etc. Without having a list of your most marketable skills and strengths, your job search won't get off the ground.

Highlight Security Clearance.

- Everything you do in a job search is going to be linked to your most marketable skills: resume creations, completing applications, making a career choice, prospecting or leads, etc.

Be Drug Free And Smoke Free.

- Drugs and tobacco cost employers billions of dollars a year in lost productivity. Let employers know that you're comfortable in a drug / smoke free workplace and will take a drug test right now.

Match Your Skills To The Most Dominant Skills In Demand.

Forbes magazine points out these 10 skills that are in the most demand by employers:

- **Critical Thinking** - Come up with examples of when you used logic and reasoning to identify and evaluate alternative solutions.
- **Complex Problem Solving** - Come up with examples of when you had to identify complex problems, analyze data / information, evaluate options and implement solutions.
- **Judgment and Decision-Making** - Ask yourself when you've had to weigh the cost and benefits of an action and make the best decision based on the available information
- **Active Listening** - Think of times when you devoted your full attention to what was being said, asked questions, and had to understand a point or

interpret verbal information.

- **Computers and Electronics** - There's shortage of people who have a knowledge of circuit boards, processors, electronic equipment and computer hardware including applications and programs.
- **Mathematics** - Individuals with a strong knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics and their application will always be in high demand.
- **Operations and Systems Analysis:** People who understand the flow, or how something works in varying conditions, and how to adapt those systems for improved quality or productivity will never be out of work long.
- **Monitoring:** Monitoring and assessing performance of yourself, other individuals or organizations to make improvement or take corrective action is required in all supervisory and management position.
- **Programming:** Writing computer programming for various purposes and in high demand languages. Most in demand languages include: Java, C#, C/C++, JavaScript, PHP, Objective C.
- **Sales and Marketing:** Virtually everything that's created has to be promoted and sold. Knowing the key principles and methods for showing, promoting and selling products or services will keep you working.

Talk The Employer's Language & The Language Of The Job.

- Military lingo is out, unless the job being applied for is military in nature.
- Yes sir and yes ma'am are always acceptable.
- Develop a career vocabulary for the job being applied for and come up with examples of performing similar job tasks in your military occupational specialties.

Prominently Display Security Clearances.

- It can take weeks to months and thousands of dollars to get a person a security clearance.
- This factor is especially important for people who are entering occupations where a background check is required.

Create A Job Search Portfolio.

There's certain information you're going to need, so gather it up and make your job search life easier.

Military Service

- Separation Papers, DD Form 214, DD Form 295, LES
- Training Record
- Honors & Awards
- DD Form 2586 – Verification of Military Experience and Training
- Service Record
- Security Clearance
- Medical Record

- Benefits

Personal Identification

- Birth Certificate
- Proof of Citizenship
- Social Security Card
- Passport
- Photo ID

Work Experience

- Work History (job titles, dates, duties, accomplishments, employers)
- Work Samples
- Honors and Citations
- Community Activities
- Salary History
- References

Education & Training

- Transcripts
- Diplomas/Certificates
- Honors
- Activities List
- Licenses
- Certifications

Create a master personal data and application sheet to save you time when completing online applications.

Do A Thorough Analysis Of Your Work History.

- Treat your time in the military as if it was a civilian job. The only real differences will be in rank. Civilian companies won't have these. This brings us to the next tip.

Translate For The Employer.

- Most employers have little knowledge of rank hierarchy or the responsibilities assigned to the ranks. You may have to let them know the difference between the responsibilities of a Petty Officer and Chief Petty Officer, Staff Sergeant versus Technical Sergeant.

Build Your Profile.

- This is the first step to using social media whether it's Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn or some other. By creating a powerful profile for one, you'll have the foundations of a powerful profile for them all.

Recreate Your Image.

- Many employers feel that veterans can only follow orders, don't care how much something costs, and don't have to worry about quality or productivity. Prove them wrong.
- Talk productivity, profitability, market share, customer service, production rating, cost savings, etc. These are business words.
- Don't show up in a uniform.

Improve Your Odds.

- There are companies who actively seek out veterans. You may be able to improve your odds of getting a job by applying to more of these types of companies...but not always. Here's a link to the 100 top military friendly companies... <http://employers.militaryfriendly.com/>

Be Ready To Defend Your Education.

