

**NVTAC VIRTUAL LEARNING  
CLASS:  
VETERAN ENGAGEMENT**

**MODULE 4: CULTIVATING  
PEER SUPPORT**

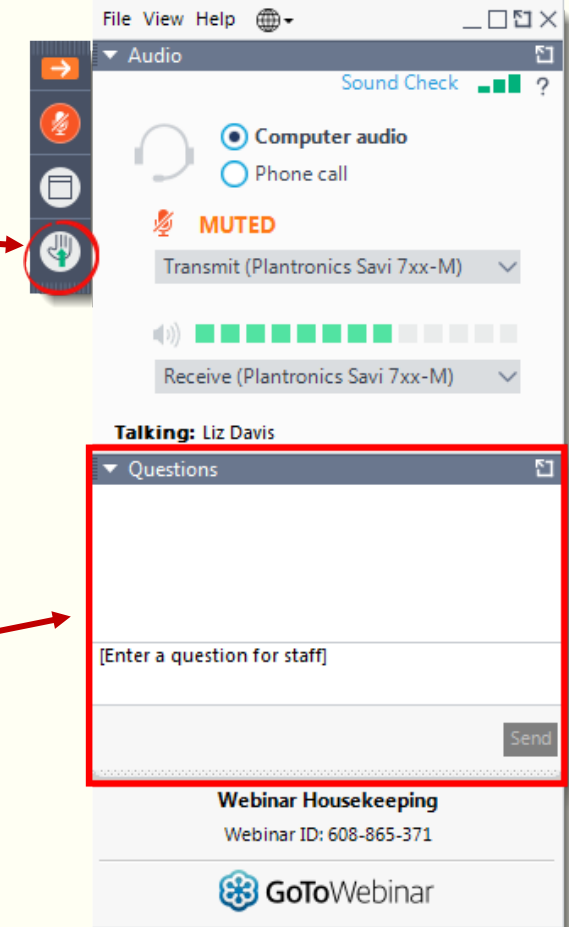
May 20th, 2020



# 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

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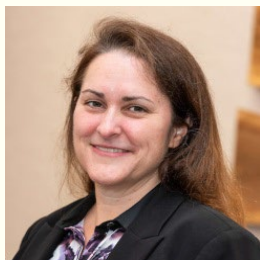
## **Nicole LaCorte-Klein, MA, CRC**

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

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Introduction and Stages of Change:	4/27
Trauma-Informed Care:	4/29
<i>CoP: Trauma Informed Care:</i>	<i>5/7</i>
Motivational Interviewing:	5/18
<b>Cultivating Peer Support:</b>	<b>5/20</b>
<i>CoP: Motivational Interviewing</i>	<i>6/4</i>

## Course Schedule: Phase II

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Basics of of Customized Employment and Discovery in Veteran Services	6/15
Guided Group Discovery	6/17
Customized Employment	6/24
Employer Engagement & Retention	6/26
<i>CoP: CE and Discovery</i>	<i>7/9</i>



# **BITS & PIECES**

# Stages of Change - Review

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.

# Peer-to-Peer Services

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Any instance wherein we're harnessing the natural power of peer relationships, social connections, and knowledge exchange, either in:

- Direct Services; or
- In an Advisory Capacity.



# Working Definitions

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## Peer

- Shared identity based on:
  - Veteran status;
  - Experience of homelessness;
  - Experience of incarceration;
  - Another shared experience or feature?

## Mentor

- Someone who:
  - is closer to our goal than we are; and
  - Can guide in the path from where we are, to where we want to be.

# A Reminder about Trauma Informed Services

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- Peer support is a core principle in Trauma Informed services.
  - Peers have a much better knowledge of the experience of Trauma, and are most trustworthy in addressing it.
  - Trauma Informed approaches are typified by collaboration – the veteran maintains control of their own services, but is surrounded by tangible support.
  - Peers are in the best position to advise us, and our agencies, on how best to craft services to promote veteran control and trust, and to avoid re-traumatization.

# Hallmarks of Trauma Informed Services

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**Veteran Empowerment**

**Choice**

**Collaboration**

**Safety**

**Trustworthiness**



# Motivational Interviewing & Peer Services

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- Motivational Interviewing is built on a trusting connection, and the capacity to reflect with a person who will not judge us for our actions, choices, or behaviors.
- For better or worse, it is easier to trust someone like us, where we know we'll have a foundation of shared experience.

A wild over-simplification: at the end of a truly difficult day, do you want to go to a mixer to meet new people, or spend the evening with a close friend?

