

- [Cindy] Hey, good afternoon again, everybody, and welcome to Session 4 of our virtual learning classroom. Today, we're going to be talking about training, placement, and retention. Next slide, please. Just a quick reminder that we are recording everything. So just to make sure that you're consenting to being recorded. Next slide.

And another reminder, this should all look familiar to you now since we're in Session 4 of these, but just remember that if you are submitting a written question through the questions box, you want to make sure that you select all panelists from the dropdown menu or you can just send a chat to everyone by doing everyone in the chatbox as well. If you want us to hear your voice, and we would love to hear you actually speaking today, just raise your hand.

Go to the Participants' tab next to your name and click on those three little dots, and you'll be able to see the little hand icon and you can raise it there as well. Next slide, please. And another reminder about closed captioning, there are two different ways that you can access closed captioning. The first is at the bottom left of your screen, you'll see a little dialogue bubble with the CC inside it.

You can click there or you can go to the far right of your screen and click on the three little dots there and then select Captions and Highlights from that if you need that closed captioning. Next slide. And here you can see again, this slide should be very familiar. We are in Session 4. So it's the final session of this series. Today you have me, Cindy and Cori as your prime facilitators, but the rest of the NVTAC team is here as well.

Next slide. And there you can see all of us, the full team with our contact information. And again, we encourage you to reach out to the lead for your region if you have additional questions. As I mentioned, this is the final session of this miniseries, this mini VLC series, but it's not the final part of HVRPTA.

So please reach out to us if you have additional TA needs or questions and you need additional support. Okay, next slide. All right. So as I said, today we're going to be talking about training and placement and support. We do encourage you, put your questions in the chatbox as we go through. I see a bunch of folks have already introduced themselves.

So it's great to see people back again. Next slide, please. And I am giving... I should have done this before I got to the slide, but it's fine. Just a disclaimer

again that we have to cover training, placement, and retention in our time today. That's a lot of topic to cover in, you know, a little over an hour. So we are going to be going fairly high level.

So again, questions in the chatbox, but anything that we can't answer today, we'll follow up with you individually as well. So please know that this is a teaser, if you will, of content. It's not all the content around these three topics. Okay. So when we're thinking about training, just to, sort of, lay the foundation here, when we're talking about training and HVRP, we want to talk for a minute about the idea of using a career pathways approach to training and to eventually placement in HVRP.

The career pathways approach is really thinking about where the veteran is now and eventually getting them onto a path that might lead to a career, so a job versus a career. And so when we think about the veterans we're serving, a job might be being a warehouse worker, whereas a career might be getting a CDL and becoming a licensed driver that opens up a lot of different career possibilities.

Certainly, in today's environment, the demand for CDLs is really high. So when we're thinking about a career pathways approach, we're thinking about getting the veteran on that path towards a career. However, not every veteran that's coming into our program, that's coming into HVRP is looking for a career either in the short-term or in the long-term.

And as we talked about, oh, I don't know, a week and a half ago, or maybe a week ago when we were talking about veteran outreach and engagement and then again when Nicole and Amy were talking about assessment and getting to know the veterans, our job as HVRP staff is to meet the veteran where they are and help them identify what their goal is, not to project what we think their goals should be.

And so a veteran may come into the program and may not want a career job. They may not want a career. They may be looking for a job. And that's okay. It's okay if they want that. Now, it could be that they want only a job because they think that's all they're capable of. And as case managers and employment specialists working with them, we might help them see their potential to do more than that, but it could be that that's all they want and that's all they need, and that's okay.

So we also have to be cognizant of the fact that many of the veterans that are coming into our program need income now, right? Especially if they're literally homeless, but even if they're sheltered homeless or in one of the housing programs like SSVF and they've been housed, they might need money now to meet their financial needs so that they can be stable.

And stability is their goal and they need money now to meet that stability. So for a veteran who's looking for money now for stability saying to that veteran, "Well, come join this training program, it's going to be six months, and in six months, you can make income," might not be where they're at, right? That might not be the best approach for them. They may say, 'Look, I need income now.'

And that's okay if they need income now. So we really need to balance and help them understand that need for that short-term need versus that long-term need. And for some of them, that short-term need might be what they need to fulfill that short-term requirement for income before they can start thinking about longer-term training and career goals.

And so when we're thinking about this, it's a process just like Nicole was saying a week ago when we were talking about assessment, there is a process here that we're going through. So some veterans may want to just focus on short-term goals. Some may be focused more on intermediate or long-term goals. And that's really okay.

Our job is to sort of help them figure out where they are and what is best for them. I'm already looking at the chat and I see there's a couple of comments. I see Tanya mentioned that right now, because of the labor market that we're in, there are a lot of veterans that... sorry, a lot of jobs that are offering training that can have potentially pretty big payoffs as far as salary in the long term and helping veterans look at those and think about those.

And we'll talk a little bit more about that when we get into placement in a few minutes. Next slide, please. So let's think about what the purpose of training is when we're talking about it from an HVRP perspective. Remember, this is all about HVRP training. So other programs have different ideas of the purpose of training or the goals of training and what constitutes training.

This is all about from an HVRP perspective. So when we're thinking about training, we really want to make sure that the training that we are offering and

providing to our veterans actually responds to a need and specifically a need that's in their IEP or that should be in their IEP, right? So the IEP is kind of your roadmap.

Ade, and Amy, and Nicole talked about that last Wednesday, that roadmap that the IEP is, and that map is actually telling you what kind of training is going to help them meet their employment goal. And so the training is in response to the need. We're not training just to train.

