Outline

• What is a Veterans Treatment Court?
• Why have them?
• Who are our Veterans?
• What are our Veterans Needs?
Veterans Treatment Courts

- Hybrid Drug and Mental Health Treatment Courts using the Drug Court Model. Principals of both Drug & Mental Health Courts
- Addition of U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs representatives, state and local agencies, and volunteer Veteran mentors.
- Target those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Jan 08 – First opened in Buffalo, NY.
- January 15 – Over 230 VTCs, many are being planned.
Who is in a Veterans Treatment Court?

Prior or Current Service in the U.S. Armed Forces

• Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard
• Active Duty, Reserves, National Guard
• Anyone who has served *regardless of discharge* (VA)
VTC Mentor/Peer Programs

• Volunteers with prior or current military service
• Help Veterans navigate the Court, VA, and treatment systems
• Assess “other needs” and help adjust to civilian life
• Help the Veteran and Veteran’s family receive the services they need to be productive members of society
Why have a VTC?
Why a VTC?

- Veterans have different needs
- Veterans have unique resources
- Transition from Military Service
- War and trauma can have significant impact
JFV: A Professional Services Division of NADCP
Size of Active Duty Military

- US Army 541,291 38%
- US Navy 317,237 22%
- US Air Force 333,772 23%
- US Marine Corps 195,338 14%
- US Coast Guard 42,357 3%

Total Active Duty 1,429,995 (.45% of the US Population serve in the Active Military based on a US Population of 317.8 Million)
• There are 850,880 Reserve and National Guard in service
• 254,000 Reservists and 332,000 National Guard members have deployed to OEF/OIF
• Increased stress on families, employment, and housing
KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Despite our rivalries we’re all family, but no one likes being called by their brother’s name.
How many Veterans?

• 21.9 Million Veterans (10% Female)

• 2.5 million deployed to combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001

• 52,310 Wounded, as of 22 Jan 15

• 6,847 Killed (hostile and non-hostile) 22 Jan 15

• Operation Inherent Resolve and Freedom Sentinel replaced Operation New Dawn and Enduring Freedom
Learning Objectives

• Understand the five basic discharge types

• Identify the eligibility and service availability of treatment for veterans of various discharge types

• Recognize the implications of accepting various types of discharged Veterans into your court model
Military Culture

• **Culture** is the way of life for a society. As such, it includes codes of:
  – *Manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior such as law and morality,* and systems of belief as well as the arts and *gastronomy.*

• **Cultural Competence** refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.

• Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.
Warrior Ethos

Before
• Sense of purpose
• Identity
• Morality
• Belonging
• Honor
• Sacrifice

During and After
• Prevent asking for help
• How does the Warrior become the Veteran
• Suffer in Silence
• Pride in “Embracing the Suck”
Military Culture =
History + Training + Experiences
There is no Unified Culture

- Numerous Sub-cultures
- Collectivistic vs. Individualistic
- Why you join
- What is your role
- Combat vs. Support
- Deployed
- Which Generation
- Length of Service
Transition to Veteran

• Discharge
• Loss of support
•Disconnected from civilian society
• Loss of Identity
• Duty and Honor
• Where to go for assistance?
Women Veterans

- Women comprise approximately:
  - 14.5% of all active duty military
  - 18% of all National Guard and Reserves
  - 6% of VA health care users

- 8% of the Veteran homeless population are women

- In FY 2011 – VA served nearly 198,908 homeless, at-risk, or formerly homeless Veterans. Of those, 7.7% (15,303), were women

- 2 times more likely to become homeless than non-Veteran women
Substance Abuse

Among active duty service members:

• Heavy drinking (five or more drinks per occasion at least once a week) self-reported at 20%, 27% among those with high combat exposure.
  – Heavy drinking is higher among 18 to 34 age group than civilians.

• Prescription drug misuse doubled from 2005 to 2008 (4% in 2005 to 11% in 2008)

Dept of Defense Behavioral Health Survey - 2008
Suicide

- Approximately 20% of all suicides are Veterans
- One study indicated that women Veterans are 2-3 times more likely to die by suicide than non-Veteran women
- 50% of enrolled Veterans in college, have contemplated suicide
- VA indicates 22 Veterans die by suicide each day, 8030 per year!
- In 2013, 479 Active duty, reserves and national Guard died from Suicide
Suicide Profile

- Male
- White/Caucasian
- Non-Hispanic
- Under 30 years of age
- Junior enlisted (E1-E4)
- Educated through high school

- Most had at least one deployment
- Primary methods are firearms and hanging
- Primary behavioral health diagnosis was mood and adjustment disorders
- Failed intimate relationships and administration/legal problems were most common psychological stressors indicated
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

• An trauma disorder caused by a traumatic event (e.g., combat, disasters, terrorism, serious accidents, or physical or sexual assault)

• Includes 4 types of symptoms:
  1. Re-experiencing or reliving the trauma, such as having flashbacks, nightmares, or becoming very upset when reminded of the trauma
  2. Avoiding places or people because they remind one of the trauma, isolating from others, and/or feeling numb
  3. Increased arousal, such as feeling on guard, being irritable, having trouble sleeping or startling easily.
  4. Negative changes in thoughts and mood associated with the trauma, such as not recalling specifics of the event, persistent negative emotions, negative beliefs about oneself or the world

• Symptoms may lead to problems in functioning in social or family life, work, and school.
How common is PTSD among Veterans?

- **Vietnam War** – 15% men/8% women (31%/27% est. lifetime prevalence)
- **Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm** – 10%
- **Operations Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)** – 14%
  - Est. 300,000 suffering from PTSD or major depression (2010)
- **Repeated deployments increase the likelihood of PTSD**
Combat-Related
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- TBI is an injury to the brain from an external force.
- The external force could be from a rapid acceleration and deceleration, impact, and blast waves.
- TBIs are classified as Mild, Moderate and Severe
- TBI can cause temporary or permanent impairment to cognitive, physical and social functioning.
- These symptoms can also be from co-occurring medical conditions such as post-traumatic stress, chronic pain, or other medical problems. Patients who feel that they have continuing symptoms should see their VA healthcare provider for referral.
- VA has great resources for further information on the TBI screening, guidelines for assessment and treatment, and published education products. All are freely accessible on the web. Some reference websites include the following: www.polytrauma.va.gov; www.healthquality.va.gov; www.Publichealth.va.gov
Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

- MST is sexual harassment and/or sexual assault that occurs in military settings
- 60% of women with Military Sexual Trauma also suffered from PTSD
- MST is not a diagnosis, but a type of trauma
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 100 men report experiencing MST

Number of Positive MST Screens in VA (2002-2008)²

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<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
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<td>61,126 (1.1%)</td>
<td>59,690 (19.9%)</td>
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VA Screening, 2002-2008
Unemployment

• In 2013, there were 722,000 Veterans unemployed.
• Unemployment rate for Veterans was 6.9%.
• For Gulf War II (Post 9/11) Veterans, the rate is 9%.

• On any given night it is estimated 49,333 Veterans are homeless

• Homelessness among Veterans declined between 2010 and 2011, with a net decrease of 10.7% (8,114 people)

• In 2011, the estimated number of Veterans who used an emergency shelter or transitional housing program at any time from October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011 was 141,448 Veterans.

• In FY 2011, the VA served nearly 198,908 homeless, at-risk, or formerly homeless Veterans. Of those, 7.7%, were women.
Veteran Treatment Courts

• First court 95% Success Rate
• Needs to be a collaborative effort
• Information flow is imperative
• Mentors increase success
• Stay in your lane