# Priorities & Needs

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I spent 8 months in a foxhole in the desert. We were the first ones there in Desert Storm. We ate MREs for every meal. It wasn't very nice, but we didn't mind it. We weren't alone, and we didn't have neighbors who had nice things we didn't. I had my unit with me, and we were all in the same suck.

Sometimes, in the work that we do, we think that if we can help a veteran get off the streets and into an empty apartment, we've done a great job. But it's not that simple. It's hard to imagine if you're not used to it, but it can be easier to adjust to living on the streets than to living alone; especially if you have military experience.

Veterans need more than an empty apartment: we need to help them connect to people, and to have some cash in the pockets and some healthy ways to enjoy their time. We need to help them *reintegrate* into their community.

I always remind my staff: *homelessness isn't as bad as loneliness.*



**Sergio Dickerson, Vice President Of Client Service, American GI Forum  
US Army, Retired**





# MAINTAINING CONTACT

# Maintaining Contact

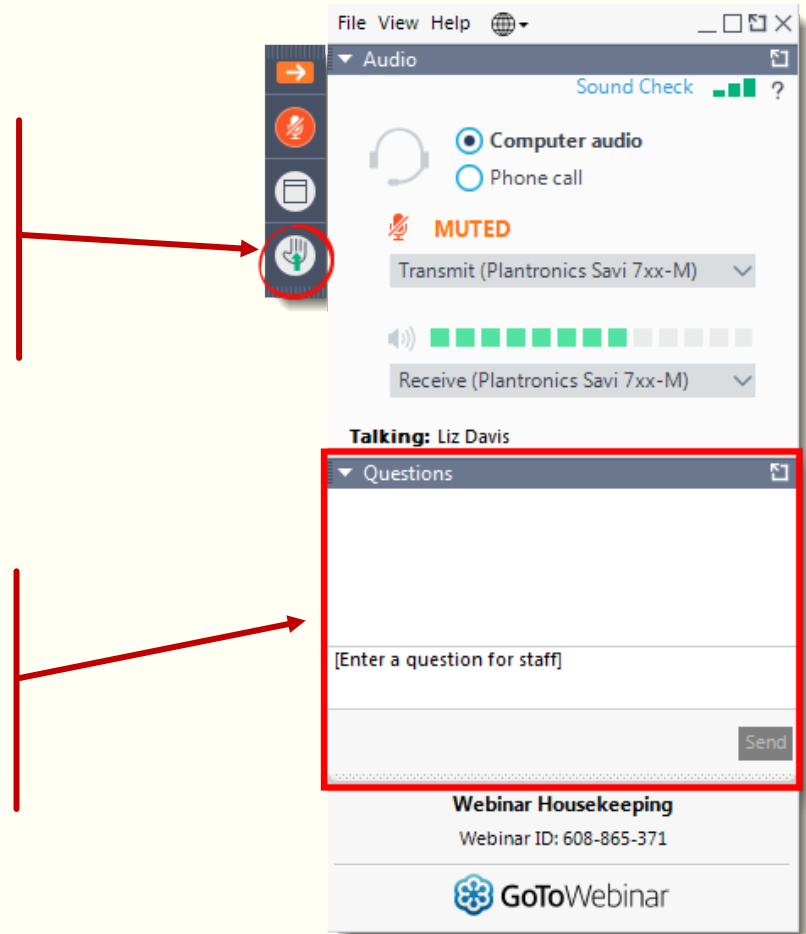
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- Poll: How likely are veteran 'alumni' of your program to stay in touch?
  - Very likely: most veterans stay in touch.
  - Somewhat likely: some stay in touch, but many do not.
  - Pretty unlikely: most veterans receive our services, then limit contact.
  - Very unlikely: it is a struggle to even get basic information from all but a couple veterans.

# How do you Maintain Contact with Veterans after Placement?

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# Motivation, Persistence, & Momentum

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The HVRP – and career development - process begins with **MOTIVATION**.

**PERSISTANCE** is cultivated through the process of career development, as the veteran becomes accustomed to the demands of work.

The culmination of the process comes with **MOMENTUM**, when the veteran's career development moves forward on its own power, and when the veteran can begin to convey motivation to others.



# Increasing Post-Placement Engagement: Strategies

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- Appreciation and Recognition Events
- Social Events
- Incentives (e.g. Bus/Subway /Gas Cards)
- When all else fails: ask.
- Veterans will often be more willing to commit time if you clearly explain how their time will serve another veteran.
- Your experience with a veteran will suggest whether they will be a good candidate to act as a mentor - now or in the future.