That training should also be very connected to what the veteran wants and needs, their goals, their interests, and also, it should be connected to what local employers need. So what are employer's need? What's in demand?

What kinds of skills are employers demanding? And so the training that HVRP is providing or connecting veterans to, has to both meet the veterans' needs and the employer's needs. As Cori mentioned on Monday, you know, employers are the other customers, the other clients in HVRP. And so this training is really connecting the needs of both of those groups.

And then, sort of, the ideal kind of training is something that has, sort of, an on the job piece that could include apprenticeships or other kinds of on the job training but that help the veteran not only gain skills, but also get a better sense of the reality of that workplace or that working environment, or the reality of that industry or that career path and what it seems like.

I guess it was... I'm not sure who it was and which day when we were talking about this. I guess it was Cori on Monday with employer engagement, that matching of employer and veteran, and we'll talk about that a little bit more in-depth in a minute, but we really want to make that connection.

We want to serve both. And when we can give a veteran a sense of both the skills they need and improving those skills but also a sense of what the culture of that job or that workplace is, that's even better. Next slide, please. So a word here about basic skills versus occupational training. Basic and life skills training.

I put on here a blanket statement. It says as necessary, but I would say for most HRVP participants, some kind of basic education and life skills training is part of their IEP because, for most of the veterans that are coming into our programs, there is some kind of gap there.

And whether that's because they haven't worked in many years and they just need a refresher on, kind of, workplace etiquette or whether they're coming in and they don't have that basic like reading level or math ability or those kinds of things, for most of the veteran who observed some kind of basic education or life skills, it's going to be part of their IEP because it's going to be necessary for them to be able to navigate whichever career they're choosing, right?

But that's basic skills. That's not the same thing as occupational training. And so when HRVP, when we talk about... And there's a quote here from the FOA. But when they're talking about that 80% requirement for training, they're talking about this occupational training.

So we're talking about training that could be OJT, on-the-job training. It could be an apprenticeship, it could be work-based learning. It could be any of those things, but it's connected to a job. Whereas things like life skills and financial management, those don't count towards the 80% training requirement.

That does not mean they're still not important and shouldn't still be part of the veteran's IEP if that veteran needs those skills in order to both obtain and maintain employment. Next slide, please. So when we're thinking about training and the training for HRVP participants, one of the things we need to consider is when does the veteran get the training that he or she needs.

And maybe there's multiple trainings that are identified in their IEP. But when do they get it and how do we go about either providing it ourselves or connecting them to that outside resource for training. And the first thing you need to do is you need to go into your HVRP budget and see how much money you have for training to pay for training and really look at it.

What is the money in there? What did you say you were going to use that money for? What kinds of trainings? And then start to think about, is it enough? For many people last year, they had too much in their training budget only because many training programs were closed because of the pandemic, right?

And so people had money set aside to pay for trainings and then those trainings didn't happen because things were closed down, but now in most parts of the country, things are open again and trainings were happening. So it's a good chance to look at your budget and see what you have in there, what do you have available, what kinds of trainings did you talk about so that you know what the sort of environment, the scope of what you can do.

Then you want to think about the sort of timetable for training for that individual veteran. As we know, every veteran is coming in a different place with different needs, with different environmental, situational barriers, personal barriers, personal assets. So really starting to think about when the training makes sense for that veteran. For some veterans, the training may make sense almost immediately upon enrollment and for others, it may be much later in the process of engaging with them or maybe it's this occupational training makes sense but only after these other basic skills or life skills or other kind of training has happened first.

So really starting to look at that, and again, that's on an individual veteran kind of level. And as I mentioned before, you know, some veterans may have a short-term need for income and for a job to address their immediate income needs. And once those are addressed, they may be in a better place to think about career pathways kinds of trainings, more intensive kind of training.

So maybe a veteran needs a job today so they can actually think about what their career is going to be tomorrow. And thinking about that, and when we talk with placements, I think it may come up in the placement section. But when and where you engage in the training, and when and where you decide to take credit for a placement may impact that.

If you have a veteran who comes in who needs money today but is really a great candidate, say for a CDL training, you may help them find a short-term, immediate job that gives them some income but not take credit for the placement, not count them as a placement, just get them that short-term job so that then you can connect them to the training and pay for their CDL training so that they can eventually get that career job that is better paying, that's more aligned with their skills and with their needs and with their interests.

And so really thinking about that. And again, whenever we're talking about spending money for HRVP, you really want to make sure you check in with your GOTR about your training dollars. I've already told you to look at your budget and see what you've got there. You may need to move money around, but really check in with your GOTR and make sure that what you are spending your training dollars on is an allowable expense for your grant.

Next slide, please. I'm not going to spend too much time on this slide because we talked about partnerships a lot on Monday a lot, a lot. You heard my voice

way too much. But when you're thinking about training, it really is a prime place where HRVP should be connecting with partnerships.

You may have significant amounts of money in your budget for training internally. Your program, your agency may have a great expertise in a particular kind of training, but I don't think I'm going out on a limb here when I say there is no single HRVP program anywhere who can do all of the training that all of the veterans in their program need in-house.

So that means you have to connect and use your partners and leverage the resources that you have. We talked a lot on Monday about the American Job Centers. One thing we didn't mention is that the American Job Centers have something called an Eligible Training Provider List. They're required to have this under WIOA, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and it's basically a list of trainers who have been approved to receive WIOA training dollars.

So WIOA training money can go to these providers to provide training. It doesn't necessarily mean that WIOA has those dollars right now, but these are approved trainers. And so that gives you kind of an initial list of folks who've already been vetted. They are approved.

