



VET CENTER

"Dedicated to serving those who have served"

Presentation to WACRAO

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Department of Veterans Affairs
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The top portion of the slide features a blurred image of the United States flag, showing the stars and stripes. The stars are on the left, and the stripes extend across the top.

Department of Veterans Affairs and Vet Centers

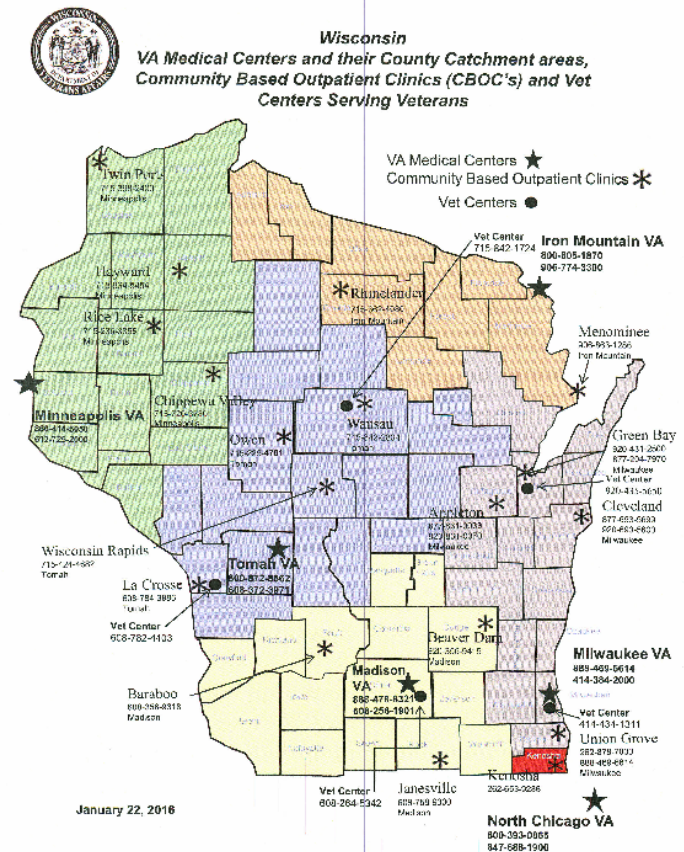
- **When the Veteran exits the Department of Defense, they assimilate under the VA for benefits: The VA is the overarching umbrella connecting Veterans world-wide**
- **Largest health care system in the world with over 360 hospitals and 1800 outreach clinics**
- **Vet Centers are small, mental health and readjustment clinics**
- **Training and treatment are specific to issues Veteran returning from combat experience**
- **Also assist in locating resources for Veterans**

Wisconsin Vet Center Coverage

"There are VA health services near you"

Outstations:

- Eau Claire
- Balsam Lake
- Menomonie
- Chippewa Falls
- Hayward
- Spooner
- Ladysmith
- Stevens Point
- Rhinelander
- Wisconsin Rapids
- Hudson
- Barron



Contrasting Core Values: Veterans vs. Millennials

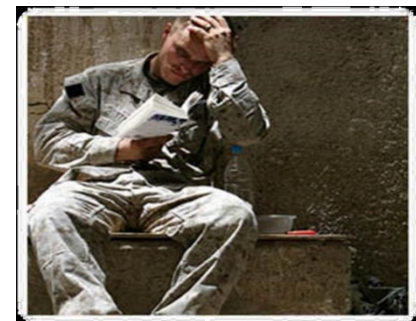
DoD (Dept. of Defense)	Navy / USMC	Air Force	Army	Millennials Aged 8 to 27 Birth Years: 1981-2000
Integrity Ethics Honor Courage Loyalty	Honor Courage Commitment	Honor Loyalty Duty Respect Selfless Service Integrity Personal Courage	Integrity Ethics Honor Courage Loyalty	Achievement Avid consumers Civic Duty Confidence Diversity Extreme fun. Fun! High morals Highly tolerant Hotly competitive Unique Individual Like personal attention Self confident Sociable Members of global community Most educated generation Extremely techno savvy Extremely spiritual
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>Warrior Ethos:</p> <p><i>I will always place the mission first.</i></p> <p><i>I will never accept defeat.</i></p> <p><i>I will never quit.</i></p> <p><i>I will never leave a fallen comrade.</i></p> </div>				

What do student Veterans and civilian students have in common?