- Some military educational courses or other online course taken while deployed outside the U.S. may be unknown to an employer. Have courses taken and transcripts in hand so you can show the employer how each course taken, or degree/certification earned, will have a direct bearing on your ability to do the job.

Use The Free Stuff Online To Help You Make Your Resume.

- Use sites like www.freemilitaryresumebuilder.com or http://vaforvets.va.gov/career_center/pages/gettingstarted.aspx to help with a self-assessment or create your basic military to civilian resume.

Work From A Job Search Action Plan.

- Develop a daily job search action plan and follow it religiously.
- Monitor your time, activities, and define what's working and what's not.

Build A Three-Pronged Network.

- The tendency for military in transition to primarily use the network of contacts developed while in the service. This is understandable but this approach leaves two legs off the three-legged stool. As someone trying to enter the civilian labor force you need to begin networking with friends, relatives, and acquaintances (second leg) and you'll need to expand that network by meeting new people who might know of opportunities in the field you'd like to work (third leg).

Be Creative When Prospecting For Leads.

- There are no rules in a job search and there are over 50 different ways to find job leads). The more different methods you use the quicker you'll find work.

Stress Some Uniqueness.

- Employers often think the same package contains the same product. Nothing is farther from the truth when discussing a person's military experience. Look for skills, abilities, experiences and achievements that point to your unique abilities.

Use Military Oriented Outplacement And Recruiters.

- Some private recruiting firms have divisions that specialize in working with professionals who have served in the military. These folks understand what you're going through.

Target Companies That Provide Some Type Of Military Support Or Are Federal Contractors.

- If a company is a federal contractor you can count on your military ser-

vice not negatively affecting you. In fact your veteran's preference points are in play with these types of companies. Get a list of all of the federal contractors in the region you'd like to work. Here's a link to the top 100 Federal Contractors: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top_100_Contractors_of_the_U.S._federal_government

Know Your Rights.

- If you've been deployed, and had to leave a job, you have some very well defined rights to reemployment. The problem is that the employer has some well defined rights as well. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act web site:

www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userrra/ can help you determine if you have any recourse to getting a job back.

Attend A TAP GPS Program At One Stop Career Centers Or Access It Online.

- Many of the states can deliver the new TAP GPS Program to veterans looking for work in a series of job search and career decision-making workshops. The Department of Defense has also made it available online at www.turbotap.org/portal/transition/resources/Stakeholder_General_Public

Don't Delay, Look Today.

- Putting off the job search is a mistake. The military works on the 40-70 PF rule: If you have between 40 and 70 per cent of the information needed to make a decision or make a move, do it. If you wait until you have all of the information, it may be too late. Begin your job search immediately. Job listings are only open for brief periods of time.

Forget About The Perfect Job.

- Waiting for the perfect first job out of the military is a fool's move Take what's reasonable, build a civilian work history and keep looking for that next job.

Hit All The Veteran Focused Job Fairs Within 100 Miles.

- These employers are looking specifically for veterans. Just Google veterans job fair and your state and you'll get a list. These are also good places to research companies and make new network contacts. Always find out what companies are going to be there. If there's any you might be interested in, have a resume tailored to that industry with you.

Apply To The Uncle...And All Of His Relatives.

- Start out applying for federal openings. This is going to require a little research so you'll know how to build a federal resume. After the uncle, talk to his relatives...state, local and municipalities. These types of openings take some time, so get them out of the way first...and keep looking at them every week.

- Here's a link the Office of Personnel Management for federal employment: <http://www.opm.gov/>

Join And Participate in Veterans Groups.

- Reach out inside these groups for job leads, expand your networks, and share your experiences. Don't just make it a place to stop and have a cheap drink. For a list of all types of veterans groups that might help you, go to <http://dir.groups.yahoo.com/dir/1600059788>. People who fought together can network together.

Focus On The Bests.

- Target the best job search engines, the best job boards and the best sites for entry level jobs. Spend less time on those not considered the best.

Forbes magazine has listed the **75 Best Websites For Your Career:**

www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2012/09/14/the-top-75-websites-for-your-career/. Spend a few minutes looking at the sites in this list.