In fact, there may be WIOA dollars that you could leverage for those trainers as well. So it's a great partnership to think about and connect to. You also want to think about community colleges, not in the sense of getting a degree from a community college but in the sense of the trainings, a lot of community colleges have certificate programs.

In some cases, they even have OJT programs. There's other things connected there. So really looking to community colleges to leverage those resources as well. And any conversation about training would be not comprehensive or not complete without at least a brief discussion of apprenticeship.

We don't have the time to go completely into apprenticeship today, but apprenticeship is really when we're talking about career pathways is really that that sweet spot that really all of the things we've talked about so far about helping veterans have access to income, helping them increase their skills, meeting employer demands and employer needs for skills, apprenticeships do all of that.

They're win, win, win. It's a career pathway. So the longer you're in it, your salary goes up, your benefits go up. So it really is a win, win for everyone. So when you're thinking about apprenticeships, you want to connect to your State Apprenticeship Office, but you also want to go to apprenticeship.gov to find out...the website is here about the registered apprenticeships through Department of Labor that you can find.

Excellent. Okay. I'm going to just pause for a second there and see maybe Cori or Dave, if we have any big questions or comments in the chatbox that we should address or notice.

- [Cori] I don't see anything new. The comment about jobs that are now offering training, which I think we're going to see more and more of, which is great. I don't see anything new. I did pop the link that was on the last slide for apprenticeships.

That's an apprenticeship job finder, just a great link. It's not every single possible apprenticeship, but it's a great place to start. And there's a usable link right in the chat for folks who might want to use that.

- Thanks, Cori. So now we're going to move on and talk a little bit about placement. So again, by the time you get to placing a veteran, there's a lot of things that you should know. And it says very clearly on this slide, ideally, because as I mentioned a few minutes ago, there are some veterans who will come into your program who want a job now, who need a job now, and who don't want you to mess with anything else except find me a job now.

I found you a job, you know, this week and they're happy and they're done. And hopefully, you've set up that they're going to check in with you. Cori will talk about that a little bit in retention, so there are those veterans who want this done quickly and you are able to quickly place them, and that's what the veteran wants and needs. But for the other veterans that are not those veterans, by the time you're getting to placement, you really should have a good sense of who this veteran is.

This goes back to Nicole's and Amy's, and Ade's discussion around assessment and getting to know the veterans. You should know who they are, what their barriers are, what supports they need, what their interests are, what kind of work environment they like, all of those kinds of things. You should have a good sense of what you can provide connected to those needs and addressing

those barriers internally and also which partners you're connecting to maybe for supportive services or for training or any of those things.

You also, hopefully at this point, have a good sense of employers In your employer network like Cori talked about on Monday that have positions and a culture that are in line with the veteran that you're trying to place, right? Again, this isn't ideal. We know that this is not always the case, but this is the ideal for someone who's not one of those short-term "I need a job now" kind of placements.

Next slide, please. So placement is really where everything that you've been doing in HRVP up to this point comes together. And so what you're really trying to make sure that you know at placement is when you think about the veteran, you know what the veteran's goals are, what they need, what kind of fit, that cultural fit that they need, that environmental fit.

Like I talked about a few minutes ago, are they looking...that, sort of, short to intermediate-term income need versus their long term career goals. On the employer side, you know what kind of skills the employer needs, what kind of environment the employer has and culture they have and who would fit into their culture, the management style of the supervisor, how flexible the employer is or can be.

Do they offer trading in-house? What kind of retention and turnover issues do they have with the employer? So ideally, you're knowing all of these things about both of the clients that you're serving and that this placement is going to serve. Next slide, please.

So as you're thinking about all that, there was a ton of things that I mentioned there around what you're supposed to know and what you're doing, but we're going to look at this, what you need to figure out, because I don't think anybody here, if I'm wrong, raise your hand or send me some kind of signal in the chatbox and say, "Cindy, you are totally wrong," but I don't know of anyone that has the perfect job.

I love my job. I am guessing many of you love your jobs because this work is not easy and you wouldn't do it I don't think if you didn't have some love for it. But nothing is perfect, right? Nothing is everything that we want in one place. And so what we're trying to figure out when we're making a match, a placement is what are those things that are most important?

And I'm going to look at this first from the veteran side of things and then from the employment side of things. So what is the most important thing to that veteran and then within that, what is most important? You are looking at both tangible things. So things that can be measured and intangible things. So from a veteran's perspective, the big thing that comes up that's tangible for all of us is money, right?

Compensation, how much am I getting paid? Do I have benefits? But then also things like, what are the hours in the schedule? What kind of skills...what's the workspace like? Where is it? Is it in a place that I can get to or not get to? And for one veteran, that salary thing might be the most important tangible consideration.

For another veteran, it might be the schedule. Perhaps you have a veteran who's a parent and has to work around childcare or other appointments. So for someone else, it might be the location. So what's the most important tangible consideration and/or what's the most important on the intangible side?

Intangible considerations are things like mission. For most of us doing this work, that mission, that purpose is very important. But when you think about veterans, part of the challenge some veterans have when they transition to the civilian workforce is they don't have that same sense of mission that they had during their time of service.

And so for some veterans, that mission, that purpose might be the most important factor in a job placement. Again, culture, flexibility. You know, will this employer allow me to come in an hour later than everybody else because I have to take a bus and the way the bus schedule runs, I can't get to work the same time, you know?

For a particular veteran, is the management style the most important thing? Do they either thrive really well under certain styles or not thrive under certain styles? Do they like to work alone? Do they like to work, you know, in a group? All of those kinds of things.

