



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Jennifer Steigerwald: Welcome to the first of four virtual learning courses in this series. Today we'll be discussing outreach one on one like I mentioned before. If you have questions throughout, please feel free to unmute yourself or type in the chat.

So, my name is Jen Steigerwald and I'm one of our training and technical assistance coaches with NVTAC.

And so, you can reach myself and the rest of the NVTAC team by our joint email address, which is contact@nvtac.org so you can ask us questions if you have any general inquiries or for technical assistance requests.

So, for people who maybe aren't sure who NVTAC is or what we do, we wanted to start with a quick overview of the support that we provide.

So, first and foremost we provide technical assistance to increase grantee's ability to establish and operate successful HVRP grants, and this technical assistance always caters to the needs of the specific grantee.

We support HVRP grantees throughout their period of performance to ensure that challenges they may face along the way are always resolved quickly.

We provide effective training and peer to peer learning opportunities that result in increased knowledge and adoption of innovative practices among HVRP programs nationwide.

And it's also very important to us to ensure that we're always discussing topics that are pertinent and relevant to our grantees.

So, in addition to providing technical assistance to HVRP grantees, we also provide technical expertise to federal staff in order to assist in policy development and supportive program oversight and strategic planning for the future of HVRP.

Lastly, we also quantify grantees customer satisfaction and share promising best practices and lessons learned.

Like I mentioned just a bit ago, we provide technical assistance to grantees which can be done in a multitude of ways.

So, some of these include one-on-one technical assistance, customized training based on grantee needs, web-based training sharing of best practices, a robust community of practice, and for those community of practices, we use feedback from grantees on their specific needs to inform topics that we cover and so much more. That's just a couple examples of the things that we can provide.

So, grantees can request technical assistance on a wide variety of topics. Just a couple examples of these are collaboration and partnerships, career-driven training, and career pathways, enrollment at the American Job Center, and take an assessment, job development and placement, outreach to veterans' employers are partners, training for new staff, working with special populations and like I mentioned, this is not even close to an exhaustive list, so if there's a topic that you'd like for us to provide technical assistance for, you can always reach out to us at contact@nvtac.org and we can discuss that with you.

00:08:12

So next we're going to dive into some outreach strategies, but before that, does anyone have any questions about NVTAC in general or anything that we've gone over so far.

Okay.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

So first what is outreach? Why is outreach important? We know that this is not easy work, and this is a population that historically has fallen through the cracks, which is exactly why we're discussing it today.

And so, in the context of HVRP, outreach means finding veterans who meet eligibility requirements, who need and would benefit from employment.

So, at this stage, the focus is casting a wide net to help identify as many prospective participants as possible.

Every HVRP grantee should create an outreach plan that is strategic and intentional, so that outreach plan can and should look different for every grantee based on their unique program, but the emphasis should always be placed on meeting the veterans where they're at in order to find participants who would benefit from your program.

So being intentional in your outreach planning, while also leaving room to adapt to the participant's needs is very important at this stage.

And just for your awareness, outreach was a part of the application process, so if you have not read your winning application yet, it may be helpful to give you some insight as to what your program's original outreach strategies were, and you can also use those networks in your community.

00:09:59

So, when we're talking about outreach specifically for HVRP, there are two primary channels for veteran outreach.

First, is directly identifying and engaging veterans who may be eligible for HVRP.

Second, would be building awareness of your program with veterans, service providers, employers and other partners to cultivate new relationships.

In order to have a robust and successful outreach practice, your program should be utilizing both of these channels, rather than focusing exclusively on one.

So, outreach is both a marketing activity and one that's requiring direct engagement with veterans. You should be on the ground, meeting the client where they are in order to engage with them, as well as marketing your program to develop partnerships and establish yourself within the community.

00:10:54

So, what is outreach? Here we're going to focus on five essential components of an effective outreach plan, but before we dive into these, something an umbrella kind of covers all of these components, is that outreach needs to be proactive. So, with that in mind, first would be identifying your target audience.

So, ask yourself, who are you trying to reach? Without answering this question first, your planning efforts may not be appropriately catered to the population you're trying to serve.

Next, we have a message, what are you offering? Make sure that the answer to that question is clear, when outreaching to veterans as well as your partners.

If you have a firm and clear message and you're able to communicate that, there will be less confusion and unanswered questions for your target audience.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

And so, the next thing we have is timing, when we conduct outreach activities being consistently flexible with your timing is important for connecting with veterans.

And next we have location, so where will those activities occur? Is your program currently conducting street outreach where the clients are, or are your current practices solely office based?