Get Comfortable Promoting Yourself.

- The “*aw shucks, I'm only doing my job*” mentality, giving all the credit to others and shunning the spotlight are admirable traits...anywhere but in your job search. Learn to brand yourself and get comfortable letting other people know how good you are. Create a one minute elevator speech that tells people who you are, what you want, what you can do and talk about accomplishments proving you can do it.

Understand How Employers Recruit Veterans.

- Knowing the methods employer use most often to recruit veterans allows you to target your job search time.
- A word of caution. Not all companies are on the *recruit a vet* bandwagon. In fact, most aren't. So, don't put all your eggs in this basket.
- Even though someone has already left the military, it's still a good idea to get a list of TAP/Base Visits by employers at military bases in your locale.

Understand Why Employers Don't Hire Vets.

1. Veterans do not represent their skills and expertise in ways that are relevant to civilian companies and not all MOS classification can be translated into a civilian occupations. These factors require three actions:

- Veterans need to do a thorough analysis of their **transferable skills** and job-related skills.
- Veterans need to define the **job tasks and responsibilities** for the job being sought, and
- Come up with **relevant examples** of when they performed similar tasks successfully.

2. Veteran stereotypes like rigidity, lack of creative thinking, PTSD, etc. need to be countered.

3. A skills mismatch is a common employer concern. This requires the veteran to do a better job of ensuring that he or she meets all of the job posting requirements and research the job functions to ensure that his or her skills match up to the job demands in his or her resume, application form and cover letter.

4. Fear of future deployment is easy to understand from the employer's perspective. Eliminate this concern in the cover letter.
5. Acclimation to a civilian labor force is another understandable employer fear. Find ways to highlight that you've adjusted well to making the transition back to a civilian way of thinking and the labor market.

Hook Up With A Job Search Pro.

- Try to locate a veterans' job club or a job search program where it meets a couple of times a week. Having the support of a group and the guidance of a job search specialist helps you overcome much of the anxiety, stay motivated in the face of rejection, keep you on track and expand your networks.

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JOB & CAREER TRANSITION COACH CERTIFICATION WORKSHOPS

- **September 8-9-10, 2014**

Alexandria, Virginia

- **December 8-9-10, 2014**

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Visit **www.CareerNetwork.Org** for details of the transition process that has been used by hundreds of veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce.

Chapter 21

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[1] Please note that this article reviews resources for Israeli veterans.

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A PROPOSED GUIDE FOR ASSISTING VETERANS IN CONSTRUCTING CIVILIAN RÉSUMÉS

by Amanda Sargent

Abstract

In today's hiring process, the résumé plays a vital role. With the rise of applicant tracking systems and the American job market remaining highly competitive, résumé screening is often the first barrier job seekers must overcome to reach upper levels of the job search process. This barrier can be especially challenging to break through for U.S. military veterans. This article describes a system for assisting veterans to learn how to translate their skills sets for transition into the civilian world of work, and how to build stronger, more competitive professional documents.

Introduction

As a career counselor in higher education, I have had a great deal of contact with U.S. military veterans hoping to enter (or re-enter) the civilian world of work. This special group of individuals generally presents with exceptional skills and qualifications that would be desirable to any employer; however, they often struggle to secure an interview. The difficulty getting into the room with an employer may be attributed to several factors that pose challenges to veterans integrating into the civilian workforce (Rudstam, Strobel Gowar, & Cook, 2012; Clemens & Milsom, 2008). Yet, there is one key piece to the job search puzzle that surfaces frequently: the transition from a military to civilian résumé.

For many veterans, the issue of résumé writing is one of the primary barriers to getting an interview and successfully navigating the hiring process. Résumés play an integral role in the hiring process regardless of population (Chen, Huang, & Lee, 2011; Tsai, Chi, Huang & Hsu, 2011; Cole, Feild, Giles & Harris, 2009 ; Cole, Rubin, Feild & Giles, 2007) and, veterans often struggle with similar challenges to civilians when learning how to write a strong résumé (targeting, tailoring, etc.). However, veteran clients face some additional challenges that civilians do not due to unique, culture-specific differences between military and civilian life: specifically, the differences between military and civilian language.