And so figuring out for the veteran and part of the case management that you've gone through, part of the some of the strategies that were discussed last week around motivation interviewing, some of the conversations you have throughout your case management with a veteran are to help them figure out what's most important. I think Nicole had said last week, you know, some of your

conversations are the last time you had a job, what was the best thing about it and what was the worst thing about it.

You know, sort of getting them to think about these things can help them figure out what is the most important for them. Next slide, please. At the same time, you're a ninja here and you're trying to figure out the same things on the employer side. So what is the most important thing for the employer?

And again, there are both tangible and intangible considerations from an employer perspective. So tangible things are things like the qualifications and the skills for the job, the compensation. Many employers have little or no flexibility. Especially larger employers may have, you know, very defined pay ranges, smaller employers may only have so much available to offer a particular position.

Maybe an employer has a position where there is no flexibility in schedule or hours. Like, they need somebody...maybe it's a receptionist position, for example, and somebody has to answer the phone between 8 and 5 p.m. and there's no flexibility there. But then there's also some intangible considerations around there and things like soft skills, you know, the ability to work as part of a team and communication skills, willingness to learn and flexibility.

Those kinds of things are intangible. And for some employers, their commitment to hiring veterans is an important intangible consideration. So having an understanding of that before you make a placement is really important. Next slide, please.

So the challenge here is to try to figure out of all of those things that we just talked about on both the employer side and on the veteran's side is which of the things are deal-breakers. If it helps to think of this in kind of a... It's a strange parallel, I get it, but like in a dating scenario, you know, what's the deal-breaker, right?

Oh, so, and so, I don't know, bites their nails and I can't stand it. It's crazy. You know, it's my pet peeve. That's a dealbreaker for me. Whatever that might be, you're trying to figure out what are the deal breakers on both the veterans' side and the employer's side. Because even if you... Let's say there's 100 considerations and the position meets 99 of those for the veteran but the one that it doesn't meet is the deal-breaker, the placement isn't going to last.

Same thing on the employer side, if the veteran meets 99 of the 100 things but the one thing that veteran doesn't have happens to be the deal-breaker for that employer, that placement is not going to work. And so you're trying to find like all those things, what are the things that are just non-negotiable for the veteran and for the employer.

You're balancing the needs of both because as I said, there is no perfect placement, there's no perfect job, there's no perfect employee. But if you can figure out, "This is Cori's deal-breaker," and you know going in about this employer, that that employer can't meet that need of Cori's, even if everything else looks great, there is no point in placing Cori with that employer because it's never going to work.

It's never going to last. And this is not a science, it's an art, but really thinking of it in this way and trying to figure out what those deal breakers are from both of those sides can really help have stronger, longer-lasting placements which helps both the veterans and the employers, both of your clients. Next slide, please.

Okay. I'm going to pause there. I saw that there was some good training examples or some other things in the chat. Cori, did you want to pull anything out before I hand things over to you to talk about retention?

- No, just John posted a lot of great resources for folks specifically in the Chicago area and then some others as well and an organization called National Able, some other resources that folks can look at that are there in the chat which just underlines that there are a lot of apprenticeship resources out there as you referenced.

You know, this is something that the federal government is very, very to. It's something that most state governments are very committed to. Certainly in cities like Chicago. I don't know about Los Angeles, but New York, you know, Atlanta Houston, there are going to be presumably city offices that are thinking about this too. So beyond that federal resource that we put out there, if you are curious about this and want to learn some more, you might want to do just a quick search, internet search on what's happening on the state level, what's happening on your city level, if you think that might be applicable because there's just a lot of resources.

This is something that I think everybody in workforce development is really excited about right now and it's something that we've seen work very well and coordination with HR, so just doubling down on that again and definitely some great resources from John as well. And then a question from William, can you exit a veteran in a past quarter? For example, we found four vets that found employment on their own in Q3.

Can I post it on the Q5 TPR?

- What I would say... I'm going to suggest... Who did you say that was, William, Cori? I'm going to ask William to email us separately. We're probably going to need William to connect with his GOTR around the process and especially if it was Q3. So anyway, yes.

So, William, connect with your TA lead and we'll connect you with your GOTR to, sort of, figure that out for you, okay?

- Sounds good. All right. So if there's nothing else in post, of course, please do continue to post those questions. And, Steve, thank you very much all for that great information. And I will take over here in retention and we can jump to the next slide, please. So the first question that I wanted to ask, and this is... We were going to do this with a poll, but we had a little technical glitch.

So we can just have folks drop this into the chat for us. When in this process do you start "doing retention?" Meaning, you know, we talk about retention, of course, we want to see veterans retained in their jobs, in their careers, but when do we start focusing on that as an aspect of the services that we're delivering?

So, folks, why don't you just drop that in the chat? When do you start thinking about retention in this process? And if we want to just... We could say our categories are outreach, intake, case management, the job development and placement phase, and then the post-placement phase. Where do you folks start thinking about this question of retention?

I'll just give folks just 30 seconds or so to drop their thoughts into the chatbox. Okay, and so far I'm seeing immediately during the initial interview, during intake, at the formation of the relationship with the client, at intake, in the beginning, at outreach, at the beginning.

So I guess my really clever trick question that everyone was going to say, "Oh, it's retention. You don't start doing that until after placement, right?" I guess my

clever trick question wasn't so clever after all because folks are exactly right. When we're thinking about retention, of course, we're not doing a service called retention when we first meet a veteran, obviously, but we're thinking about this question of retention right from the beginning.