And last but definitely not least we have methods. So, how will you find potential participants? What outreach activities and strategies will you implement?

00:12:22

Okay, so now that we have an overview of outreach in general, we're going to dive into four more specific outreach strategies. So, we have cultural competence, collaboration and referrals, on-the-ground outreach, and community presence. Does anyone have questions before we jump into these?

Cynthia Forland: And just a quick technical note behind the scenes, if in fact you want to say something which, please do, you can just use the raise hand or, of course, feel free to enter any comments or questions directly in the chat.

Thank you Cynthia.

00:13:06

All right, so we'll start with cultural competence first. So, when performing outreach, staff must be knowledgeable about the target population and be able to connect with potential clients, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or any other characteristic. So being able to connect with participants from varying cultural backgrounds different from your own is extremely important to successful outreach.

So, let's break this topic down a little bit. What do both cultural and competence mean? So cultural would be relating to the ideas, customs, and social behaviors of a society, and competence would be the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge judgment skill or strength.

So, when we're talking about cultural competence, we mean the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge judgment skill or strength as it relates to the ideas, customs, and social behaviors of a society.

So according to research, there are five essential elements that contribute to a system's, institution's, or agency's ability to become more culturally competent.

So, these elements include having diversity, having the capacity for cultural self-assessment, being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact, having institutionalized cultural knowledge and having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting and understanding of cultural diversity. So, applying these elements to your own program can help you become more culturally competent as a whole.

With those essential elements in mind ask yourself, are you using language that's familiar; are you offering relevant services and support?

Do program staff have experience working with different communities? If you answer no to any of these questions, it would be a great first start to start there.

Alright, so where should you start? Be open, be honest about what you need to learn, and what you need to improve upon.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Be willing to learn so be willing to challenge what you already perceived to know and unlearn what's incorrect.

Actively listen, so listen to people within the community you're learning about take that information that they're teaching you and apply it. And, lastly, apply key learnings to outreach practices, so take what you've heard, what you've learned, and adapt your outreach practices accordingly.

00:15:52

Alright, so we have a quick poll, based on the cultural competence information we just discussed.

And so, our first question is how confident are you in the collective cultural competence of your staff as it stands today?

And please feel free to be honest here. If you feel that you have some growing and learning to do, or if you feel like you're a rock star in this area, we really just want to give you time to reflect on some of the information we've learned so far.

So, no pressure either way, just feel free to be honest.

We'll give everyone a couple more seconds before we close out the poll.

Okay, so it looks like a pretty even mix between people who are confident and somewhat confident, which is great, some people not confident at all, which is awesome that everyone's here for the discussion today.

So, thank you all for participating.

Okay.

00:17:35

So next we're going to transition into collaboration and referrals.

And so, we'll actually be talking about collaboration and referrals from a systemic point of view today.

But in our virtual learning course on April 26, Steve Dudasik will be diving into more specific partnerships in depth.

So first you want to develop and maintain relationships with key partners which could include workforce agencies, organizations serving individuals experiencing homelessness, state and local agencies and organizations focused on underserved populations, and organizations serving veterans.

So, this is not an exhaustive list of everyone you can and should partner with but it's a good starting point with some key organizations.

Avoiding duplication and filling in the gaps and services is important for the success of the veterans you serve.

So, partnering with organizations that can provide additional needed services is an effective way to improve employment and training outcomes for veterans served by HVRP grantees.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

So, there are a variety of barriers that a veteran experiencing homelessness may face. Some of these additional barriers may include lack of transportation, lack of permanent stable consistent housing, lack of tools and attire for work, and much more so ask yourself with this in mind, who can my program collaborate with to help alleviate these barriers?

Intentional collaboration based on the needs of the veteran to serve will help your program participants be more successful.

00:19:38

So, we have another quick poll here, and so, how many strong collaborative partners and referral sources does your program currently have?

And also, as you're answering this poll question go ahead and share in the chat too, if you have specific partners and referral sources that you'd like to share with other grantees.

We'll give a couple more seconds for the poll.

Okay, so it had a lot of people say about one to five partners, but quite a few people said more than I can count so for any people any organization that has more than I can count as their answer, does anyone want to share some examples of maybe some creative partnerships they've created that have been helpful for them?

So, Jennifer says inner voice homeless veteran employment services.

St Vincent de Paul, supportive services for veterans' families, so SSVF programs.

Partnering with churches, shelters, and the local area with homelessness agencies are a great benefit for the intake process. Those are all great ones. Anyone else have any examples they want to share?