These observed differences include the use of acronyms unfamiliar to civilians, word usage that differs in context and meaning from the civilian usage, and difficulty translating military duties into articulated skill sets that civilian employers value and understand. The following is an overview of a counseling tool that I developed and have been using for the past three years to assist veterans in overcoming these challenges called *The ITMA Guide for Translating Military Résumés to Civilian Language* ©.

The ITMA Guide at a Glance

ITMA stands for *Identify, Translate, Match, and Articulate*. Anyone who has had any contact with US Military culture is probably familiar with its affinity for acronyms. In keeping with this tradition, I thought it appropriate to utilize the acronym ITMA to help individuals remember the steps of the résumé translation process. The following overview outlines a proposed process for use in helping veteran-clients overcome the challenges faced when translating their résumés.

Identify.

I have seen both veterans and civilians experience difficulty identifying skills acquired and demonstrated throughout their education, training, and professional experiences. For the veteran, this identification step can be particularly challenging as most military job descriptions are lengthy, use military-specific jargon and acronyms not commonly used in the civilian world of work, and focus on specific tasks rather than broader skill-sets. Often, a transitioning veteran's first draft of a civilian résumé presents as a three-plus page document full of detail, jargon, and acronyms that seem to have little relevance to the position to which the veteran is applying. Thus, the first step in translating the military résumé is to sift through the military résumé and job description, (sometimes referred to as MOS or, military occupational specialty) to identify transferable skills. I have found this step most successful when verbal description of daily tasks and accomplishments is encouraged from the veteran through open-ended questioning by the career practitioner.

Translate.

Step two of the ITMA process involves taking the identified transferable skills from step one and translating them into language recognizable by civilian employers. There are a number of ways to do this including the use of on-line translation tools (such as the tool found at www.military.com/veteran-jobs/skills-translator and a plethora of other sites); looking up civilian occupational descriptions on the O*net (www.onetonline.org) or the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (www.bls.gov/ooh) and comparing them to the tasks performed in the veteran's military services; or utilizing verbal counseling skills such as paraphrasing and interpret-

ing to find the appropriate civilian word to describe the veteran's skill. For example, the word *procurement* is used in the military, but the same task is often called *buying* or *acquisition* in the civilian workforce. The word *reconnaissance* has many meanings when used in military context and can translate as *analysis*, *research*, *data-management*, etc. This translation step also includes the breaking down or defining of any military acronyms present in the document as civilian employers may not be familiar with the acronym meanings. If acronyms must be used, encourage veterans to define and explain them, .e.g. *Non-Commissioned Officer* instead of *NCO* or *Situation Reports* instead of *Sit-Reps*. If you are unsure what an acronym or military vocabulary word means, ask the veteran to provide an explanation.

Match.

The *Match* step is the same action a career practitioner would take when assisting a civilian to tailor their document to a specific employer and position. In this step, it is necessary to demonstrate the process of identifying both the specified desired skills an employer has articulated in a particular job posting as well as the implied necessary skills, knowledge sets, and abilities required for successful execution of the position in question. Once these skills and abilities are identified, the veteran can match his/her strongest skill sets to the articulated desires of the employer resulting in a more competitive resume with greater marketability. I usually ask the veteran to bring in two or three sample job postings from the internet or newspaper so that we can comb through the written descriptions for key words. A *key word* in a job posting is a skill, knowledge set, or ability specified by the employer as desirable. When applying online, these *key words* are used to perform searches through an applicant tracking database (the on-line system where applications are filed and held for a particular organization). If an applicant has matched position-specific key words in their résumé submission, the document is more likely to be flagged for reading by human resources personnel or the hiring manager who is responsible for recommending and arranging interviews. If the document does not have key words, it has little chance of ever being read by a human being, thereby reducing the chances that the applicant will be called in for an interview. To find implied skills, use of occupational information websites like O*net and the ***Occupational Outlook Handbook***, in addition to company and industry research via the web, is extremely helpful.

Articulate.