And if we can jump to the next slide, please. If we kind of think about... This is just broadly defining the kind of arc of this service delivery process into three broad categories. And we know we've talked about all these in much greater detail, but just if we want to sort of think about it broadly, we start by, a number of folks actually use that term, forming that relationship.

So we often use the term engagement to say, okay, how are we really engaging a veteran with our services? How are we really ensuring that we've got a strong relationship at the foundation that, of course, starts right off the bat, that starts before we've done intake, that starts before we've done a form, that starts the minute you have any kind of contact with someone whatsoever, right?

And then that moves into case management that includes our assessment pieces, that includes coordinating with other partners, that includes sort of lining up our complementary services and then finally moves right along into career development, which career development, job development, as Cindy said, of course, different folks will have different needs, and interests, and preferences depending on what their situation is.

But we see, of course, that phase that involves the matching piece that Cindy was talking about, the placement piece, it involves engaging employers, it involves supporting someone potentially depending again, on their interests in possibly ongoing career growth after that initial placement, again, depending on how you're delivering those services and how you've coordinated that with the veteran.

So we can jump to the next slide, please. So what I want to do is just, again, thinking about those three broad phases, and obviously there, we can go into much more detail and we have done that in the prior sessions and in what Cindy was talking with us about today, but let me just talk about those three broad categories and think, okay, what do we need to be doing to consider the retention question right from the very start to make sure that we're prepared for this by the time we get to, you know, okay, someone has been placed, they've been on the job for a month.

Okay, and now an issue has come up, right? Now there's some kind of problem, either the veteran has come to you, or the employer has come to you, or maybe you, you know, kind of worst-case scenario, maybe you've just heard about it. Well, okay, now we're in kind of a spot because there's a problem and it's a month into the employment situation. There's not a lot we can do new right there, right?

We need to depend on what we've already done. We need to depend on the foundation we've already set. So it's kind of like saying that, you know, we're going to... We aim the arrow before we shoot the arrow, right? We don't just shoot an arrow and then try and figure out how to aim it once we've done that so that we can hit the bullseye.

We've got to do that. All the aiming stuff happens first, that happens right from the beginning and the same principle applies here. So if we think back to that process of engagement, if we think back to when we're first meeting someone, when we're first meeting a veteran and building that relationship with them, of course, the first thing we want to do, not just for purposes of retention but for the purposes of the entire process, of course, we want a really strong connection to the veteran that's going to, you know, increase their willingness.

It's going to make it easier for them to reach out to us with questions, to reach out to us to express the challenges they may be experiencing and, of course, to be very open with us throughout this entire process. So the stronger that relationship is right from the start, the easier it is going to be to make sure that we're meeting all of these pieces as we're moving through this process.

A great thing to do here, and it's one of those things we often don't think about, but I think it really serves us well if right from the earliest stages, right when you're setting the groundwork with the veteran you're serving, one of the things we often neglect to mention, we often neglect to say, "Hey, by the way, yes, we are working toward ensuring that you're in a job, but we're going to maintain in contact after that.

Just want to let you know that, that, you know, we'll drop you an email, or a text," or, you know, whatever the easiest thing is, whatever suits that veteran's preference is the best, that's what we're going to do. We're not going to call them every day. We're not going to show up at their office. We're not going to show up where they're living.

But we are going to stay in touch, and establishing that foundation right from the beginning, that they should expect that, that can make a real difference, because it, sort of, depends on how a veteran is viewing these services when they first come through the door. Are they thinking about this, you know, in the same way, that we might think about a visit to the doctor's office?

Or, of course, it makes perfect sense that we're going to stay in touch, depending on what it is we're talking about. Or, are they kind of viewing you like a visit to the barbershop where, you know, "No, when I go to the barbershop, I get my haircut and then I leave"? I don't expect a call a month after that from my barber asking, "So, Cori, is your hair growing? Has it grown too much? Is it growing too little? Or what are you thinking now? What do you think about that little part that always gets a little weird when it's too long?"

You know, I don't expect that, but, of course, if that expectation is laid from the beginning, it really helps ensure that that relationship will continue. Now, two ideas that we did talk about that we didn't even begin to scratch the surface of, just given how much we've been talking about, but Ade and Nicole talked about trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing as two sets of strategies that are really going to help us build that relationship, are really going to help us get past whatever barriers, and I don't mean barriers like barriers to career, but, you know, maybe barriers to a relationship that a veteran might put up because, you know, maybe they've talked to a lot of folks like us, a lot of folks and a lot of different programs, and maybe they like to kind of keep their distance a little bit until they figure out what we're all about, what we're doing, whether or not we can be trusted.

Well, those methodologies, those mindsets of trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, other aspects like that can be really helpful at this stage of establishing that foundation of trust, establishing that connection and really making sure that you have that genuine engagement that's going to not only carry you through the job development process, it's going to carry you after that and ensure that longer-term connection that you really want.

And we can jump right to the next slide, please. So, of course, when we start thinking about case management, we talked a lot about assessment. We talked about service coordination, all these other pieces that factor in at the case management stage.

Well, of course, as we're learning about assessment, and this may sound almost so obvious that it sounds silly to say, but I think it's something we don't necessarily think about as clearly as we might. As Cindy was talking about that matching process, making sure that we really understand what's going to be a great fit between the employee and the employer and, you know, what might be an acceptable compromise, what might be something that, okay, the veteran will...

They're not wild about it, but they'll get over it because that's what having a job is all about sometimes. But on a broader level, you know, what are the things that are, you know, actually non-negotiable? What are the aspects of this connection that we know just will not work?