# MENTORSHIP

# Mentorship

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**There are many kinds of mentor programs.  
What kind do you use, or have you used in the  
past?**

# Steps: from the *National Mentoring Partnership*

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1. Recruitment
2. Screening
3. Training
4. Matching
5. Support
6. Closure



[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)

# Recruitment

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## Sources

- HVRP Alumni
- Employers
- Other Veteran and/or Homeless Serving Organizations

## Questions

- What is the purpose of the mentorship relationship?
  - Veteran Engagement
  - Social Capital
  - Industry Connections
- Specific goal determines the likely best mentor 'fit'.

# Screening

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## Considerations

- Veteran and Mentor Safety
  - Criminal Records?
- *Mentor* Preparedness
  - What impact could the relationship have on the Mentor?
- What do you need to learn about the mentor candidates for matching purposes?

## Questions

- Should agencies 'host' mentors, at least initially?
- Can mentorships be virtual?
- How will staff support both mentees and mentors from different backgrounds?

# Training

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- Ideally, mentors will have the same kinds of training on Trauma Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing, Discovery, and other techniques that you use.
- This may differ based on the purpose of the mentorship.
- **Questions:**
  - What training will be mandatory for mentors?
  - How can that training be easily provided?
  - What additional resources can you make available for interested mentors?





# Matching

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## Questions:

- What is the purpose of the mentorship?
- How important, and how thorough, is the mentor's 'peer' status?
- What have you learned about the mentee's personality through the process of service delivery?
- What have you learned about the mentor's personality, in the screening process?

# Support

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## Considerations

- Striking the balance between supporting the connection, and propping up a bad match.
- Mentor relationships can fail; that's fine, but we should learn from it!
  - What were the reasons?
  - What adjustment can be made?
- Opportunities for Reflection

## Questions

- What are the possible risks and benefits to both the mentor and mentee?
- What support does the mentor receive, outside of the mentor relationship?
  - Do you continue to support them in retention, or with supportive services?

# Closure

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- The *formal* mentor/mentee relationship should end.
  - Based either on a planned benchmark (3 months on the job, 1 month housed, apprenticeship completed, etc.), or a set time limit.
  - The 'deadline' can be extended at the agreement of both parties.
- Whether planned or un-planned, mentors and mentees should receive an exit interview for the purpose of:
  - Determining the need for further services/another mentor relationship; and
  - Overall program growth and improvement



# JOB CLUB

# Job Clubs

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- Semi-formal, facilitated peer gatherings to discuss issues related to career search and retention.
- *Often* peer-driven.
- Often sponsored by local American Job Centers.
- Can be formed alone, or in collaboration with other partners.

# Question

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**Do you partner with a Job Club provider? Who?**

**Do you facilitate your own Job Clubs?**

**Have they been beneficial? Why or why not?**

# Job Club Considerations, from the NYS DOL Job Club Tool Kit

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1. Is there a need?
2. Identify members
  - Current HVRP clients? Past clients? Future clients? Others?
3. Logistics, Group Size, Program Cycle, Schedule, Space (or Medium)
4. Specific Purpose
  - Engagement, Job Search Skills, Specific Training, Retention?
5. Add additional virtual tools.
  - Facebook, LinkedIn, Google groups, etc.
6. Identify a Facilitator
7. Market, Recruit & Implement
8. Monitor and Evaluate



# Foreshadowing: Guided Group Discovery

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- Process wherein a thorough strengths-based, and flexible 'assessment' process is facilitated for, and by, a group of veterans.
- Veterans are provided the tool with which to explore and guide their own career search, and to support one another.
- A approach that is both Trauma-Informed and 'Motivational', Guided Group Discovery add another layer of impact to the Job Club model.





# PEER LEADERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF HVRP

# Peer Leaders

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**What role do your client's peers play in the planning, service design, and governance in your agency or organization?**



# PEER SERVICES: SOME BASICS

# To cultivate a Sustainable Peer Initiative:

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- **Evaluate your Efforts:**
  - What is your Theory of Change?
    - What do you want to accomplish *in terms of results*?
    - How will you know you've failed or succeeded?
  - What do veterans say?
    - Planning Meetings
    - Satisfaction Surveys
    - Exit Interviews
- **Assign Staff to Lead the Effort:**
  - Empower them
  - Support them
  - Give them *time*



# PARTING THOUGHT

# Motivation, Persistence, and Momentum: Redux

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Consider which veterans you are serving, or you have served, who:

- Would benefit from peer support?
- Could offer peer support?
- Would benefit from offering peer support?

# Questions?

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**E-mail questions to:**

[contact@nvtac.org](mailto:contact@nvtac.org)

**Continue the conversation at:**

[nvtac.org/nvtac-knowledge-network/](http://nvtac.org/nvtac-knowledge-network/)



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