The final step is the synthesis of all previous ITMA steps and is the key to strong résumé writing for both civilians and veterans. Practitioners must help veterans take their newly identified, translated, and matched

skills and transform them into a résumé that will both trigger the applicant tracking system and catch the eye of hiring personnel. While tailored articulation of values and skills can occur in any section of the document, I have found the most influential sections to be the professional summary section at the top of the document (sometimes called the *Professional Profile* or *Qualifications Summary*) and the sections detailing related and additional experiences. Strong summary sections should include references to the veteran's most relevant skills, knowledge sets, experiences, and valuable special qualities. Experience description sentences should always include three essential pieces: 1.) a descriptive action verb, 2.) the keyword skills/abilities identified in the *match* step and 3.) the tasks (in civilian language) performed by the veteran that evidence possession of the skill, for example: "*Managed infantry battalion of 600 individuals with tasks including coordination of daily operations and facilitating training initiatives.*" I also encourage clients to open each bullet point description with an action verb rather than the phrases *responsible for* or *duties included* as these statements imply a party was supposed to do something without concretely specifying the skill was demonstrated.

Discussion

While the ITMA guide is one tool that may help career practitioners assist veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce, successful reintegration involves more than writing a strong professional document (Rudstam, Strobe-Gower, & Cook, 2012; Demers, 2011; Church, 2009). Other common transition challenges veterans may face include: learning to manage symptoms from service-connected mental or physical conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and physical injuries; the stigma and misunderstanding of veterans' needs in the workplace; and the culture shock that may result from abrupt entrance into a civilian work environment (Rudstam, Strobe-Gower, & Cook, 2012; Ostavory & Dapprich, 2011; Church, 2009). Career counselors and practitioners serve on the *front lines* (so-to-speak) in the battle for better reintegration of our veterans. While many practitioners are familiar with the unique challenges faced by veteran clients, there is a surprising lack of current research surrounding veterans and career-related issues, particularly given the recent media attention surrounding hiring initiatives such as *FedsHireVets* and *Show Your Stripes*. While raising awareness is a positive move toward better support for our returning vets, to truly serve this population effectively, more research is needed to understand and develop evidence-based interventions for addressing the unique career development challenges veterans experience upon transition into the civilian workforce.

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Chapter 23

ONLINE RESOURCES for CAREER PRACTITIONERS and MATERIAL on the NCDA WEB SITE

by Stevie Puckett

Abstract

A basic package of websites for distribution to transitioning military members is suggested along with an explanation as to why each site is included.

There are an overwhelming number of links and resources for Veterans online. This article, will highlight a small number of sites that have been found to be particularly useful. The intention is to create a basic package of sites for military personnel in transition. This format may be more useful and less overwhelming than handing over a lengthy list of sites. Then, if the transitioning member has specific needs not addressed in the basic package, the assisting career practitioner can add supplemental, customized information as requested.

Two online resources specifically for the career development practitioner deserve special attention as background information. The first is Joining-Forces.gov which presents the issues facing vets in the areas of employment, education, and wellness. It is complete with video and on-going, real-time updates from Dr. Jill Biden on Twitter. There is also a sign up form for career practitioners to receive email updates regarding the initiative. The second website to bookmark as a reference for supplemental information is the military interest section at NCDA.org. There one will find many links to military specific career information resources. Each listing includes a summary of the content at each link and why it might be useful.

As for this article, the following basic package of sites for distribution to transitioning military members is suggested. Many of the long web addresses have been shortened with TinyURL to make it easier to type the addresses into a web browser and so that readers can be linked to a specific page on the site. One may reuse the TinyURLs listed here as they will not expire. Still, it would be prudent to check that the links still work occasionally in case TinyURL ever discontinues service.

tinyurl.com/RealLifelines
tinyurl.com/FedsHireVets
tinyurl.com/StateIncomeTaxes
tinyurl.com/usaaBestPlaces
tinyurl.com/MyNextMove
ResumeEngine.org
GIjobs.com
tinyurl.com/LinkedInVets
tinyurl.com/SBAvets
google.com/alerts

Additionally information about each website and reasoning for its inclusion in the basic package of sites for military clients in transition is listed below.

Site #1: tinyurl.com/RealLifelines

This site is a part of the Department of Labor sponsored suite of websites. It is beautifully simple, yet remarkably deep. This is a good overall resource for researching a plethora of different aspects of military transition. Particularly helpful is a state-by-state list of directors including a name, phone number, and email address right at the top of the page for each state in the job search section. Other state-specific resources are listed next. This site provides a good hub for information on job accommodation resources, benefits, and support services.