And we often think about that in terms of an initial placement. Sometimes we don't necessarily think that through and start to imagine like, okay, if Cori's at his new job and he really likes all these different pieces of it and he's very excited, that's great for the first week, maybe for the first month, but we all know, and I'll use the analogy that Cindy put forward of, you know, our interpersonal relationships with one another, our personal relationships, we know that those change over time, right?

We know we get to know each other better. We know we get closer. We know there's a greater degree of understanding, and that's either going to lead to a closer connection or it's going to maybe lead to discovering some more of those non-negotiables that we didn't see at first. So the more we understand about the veteran at this stage, the more we understand what is the ideal scenario, not just at placement, but a month from placement, three months, six months, a year from placement so that we really understand how all this is going to work, how it's going to suit the veteran's preferences, how it's going to suit their goals, how it's going to, you know...and potentially how a veteran might be dealing with challenges and barriers that come up in the employment scenario.

We know there will be those, right? That's part of why we all get paid to go to work, is because there will be challenges. There will be issues. There will be, you know, social considerations. There will be learning curves. There will be things that we're not wild about. So what are we going to do in advance to say, "Okay, we know Cori well enough to know that this is the kind of situation that's going to start to bother him after a while. Can we equip Cori with the

tools that he needs to ensure that he can meet those challenges and overcome them in this process as he's moving forward?"

So that we're actually really making a plan with the veteran before we're even at the placement stage, but then, of course, carrying it forward and continuing to say, "Okay, remember, as we're thinking about this job, here are the areas of possible challenges. Here's what we think we can do to respond to those. And remember, we're going to stay in touch. So do feel free to call me, do feel free to be in touch if there's any support that I can offer."

And then equally so with our coordinated services. I think as we all know, you're working with a lot of partners who are not so much on the employment side of things, right? They're folks in the housing world, they're folks in the supporting services world and maybe they just don't know the dynamics of workforce development the way you folks do. So they're probably not going to be thinking about things like retention.

They're going to be thinking, "Oh, placement. Placement is boom. We're done. That's the end of the story. We have accomplished something. We can stop thinking about that." So then it becomes our job on the HVRP side to remind folks that, you know, no, placement is a great milestone. It's fantastic.

It's the goal we've been working toward, but it's not the end of the story. So we need all of our partners to continue to be engaged, to continue to be supportive, to continue to offer to do what they're doing to keep this employment arrangement thriving and moving forward the way we want it to.

So in all the stuff that we're doing with case management that we're thinking about how it leads to placement, we probably need to just expand our thinking just a little bit and think about how all of this will play out three months after placement. Just so we're keeping all of that consistent. And, you know, just like a golf swing or throwing a baseball, to name two things that I do not do well at all, it's all about the follow-through, right?

That's everything that we're thinking about in this stage, is the follow-through and making sure that all these pieces continue to carry through the way they should, that they just stop at placement. And we can jump to the next slide, please. So, of course, now at career development, this is getting a little redundant with what Cindy was talking about, but, you know, here we are again.

We're at this point of thinking about that match that is driven by the veteran's choices, their interests, their goals, their needs but also, of course, must then align like a key and a lock must then align with the realities of the employer, what they need, what they want, what kind of environment they have, and what kind of fit it is for all these different things that we know about the veteran, how well is that going to fit, again not just in the first week but in the first three months and longer potentially.

And here again, this is another aspect. We talked about employer engagement last time. This is another area where if we view our employers as customers and even better as partners, then we have a relationship with an employer who might call us up and say, you know, "I'm a little worried. We've had some...you know, Cori's showing up a little bit late or he called in sick every Friday for the past three weeks," or he just, you know...

or there's this other problem, whatever it is. If we have an employer willing to come to us with a concern when it's still a problem that we can help to solve, of course, that's much better than hearing that, "No, we've been dealing with this problem for three months, but we tried to deal with it on our own. We tried to work it out with a veteran, and it fell apart, and the employment situation was terminated or the veteran left," or whatever it is.

So all of that, again, is about that relationship-building piece. When we're able to align those veteran skills with the employer needs while accounting for all these other factors, thinking about our non-negotiables as Cindy has talked about and then ensuring that at the end of the day, this entire process is very strength-driven, right?

So if we haven't used that phrase before in this series, really saying that when we're talking about the veteran, when we're talking about their job possibilities, when we're talking about their role with the employer, we're talking about their skills, right? We're talking about their goals, we're talking about all the good things that make that veteran a desirable employee that we know is going to be a great addition to any team, but we also need to be what we call barrier aware.

We want to make sure that whatever challenges might come up, that we're aware of that and we're thinking about it and considering it just as we've discussed. And we can jump to the next slide, please. Now, of course, there are aspects of this. Again, I really do feel like that the vast majority of this work

that we're going to do is going to be work that we do prior to the point of placement.

That's when a lot of decisions have already been made or a lot of processes have been put in place that are either going to work the way we want them to or potentially are not. But that said, you know, we are going to be doing things after placement. So let's think about what some of the different models are, some of the strengths and weaknesses of those.

Now, in many cases, and this is true of HVRP, but it's true of workforce development programs generally. Sometimes we see dedicated retention specialists. So we see folks on staff whose role is to, okay, you know, Cindy's going out. She's talking to employers. She's connecting employers. She's making placements.

But once that placement piece is done, then Cindy, kind of, moves over to the next veteran who's looking for employment and hands off the relationship to a dedicated retention specialist whose entire role is to maintain contact with both the veteran and the employer. And if you have to do things like gather employment verifications or anything like that, that would be within this person's purview.

