

***VIRTUAL LEARNING
CLASSROOM: CULTIVATING
VETERAN ENGAGEMENT***

**SESSION 1: STAGES OF
CHANGE AND LAYING THE
GROUNDWORK**

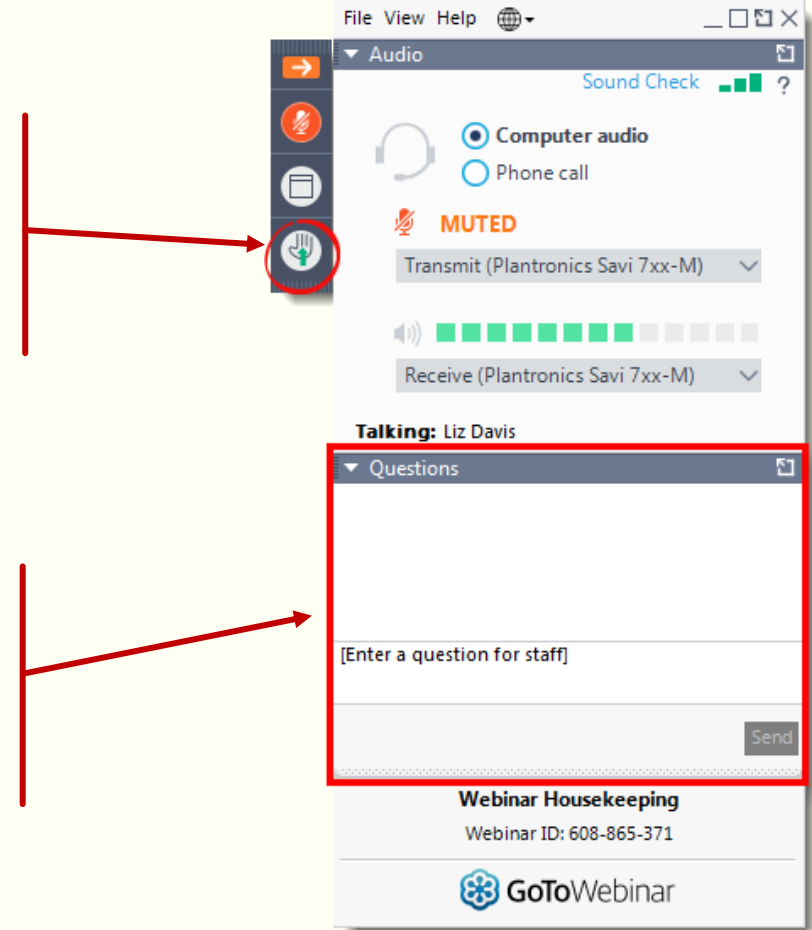
April 27th, 2020



We want to hear from you!

If you have a question, and want to speak, **raise your hand** to get your mic unmuted

If you don't want to speak, use **the question box** to ask a question and we'll answer!



Meet Your Instructors



Nicole LaCorte-Klein, MA, CRC

Training Consultant at Atlas Research, Nicole brings years of experience providing job placement, vocational case management and direct service to individuals who are homeless. Nicole has provided technical assistance to HVRP, SSVF and other Veterans Administration staff for years, offering her experience as both direct service provider and trainer.



Cori Di Biase

NVTAC Project Director at the Manhattan Strategy Group, Cori has provided services and consultation to support veterans and civilians in employment for more than twenty years. Cori prides himself on serving the staff and leaders who have dedicated themselves to serving our country.



Cindy Borden

As the Director of Technical Assistance and Training for the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV), Cindy conducts training, develops resources, and provides intensive coaching in program design and implementation to veteran service organizations. Cindy brings more than 20 years of experience in both direct service and technical assistance to help organizations increase capacity and improve services.

Course Schedule

Introduction and Stages of Change: 4/27

Trauma Informed Care: 4/29

CoP: Trauma Informed Care: 5/7

Motivational Interviewing: 5/18

Peer Support Strategies: 5/20

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- *All events at 2pm ET, unless otherwise noted.*

Course Schedule: Future Topics (June Dates, TBD)

- Customized Employment and Discovery
- Planning and Goal Setting
- Career Search & Opportunity Matching
- Employer Engagement

Missed Connections

- Have you have worked with a veteran who:
 - Has repeatedly made appointments with you or others, but ends up missing them?
 - Is very enthusiastic about work one day, but apathetic (or just absent) the next?
 - Has accepted a job offer, but stops showing up after a short period of time?
- Using the question box, or by raising your hand, please tell us your thoughts on why this change occurs.