- Many are first-generation college students that do not have resources, such as parental assistance, in navigating the higher education system
- In some ways, Veterans appear very much as a transfer student:
 older, don't stick around much on campus, *"been there, done that"*
- They want as much information provided BEFORE they get to campus as possible; provide the same information as you would to new or transfer students regarding your campus

Veterans are very concerned about:

- Using their GI benefits wisely
- Being singled out as the "token Veteran"



The Vet Center Difference: Servicing Combat Zone Veterans

How can colleges/universities be helpful to student Veterans?

- Create ways to foster independence and self-exploration, but give guidelines, step-by-step
- Provide resources/information that Veterans would benefit from: share with instructors / professors, so that they can remind all students
- Make transitions as seamless as possible for Veterans
- Keep things clear, task-oriented, the more detail the better (mission-focused); gray areas are hard to navigate
- Remember that group work is very anxiety producing, speech class, etc.: accommodate if necessary
- Don't discount military culture. Remember, military culture discourages some of the core values of the millennials. Uniforms, rank structure, etc. Don't aim for "undoing," aim for "understanding" Veteran's perspective.



How can you help any student be successful?

1. Encourage them to identify their learning style: VARK Assessment
2. Foster independence: Every instructor should encourage students to seek them out during their office hours within two weeks of the start of the course
3. Have Veterans explore their strengths and validate the education/career path they are seeking: STRONG Interest Inventory is a good tool for this.
Most college counseling services or advising/career services have this assessment available for students to take
3. Beef up their writing skills: Provide a handout regarding Purdue OWL on-line and Youtube videos so they can learn as needed
4. Make them aware of the writing center, computer labs, math labs and encourage them to visit BEFORE they start to struggle
5. Help students improve their on-campus support network:
Suggest that every student go to 2 to 3 club/organization meetings:
provide list that is on-line or -- which could be the club in their major



The Vet Center Difference

Groups that have been successful for younger Veterans

“Wellness Warriors” Time-Limited Group

~Can be adapted to any wellness center~

Facilitator: Readjustment Counselor

Personal Trainer: Wellness Director, Family Y, Veteran

Format: The group will be a time-limited, on-going group that meets weekly for 90-120 minute sessions: 8 sessions.

Maximum participants: 10

General overview:

Veterans participate in a wellness activity at the Family Y (45 minutes), led by a Personal Trainer who is a Veteran. Then, group meets for 30 minutes afterwards to process what they did/learned. Fosters connection to each other and the campus. Veterans receive a three-month family membership for the duration of the eight weeks. The ending of the group culminates with an activity event (5k walk/run, kayaking events, etc.)



The Vet Center Difference

Groups that have been successful for younger Veterans

“Warriors Unplugged:” Play guitar, and interact with other Vets

Time-Limited Pilot Group: All skill levels. Maximum participants: 6

Facilitator: Readjustment Counselor (Vet Center provided the time, place and guitars, if needed)

Format: Time-limited, on-going group that meets 2X/month for 90 minute sessions
8 sessions.

General overview:

Music is powerful. It can help us get through a myriad of health challenges as well as soothe our souls. This is a supportive group which infuses “all things music,” and will help Veterans improve mental and physical wellness.

Talkin’ and pickin’: 15 – 25 minutes processing, then playing – with wrap-up



The Vet Center Difference

Groups that have been successful for younger Veterans

“TED Talk Roundtable”

Facilitator: Readjustment Counselor
(Vet Center picks the TED Talk and provides the questions and facilitation)

Format: The group will be a time-limited, on-going group that meets weekly for 90 minute sessions: 8 sessions.

General overview:

This is a way for Veterans who wish to participate in a group on a monthly basis, Members will watch a TED Talk (20 minute lecture on-line) so all have the same knowledge provided by the TED Talk. They discuss it through the Round table process, which is a form of academic discussion and debate, with each person given an equal right to participate. Members improve their communication skills and connection with others, and fosters critical thinking skills.



The Vet Center Difference

Groups that have been successful for younger Veterans

“Becoming a Clear, More Confident Communicator”

Facilitator: **Readjustment Counselor**

Format: The group will be a time-limited, on-going group that meets weekly for 90 minute sessions: 8 sessions.

General overview:

A general topic regarding elements of communication will be introduced each session. Communication entails not only verbal and nonverbal expression of thoughts and feelings, but the corresponding communication of attentive/active listening.

We often forget that our communication pattern changes when we are tired, stressed out, frustrated, or angry. This group will explore ways to manage stress and anger as well as help you become a more effective communicator and listener, and gain more control in your life.



Thank you for your kind attention and your
commitment to helping Veterans be successful.
Questions?

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