And, of course, they're there addressing barriers. They're talking about challenges. They're doing whatever needs to be done to ensure that, you know, within reason, assuming this isn't a demonstrably bad situation, that it's better that it actually be ended, and we'll talk about that in a minute. But as long as there's something that we want to keep working on, this retention specialist will be working on that.

Now, the challenge here, of course, is although this person is going to be practiced in all the skills they need to be to really make sure they're doing this work well, remember how often we talked about relationships, right? We talked about that... When I asked folks for their feedback, half the responses we got were talking about the minute you start building that relationship with the veteran.

Relationships aren't things that we hand over like a library book where I can just give it to Cindy and trust her to bring it back to the library when she's done and everything's fine. A relationship obviously is much more complicated than that with both the employer and the veteran so there will be instances where

both an employer and a veteran would say, "Now, wait a minute. Why have I been talking to Cindy all this time and everything's been working so well, and now I've got to talk to someone else? What does that mean? I don't understand it."

Now, in many cases, you can prepare for that just like we said by describing that process in advance, but in other cases, just that relationship piece can be very hard to transfer. Now, on the flip side, we can say that it's our employment specialist, our case managers, presumably a lot of the folks on the phone right now, that retention become part of your role. And that would mean that you would be building on those existing relationships with the veteran, with the employer, with the partners, with all the different pieces in play, and you would be providing that ongoing support.

Now, in my opinion, particularly for a smaller program, this is a little bit easier to put in place, but the flip side, the challenge, of course, is that this is something that takes time just like everything else you're doing that's already taking a lot of time. And I realize now, as I think back to each of these sessions, each one of us that has presented has told you some new way that you should be spending your time to keep doing all these new things.

Now, of course, we're not just trying to load you up with new work, but the point remains that, if this is going to be something that a case manager or an employment specialist is going to be in charge of, that's great, that works, but we need to be sure that we're factoring the amount of time that takes into what we think about in terms of what someone's caseload is going to be, all that kind of good stuff to ensure that it is something that they can realistically handle and it's something that you can, of course, do very well.

Because the minute you drop the ball at this stage and, you know, someone reaches out to you with a problem and you don't get back to them for three days, well, you know, of course, that's going to be extremely troubling to the overall relationship. And let's jump ahead one more, please. So another thing that we see sometimes, it's not ubiquitous but when we see it, we think it's fantastic, is really using peer to peer support at this stage, right?

And I think when we look at HVRP staff, of course, we see a lot of folks who are veterans themselves, met a lot of folks who have themselves experienced and transitioned out of homelessness. And that's going to give you a great

perspective, a great ability to connect with the veteran that you're working with, but eventually, there's going to come a point where your kind of "official professional relationship" with a veteran can really be augmented if they're also speaking in a structured way, if they're also speaking with and getting a degree of support from other veterans who aren't professional members of the HVRP team.

They're there, they're folks that might have gone through this in the past, they've done all of this, they know the challenges, they know the pitfalls, they know the rewards, and they can be the person that talks to the veteran and says, "Okay, great. You've made a great achievement here. Now let's think about what are some of the things you need to do to keep building on this, keep growing from this that's going to be part of that retention process."

Now, the whole process of establishing a mentor relationship, you know, that's just like trauma-informed care or motivational interviewing. That is yet another whole big thing to think about. However, it is something we've seen used very, very well in HVRP, and it's something we strongly recommend.

And it's also part of one of the past VLCs that we've done on veteran engagement, which we'll see if we can get that link up into the chat for you before we head out today. That does have a lot more information on this, and hopefully, it would be helpful to folks. Okay, and we can jump ahead one more, please. So finally, you know, this is just some good practices, some good things that we should be doing that we want to establish with folks.

So, of course, our regular check-ins, we did talk about that. And this is going to be something you want to be pretty flexible with, right? Flexible up to a point, but you also want to make sure that you're getting done what you need to get done. So you want to make sure that you are readily accessible to the veteran and the employer. Probably, you want to be a little bit proactive.

You want to be as proactive as you can be to be in touch on a regular basis, check in, but we also know that this is something we really need to be...we need to be mindful of the nature of the relationship thus far. When we think about staying in touch with a veteran, what's going to work best for them? Is this someone who really...

Like, you know, they're in touch with us a lot. We text with them every day. Well, great, keep it up for a while for the first couple weeks and say, "Hey,

how'd your day go? How are things? What's going on?" That's great. The other folks we know are not going to be as enthusiastic about being in touch with us every day because it's just not what they want to do, and that's understandable, and that's fair. But you need to be able to work with that veteran and say, "Okay, what's going to be the right way to maintain this connection and maintain some communication going forward?"

Same with the employer. Presumably, it's going to not be so intensive as it is with the veteran, but you certainly want to be there and available to the employer. You want to make sure they know that you're there and available. And if at all possible, if there's ways to do it that are not obtrusive to the employer, you want to, of course, maintain contact.

And then finally, partner agencies. I think hopefully we all have a good rhythm for how we work with them, but anyone that we know is working with the veteran who's been placed, we want to be sure we're just keeping that connection with them so that they know what this process is going to be all about going forward. And then there's also the potential for additional engagement opportunities.

Now, that mentor relationship is one of those. A mentor relationship is a great way to keep someone engaged and to recognize that you're still a part of this process. Job clubs are another flip side of that, or you might use a job club as part of your process. And, again, that's another thing that requires a whole lot of talking that we don't have time to do.