Working with our local criminal justice system to visit veterans being released from jail, another great one, veteran service organizations, American legions, DAVs, etc. VA medical centers, of course, food banks, these are all great ideas.

Veterans' courts.

Any final thoughts from anyone before we go to the next section?

Awesome. Thank you all for sharing.

And feel free as we keep going with the presentation, you can continue to share any of your personal experiences or ideas you have in the chat too.

00:22:28

Okay, so now we're going to move to on-the-ground outreach, so meeting veterans where they are is key to successful engagement and meaningful service delivery.

So, adapting your outreach practices to find and meet veterans where they spend time can also help with trust and relationship building. So, we shouldn't just be expecting veterans to make appointments and visit you and your office, but rather going out into the community where the veterans spend their time and finding them that way.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

So effective outreach must be accessible to all appropriate participants, non-threatening, flexible, and able to adapt to client needs and client centered with the client's needs at the forefront.

So here are just a few tips to consider when you're planning your on-the-ground outreach.

So be sure to always follow up your initial engagement with quality services that meet the veteran-specific needs, so don't make any promises in your initial meeting that you don't intend to carry out.

Beginning to build trust with the veteran you serve at the initial point of outreach is key to successful service delivery.

Always use a client-centered method and also be prepared to change your approach as necessary in order to connect with a veteran.

Most importantly, be patient, allow room for the veteran to build trust with you over time.

00:24:18

Okay, so we have another poll for you all, and so does your program currently perform on-the-ground outreach?

And then, again, while you're answering this in the chat or while you're answering this poll, if you could also write in the chat maybe some tips that have been helpful for you, maybe when you first started on-the-ground outreach or anything that you think is important when an agency is planning their on-the-ground outreach.

And we'll give you a couple more seconds for the poll, and again feel free to write in the chat.

Cynthia Forland: I would just emphasize too; this is Cynthia behind the scenes.

Cynthia Forland: If, in fact, you've had impacts with COVID in terms of how you provide and perform on-the-ground outreach, please feel free to share that either by raising your hand or putting that in the chat.

Cynthia Forland: Because we know that in many ways the COVID pandemic has made some of these things a little bit more difficult, so anything you could share about that would be helpful, especially if you've had challenges with on-the-ground outreach during this period.

Absolutely, thank you Cynthia.

So, it looks like a majority of people did say yes, they currently perform on-the-ground outreach. So about 88% of people do and about 12% of people don't currently or don't yet.

So, we have some a few things in the chat as well, and so shelters, VA clinics, homeless offices at the VA, social workers and treatment facilities at the VA, these are all fantastic resources and partnerships when we're talking about on-the-ground outreach, those are great examples.

So, we have not done on-the-ground outreach but are at a point now where we can start. This was due to the pandemic and I'm sure you're not alone in that as well, the pandemic definitely changed a lot of outreach practices.

COVID restrictions changed the way people sheltered, which made it more difficult to locate and assist them, absolutely.

Anyone else have any thoughts either around outreach during COVID or outreach in general?



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

So, we had to revise our entire outreach process during the height of the pandemic by focusing on our network of agencies and veteran referring other veterans.

That's a great example, so another reason why it's important to have really strong partnerships and relationships with other programs.

Job fairs and resource fairs to reach community partners and employers, point in time count, homeless shelters, and resource centers to reach veterans. Those are all great examples as well.

COVID would not allow us on site to conduct outreach so being creative was key. Absolutely. So everywhere had different restrictions, different access that you could still provide so those creative solutions were and still are very important.

These are great. Does anyone else have anything they want to share? You can also feel free to unmute yourself if you want to talk instead of typing in the chat.

Um we also sponsored drive-through and zoom job fairs which increase our employment and outreach efforts. So that's a great example of creative solutions when you can't conduct outreach in the same way you were before, that's a great example.

Anyone else?

Okay we'll go ahead and move on, but again feel free to keep sharing in the chat as we go.

00:28:50

Alright, so our last outreach topic of the day is community presence, and so being a staple in your community and being well connected within local processes is extremely important.

So, for sustainable success, you need to be present, visible, and well connected in your community with local organizations and agencies, just with every relevant partner in your area.

So how can you improve upon your community presence? Create strong, impactful, and meaningful partnerships with local organizations, you can align yourself with already established systems, such as the local continuum of care.

You can coordinate your outreach efforts with partners serving the same population to better serve veterans experiencing homelessness, and you should avoid duplication of efforts by thoughtfully coordinating both outreach and services with your partners.