Who are We Talking About?

- Veterans who we cannot consistently engage.
- Veterans whose decisions change quickly, and for reasons we can't understand.
- Veterans who have barriers to employment and career development – but barriers we typically cannot identify.

The Purpose of this Class, and this Course

- Today: Using the **Stages of Change**, we'll explore what's likely happening 'behind the scenes' for veterans who:
 - Do not readily engage in a career search, or
 - Do not maintain engagement, even after having found employment.
- The course as a whole: We'll look at means by which veterans who are dis-engaged or **ambivalent** can be engaged, and how we can cultivate:
 - (**Intrinsic**) Motivation;
 - Perseverance; and
 - Momentum.

Veteran Dis-Engagement: Our Responses

- Frustration
 - “If he won’t show up for appointments, there’s nothing I can do!”
- Blame
 - “She doesn’t want to be helped. Either that, or she’s just lazy!”
- Guilt & Disappointment
 - “I must be doing something wrong. If I were better at this, I’d find a way to help him be successful.”

Challenge: A lack of information begets frustration.

The Guilt-Free Grantee

A Series of Ridiculous Questions:

- How do you cultivate career success for someone who will not speak to you?
- What are some good interview tips for a candidate who tends not to keep their appointments?
- How do you ensure retention for a veteran in a job in which they are very unhappy?

Challenge: Disconnect between the situation and the practice we typically apply.

Challenge: Timing of Services

- *When* we deliver a service is as important as the quality of the service;
 - Focusing on a job search with a veteran too 'early' is as counter-productive as asking about retention 'too late'.

Consider the Phrase:

- “Meeting the veteran where they are.”
 - Often, this is literally true, as outreach is conducted in transitional housing, in shelters, and on the streets;
 - It is further true that HVRP Grantees ‘meet veterans where they are’ by delivering services to meet their immediate needs;
 - Finally, HVRP staff work to honor the perspective and priorities of the veterans they serve.
 - However, in another sense, the phrase reflects an over-simplification.

Where the Veteran “Is”:

- For veterans who have been homeless and unemployed for prolonged period of time, consider the following life factors:

Social Connections	Income Generation
The Presence of Trauma	Reliance on Benefits
Lack of Recent (Formal) Work Experience	Freedom & Flexibility

QUESTIONS?



Introducing: The Stages of Change (Trans-Theoretical Model)

A framework for understanding the veteran's:

- Transition from a *life* in homelessness, to a stable housing and career employment.
- Motivation (or seeming lack of motivation) in the process.
- Decision making at various stages.
- Support and service needs – what we can do - throughout the process of transition.

The Stages of Change

Stage of Change	Description	Practitioner Response
Precontemplation	Unaware of the need for change; unable or unwilling to change.	Establish rapport; Explore risks & rewards of current circumstances; Meet immediate needs.
Contemplation	Ambivalent; Uncertain.	Weigh Pros and Cons; Talk about work, without forcing choices.
Preparation	Considering options; Asking questions; Expressing willingness to change.	Explore options; Set goals; Clarify roles – your role, and the veteran’s.
Action	Taking steps toward change.	Provide support and services; actively plan and assess; ‘Celebrate or Recalibrate’ as goals are met, or not.
Maintenance	Some goals have been met; Significant change has begun.	Review and revise goals, as needed; provide support, as agreed.

With the Stages of Change, We See:

- The veteran is not 'resisting' assistance. They are:
 - Unable to see the possibility of change;
 - Unsure what it will entail, or how to proceed; and
 - Uncertain of their ability to achieve it.
- The multiple additional factors that inhibit change, including:
 - Social connections;
 - Cultivated habits and skills of survival; and
 - Comfort.