But if you have a job club that's part of the process of job development, maybe see if it's possible to keep veterans who are recently employed coming into that job club both because, if they come into a job club and tell the story of their success, of course, that's great for the room. Everybody loves to hear that.

But it also is going to be a great way for them to reaffirm that, "Okay, right. This is the goal I've been working toward. Whatever challenge I might experience, I have a group here that's going to support me, that I can talk about it with." But those challenges are not a reason to say, "You know what? This was a mistake. I should never have done this. Not ready for this. I'm just going to give it up." So that job club is another area where folks can continue to get the benefit of that support.

We often see things like asset management, benefit management resources, because, of course, many folks are on... They're going into employment, that's going to affect their assets. Obviously, that's going to affect their benefits. Presumably, there might have been a lot of changes to their housing situation while all this is happening, so ensuring that they maintain connected to someone who's going to be able to help them manage that.

It's not only very good that someone has a connection to someone who's going to help talk those things through with them. That's another way to keep that connection going, keep that support going forward. And then finally, you know, as Cindy was talking about this career pathways notion, you know, very often, as she mentioned, you'll see veterans who...maybe they're not thinking about a career the first time you meet them.

And that's understandable. Maybe they're thinking in terms of their immediate needs, and that's fine. That's all good, and that's what we're there to do is help meet those needs. But as they start to transition a little bit and start to think in the longer term about their own arc, maybe they are going to want to be able to look to you for some support in terms of thinking about what are some additional trainings I could get into, what are additional ways that I could take this job which, you know, "Yeah, I like this job. But, geez, I've been looking at the person in the cubicle next to mine, or the office next to mine, or the station next to mine. I like their job even better, but, you know, they have some training that I don't. What do I need to do to keep this career pathway moving forward?"

So just another area where we can really be as supportive as possible to folks and really be offering some additional resources, offering some additional value that's, of course, also going to keep them connected, keep them engaged with you as that's happening. And we can jump to the next slide, please.

The last thing that we want to emphasize here is creating a distinction between job retention and career retention. And, I mean, very simply that means, you know, on the one hand, do I keep a job or not? And, of course, all things being equal, of course we always think, well, someone wants to keep a job, right?

Well, yeah. Yes, absolutely. But if the reason I leave a job is because that's what I need to do to continue to grow within my career, well, that's a little different than just saying, "You know what, I'm sick of this. I'm out of here. I'll

figure out my next steps on Monday, but I'm just not doing this anymore." So as we are able to maintain those relationships, that's when we can maybe be able to offer some advice and some additional support on saying, "Okay, what does it look like?"

If you want to move forward in your career, if you want to move on from your current position, I don't think anyone on the line here is going to say, "Oh, that's terrible. You should never do that." Of course, we all do that. That's a signature that this whole process has worked exactly the way it should, is someone is now part of that pathway.

But this is another area where you can continue to be of some support to them and to help them understand, "Okay, what's the right way to do that? You know, meaning how do I leave a job? How do I give notice? How do I do it respectfully? And also when do I leave a job? Do I leave a job because I don't like it anymore or do I leave a job because I haven't liked it for a while but I actually have another opportunity in front of me that I want to pursue?"

So all these pieces are really how we... Just going back to that idea of the job versus the career, for the veterans who are interested in having these conversations, for the folks who are engaged with you on this level, these are all things that we can discuss with veterans to say, "Okay, this is how we keep this process going forward in the most constructive and supportive way."

And I believe we can jump to the next slide, please. So that's the end of the formal presentation. As Cindy mentioned, of course, we've been all talking blue streak here on the line with you, and we hope that hasn't been... We hope we haven't been throwing too much at you, but of course we've had a lot to get through.

And I think every one of us naturally speaks pretty quickly anyway, and now we've just been encouraged to go even faster. So let's pause. You have our contact information here, but please let me know what are some questions based on today's session, what are some questions... You know, are there other questions that you were hoping to get the answers to that we never talked about, that maybe we can answer now or maybe we'll maybe get back to you in the future?

Please let us know your thoughts. And Cindy, of course, anything to add to my little quick read-through there, please jump in as well.

- No. Thanks, Cori. You did a great job. I feel like we're trying to get so much information into not a whole lot of time, and I think you did a great job talking about retention, and the importance of retention, and thinking about it throughout the process.

- So I guess we will stay on the... We encourage folks to drop their questions in. We're going to stand the line here until at least 10 after. But if folks are content with where we're at, we will be putting the slides up as Cindy put in the chat that they will be going up on nvtac.org under the Grantee Training section.

We can maybe find to directly link to that as well for you. We're just starting to get back the properly formatted recordings, and PowerPoint slides, and all that good stuff. So that process of posting those up is just beginning, but we'll continue over the course of the next couple of weeks or so.

So there's the full link. That's right where...

So, Misty, to your question, to other folks looking for the archives, they're not there yet. But if you go to the page that I just put into the chat, that's going to lead you to our page on trainings and webinars. And down in the middle of that page or just after the first two modules, you'll see a Virtual Learning Classroom header.

And I would think within the next couple days, we're going to start posting these. We should have everything up there by, I would say, the end of next week at the very latest although I'd assume we're going to get it up there faster than that as well. And otherwise, I guess we'll just say thanks again to everyone for joining us here today and for attending these sessions.

We really enjoy having these conversations. We hope you've enjoyed it as well. And as Cindy said, please do reach out to your regional lead or just reach out to contact@nvtac.org. If you're not sure who to reach out to, you can reach out there, and the appropriate person will get back to you as well. But, again, thank you so much for everything. We really do appreciate it.