So, does anyone have questions, comments or maybe some personal examples about community presence?

Okay, so we're going to move now to some discussion topics. So, before we jump to the next slide.

You can of course type in the chat but also if you want to either raise your hand or unmute yourself that would be fantastic. This is open for discussion and personal examples just so for everyone in the room to learn from each other.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

00:30:39

So, the first one we have is which of the strategies discussed today have you already implemented and then one step further, how did you first start? So how did you begin the planning of those new outreach methods?

You can either type in the chat or raise your hand.

So, we have a couple here. We've always done all of them, we're fairly aggressive about our outreach. That's awesome, love to hear that. I would also be interested to hear if you have specific thoughts or ideas about how other people can do the same outreach.

The pandemic forced us to become creative in our outreach and employment options, absolutely. I'm sure that's something that everyone here has experienced as well.

Someone mentioned they like the drive-through job fairs, that's an awesome one. That was a super creative approach.

Our program started from the ground up, so we started by placing our employment specialists within community locations that veterans had access to, like the COC. That's an awesome one, so making it so that veterans can access multiple different resources without going agency to agency, that's very helpful.

Connect with everyone, follow up consistently, follow through consistently on all referrals. That's great advice.

Zoom and conference calls were added during the pandemic, and we'll continue to utilize these methods; however, working with the local continuum of care has also been great.

That's an awesome one. Definitely being able to tap into those systems that are already in place in your community is great, like the continuum of care.

Just joining in on processes that are already in place.

Cynthia Forland: And I'm just, this is something I'm just going to jump in really quick, I like especially one of the last comments, which is you tried out some new things during the pandemic and you're going to keep some of those around because you found them to be incredibly valuable.

Cynthia Forland: And I think that's happening, and a lot of services for folks experiencing homelessness and workforce development services, so I think that's a great example where something that was a barrier or made your work more difficult, you also discovered something that could ultimately be a great new tool in your toolbox that you retain.

Looks like we have a couple more. So, we keep connected with our partners in the community and follow up all referrals consistently right away, so staying consistent.

That's a great one, a lot of our communities have been focused on the increase in the homeless population and how they're going to manage it after the ninth circuit court ruling. So, partnering with local governments to be a part of the solutions has been a part of our outreach efforts, as well as partnering with other organizations.

Helping veterans with everything from housing to mental health support, that's a great one. So, making sure the veterans are not only connected to HVRP, but have proper wraparound services to address the needs that maybe HVRP doesn't address. So, filling in those gaps and services and getting involved in the local policies, that's a great one.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

And we want to hear from as many of you as possible, so if you haven't typed any ideas in yet, we'd love to hear from you.

Anyone else have some ideas or just examples of what you've done, either in COVID or out of COVID, before we move on?

We started offering training programs, that's an awesome one. So being able to provide training within your organization is extremely helpful when we're talking about HVRP participants, that's a great one.

Anyone else?

Consistently engaging and re-engaging with some of our outliers as turnover is a very real thing, that's a great one and I'm sure a lot of people have experienced that in different ways throughout the last few years, with turnover. So, not just engaging but re-engaging is a great tactic or a great tool to use when you're talking about outreach or partners.

Increase social media usage, that's a great one we haven't heard yet today. Definitely some creative ideas you can use with social media.

We plan to reach out to three to four housing organizations or veteran organizations each week to keep our outreach consistent.

That's an awesome one. So, setting small goals that you as an organization can meet each week or each month, whatever that looks like for you, just to hold yourselves accountable and make sure you're consistently performing that outreach.

Cynthia Forland: I wonder too, this is Cynthia again, just in terms of the social media usage.

Cynthia Forland: If you wouldn't mind sharing, and we certainly, if you want to raise your hand, we can unmute you or in the chat can you say a little bit more about what that sort of social media usage has looked like and what you found successful?

Cynthia Forland: Feel free to add anything else in the chat if you're comfortable, that would be great.

Creating Facebook and Twitter accounts was a way to get the message, so that's a great one. If you don't already, if your organization doesn't already have social media, a good first step is just getting yourself out there, creating the accounts.

Especially during the pandemic, yeah absolutely.

So, we primarily used it to share what we offer and encouraged current clients to spread the word.

So that's great that you're not only using that to connect with partners, but also with current clients and potential clients. So, getting out the message, you can use social media to get out the message both with your partnerships and with potential clients, so that's a great one. Anyone else have experience with using social media in creative ways throughout the pandemic or currently or before the pandemic?