Site #2: tinyurl.com/FedsHireVets

This site has a good overview of the Federal job landscape and what to expect when one wants to transfer to a government opportunity from military service. It seems to provide a good background for establishing a plan and managing the hiring process.

Site #3: tinyurl.com/StateIncomeTaxes

Site #4: tinyurl.com/usaaBestPlaces

One scenario one will see as veterans approach transition is that some know exactly where they want to live, some want to stay where they are, and others say it all depends on the job they get. For the people in that last group, these two sites can provide location research information. Retirees might like to know how their military pension will be taxed or not based on where they decide to live. That is where site number three comes in handy. It is a page from Military.com that addresses this issue and how to contact Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) to have state withholding taken from pension checks if desired. It is also recommended to reference USAA and HireAHero.org's Annual Best Places for Vets Jobs Report. This may prove to be an invaluable resource that transitioning military members will want to reference again and

again during their transition. In this report, several important factors are considered in the ranking such as: DoD contractors in the area, number of government jobs in the area, military skill related jobs, presence of institutions of higher learning, proximity to VA Medical Services, and a few other factors. There is also a lively discussion about each year's results as people who live in the ranked or non-ranked areas discuss the rankings. Another useful aspect is the ability to create a personal top 10 list based on how one answers a few questions.

Site #5: tinyurl.com/MyNextMove

My Next Move for Vets is an O*Net based tool that is specially branded for vets. It is a wonderful resource for career research including keywords for knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality. This site also highlights technology and education requirements as well as salary and outlook information. There is a short summary for each career and a cross-reference for similar positions in the different branches of the military.

Site #6: ResumeEngine.org

This web-based resume tool was developed through a partnership between HiringOurHeros.org (of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation) and Toyota. It has been hailed as the next generation military skills translator. The site requires registration to create a user profile. Once logged on, one can progress through the steps to create a well-branded, contemporary, personal resume. The resume can then be downloaded into a Word document or PDF file for further editing or to print copies for interviews. A twenty minute video tutorial showing the capabilities of the site is at tinyurl.com/ResumeEngineVideo.

Site #7: GIjobs.com

There is an extensive listing of military friendly employers, schools, franchises, and sites maintained at GIjobs.com that is updated annually. The job board and pay calculator are handy tools that are also available on this website.

Site #8: tinyurl.com/LinkedInVets

Next is LinkedIn. This site is a key tool for most people who are job searching these days. However, there are a few particulars transitioning military members should be aware of to maximize their use of LinkedIn. First, LinkedIn offers a free upgrade to a premium job search account for transitioning service members. Vets need to create and complete their free LinkedIn profile first. Once the profile is complete, they can go to tinyurl.com/LinkedInVets and request to join the group there. This LinkedIn Job Seeker Subscription Group is a subgroup of the Veteran Mentor Network. Joining that group not only gets the transitioning military mem-

ber a free one-year upgrade but also introduces them to using groups on LinkedIn, one of the most powerful features for professional networking and job searching online.

Site #9: tinyurl.com/SBAvets

This site is from the U.S. Small Business Administration and is a very nice online resource for vets who want to learn about starting their own business. The business start-up basics are covered as well as information on becoming a government contractor, qualifying as a vet owned business, searching for special loans and grants to start, as well as inspirational success stories about vet owned businesses.

Site #10: google.com/alerts

Google Alerts is a way to automatically learn of new search results about particular interests. One can enter specifics on the topic of interest and Google will send an email of new results at the interval you specify, such as daily or weekly updates. Vets can set up automatic searches about companies and industries they are watching. It is also recommended that job seekers set up a Google Alert for their own name in order to see what recruiters will see when they “Google” the job seeker.

About the author

Stevie Puckett is the founder and creative director at SparksPress.com where she is a blogger and podcaster. She is a career counselor by training and a webmaster and content creator for the fun of it! She earned the BS at Oklahoma State University, the MA at Seton Hall University, and the Career Counseling Certificate at the University of California at San Diego. As a military dependent, she has experienced many moves. Through those relocations, she has come to recognize the positive aspects of that type of career challenge. She also experienced her family’s own transition from active duty as of June 2013.

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