Incorporating the Stages of Change

Challenges:

- Even in clinical settings, there is no 'sharp divide' between one stage and another – and veterans can move 'forward' or 'backward' in the stages.
- There is no direct correlation between the stages of HVRP service delivery and the stages of change.
- The Stages of Change represent an extremely complex mesh of factors in the veterans life; from our vantage point, we are unlikely to understand, much less impact, most of them.

For our purposes, the Stages of Change are not a 'practice', they are a lens.

Challenge: What We're Trained to Do

- The skills we bring to workforce development don't work in Contemplation or Precontemplation.
- Our standard practices in workforce development – the steps we take to support a veteran's success – are likely to work against our goal to build engagement with a veteran in the early Stages of Change.

The Stages of Change and Timing of HVRP Services

- Essential to plan service delivery through the lens of the Stages of Change:
 - **Question:** If a veteran is in the 'Precontemplation' phase, how might that influence the outcome of a formal assessment to measure career preferences and capacity?
- Similarly, outreaching to employers is premature in the case of a veteran who is in the 'Contemplation' stage.
- While we do not ever want to withhold HVRP services, it is important to consider the Stages of Change when we're discussing enrollment with the veteran, as well as other aspects of service delivery.

QUESTIONS?



Factors to Consider in the Change Process

Social Connections

- For individuals who have been homeless, or have experienced housing instability, for extended periods of time, their social networks are likely to have changed considerably.
- Practically, it is nearly impossible to maintain meaningful social connections between people who are and are not homeless.
- It is vital to remember what we're asking a veteran to sacrifice when committing to seek employment and housing.

Factors to Consider in the Change Process

The Presence of Trauma

- Extended periods of homelessness are inherently traumatic.
- The presence of trauma can cause:
 - Anxiety
 - Difficulty concentrating, setting goals, and processing new information
 - Challenges to memory and focus
 - **Dissociation** – a ‘lack of continuity between thoughts, memories, surroundings, actions, and identity’
 - Difficulty forming connections with other people.

Factors to Consider in the Change Process

Income Generation

- Homelessness requires skill, and a great deal of effort.
- The nature of the skills developed can tell us about a veteran's preferences for employment.
- However, they are unlikely to have increased the veteran's self esteem, an belief in their ability to work.
- Reliance on benefits and public resources, further, has a significant impact on how the veteran approaches generating income, acquiring resources, and relates to other public programs – like HVRP.

Factors to Consider in the Change Process

Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation is...	Extrinsic Motivation ALONE is...
...Motivation that is ours, that reflects our priorities, our commitment, and our aspirations.	...Compelled by external factors, such as the fear of punishment, or a desire to conform to someone else's expectations.
...Sustainable, strong, and able to weather some degree of resistance.	...Unsustainable, as it will not continue in the absence of the external factor that created it.

QUESTIONS?



Stages of Change and Veteran Retention

Workforce Development is Nearly Unique Among Human Services

Social Security Benefits

- Narrow Eligibility, Strictly Reviewed
- Application Process is Intensive for the Potential Beneficiary
- Once enrolled, the Beneficiary is Required to do Little More than Maintain Eligibility

Workforce Development

- Eligibility Designed to Target Audience, but Less Restrictive
- Application Process is Typically Immediate, and Functional to the Process
- Once the recipient is enrolled, much more effort is expected and required of them

A Veteran's Typical Experience with Human Services

- Following directions, 'jumping through hoops', and working the system to attain basic resources;
- Spending significant time and energy to interact with an array of acronyms; and
- Often, if not in every case, working with staff who don't have the time to build any sort of meaningful relationship with them.

Remember...

The veteran who got a job, and then disappeared.

Veteran Retention

Now let's re-imagine the steps that lead to a veteran leaving employment after only two weeks:

- When we met, the veteran was in the 'Contemplation' phase – considering employment, but by no means committed to it.
- The presence of trauma affected the way he makes decisions and plans for the future.
- As he was used to working with a Case Manager who gave him 'assignments' to receive benefits and resources, the veteran took our 'guidance' in seeking employment the same way: he followed our lead, without ever really making the goal his own.

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E-mail questions to:

contact@nvtac.org

Continue the conversation at:

nvtac.org/nvtac-knowledge-network/