*Tech Support: Jen, I'm unmuting Michelle and she would like to share something.

Absolutely.

Michele Figueroa: Yeah.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Michele Figueroa: Hey Michelle. Hi, good afternoon. We have our employment specialists for women in the Birmingham area and we created a Facebook page.

Michele Figueroa: That one and all of our jobs, we post events that we have, we have a monthly meetup called fantastic Friday during the pandemic we weren't able to kind of get together more with our veterans so what we did was we created this Zoom page, we utilized a Zoom page from our agency, and we did live zoom meetings with Facebook. It tells all of our things, what we're offering, different events we were having. We promoted our drive-through job fairs because we couldn't see each other, so we had employers that set up and they did it through the car that applicants complete the applications in the car, but we put all of that on Zoom. We post our day-to-day pictures.

That's also a great way to help with follow up because veterans are still connecting or letting them know that we have incentives for them bringing in check stubs and to give, you know give other people food boxes at the height of the time when people were really running low on food.

Michele Figueroa: We partnered with Food Banks that donated us food and it was a place where we can make the bags and leave them in the front. They just opened the door to pick them up.

Michele Figueroa: So, we got the message out about everything that we were doing, and it just picked up and now, we have so many followers, they put it on Twitter, it was just one of the ways that we're going to keep, several of these ideas we're going to keep from the pandemic that caused, you know it caused us to get a greater response.

Michele Figueroa: Veterans that are a little further out, we can assist them on Zoom and doing teleconference calls or on Facebook. They can let us know that they need some assistance, and we contact them once they put in the number in messenger.

Michele Figueroa: So, it was just a great tool to utilize when we couldn't reach out, and it gets the message across, where people may not have been accessible.

Michele Figueroa: Veterans that were in our program, they were able to refer people. Say we have a veteran that's homeless, needs some assistance. Some police officers came from one of our municipalities, then they started bringing a homeless veteran from off the street when they ran into them instead of taking them in to jail, so it actually worked out great.

That's fantastic. Thank you so much for sharing, there were a couple things in there that were really great ideas, so it sounds like what we talked about earlier, some of your outreach strategies changed a little bit throughout COVID like using drive-through job fairs and things like that, and you were able to use social media to kind of get the word out.

Whereas before, you maybe could do that more in person, so those are some like creative strategies to not only change your outreach but also change how you're getting that information out and it sounds like social media was not only helpful then, but you're going to keep doing it moving forward, which is awesome.

And also, it sounds like you used social media to actually connect with veterans so that's an extremely creative and useful way to be able to utilize your platform, so thank you so much for sharing.

Michele Figueroa: Thank you.

We also have a couple more things in the chat.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

So, a couple people said they're utilizing LinkedIn which is great. Some more for sharing links to events and outreach opportunities.

So, here's a good one, so LinkedIn but using it to network with other service providers in the area, so that could be a good way to both find and reach out to potential partners for your program.

It's a great idea.

Someone said, our VP of Community Engagement posted HVRP info on our agency Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts, as well as our newsletter.

Our local continuum of care carries ours by pushing out our HVRP flyers to agencies that they collaborate with.

And we're also able to meet with military advisory councils in our service areas to spread the word. So those are great ideas. I love the idea of also linking your newsletters out through social media, so newsletters that maybe you're distributing via email can reach a wider audience by pushing it out through those platforms. So great idea.

And Jessica said the platform you use is extremely important to the demographic you want to connect with, that's a great point, so making sure you familiarize yourself with what the most impactful or useful platform would be for the message you're trying to get across.

These are fantastic examples. Does anyone have anything else, before we move to the next question?

Collaborate with other agencies, provides a more comprehensive outreach, absolutely. Especially agencies that provide services that maybe your agency doesn't so you're able to provide more services to the client.

Anyone else? And also feel free to raise your hand if you'd rather talk than type.

Okay we'll move to the next question if no one has anything else to add.

00:45:11

So, along the same lines, which of the strategies discussed today, have you maybe wanted or tried to implement but you're not sure where to start?

So, does anybody have any of the outreach strategies that maybe you haven't seen success with or maybe you haven't even started trying yet?

And then, on the other hand, for people who said they're already doing all of these strategies and have been doing so for years, do you have any tips for maybe like the very first step, or how to break through the planning process to get some of these ideas off the ground?

Cynthia Forland: Similar to what Jennifer just said, this is Cynthia again, you know there are things you wish you'd known when you were starting out, if you are a little more experienced in working with veterans experiencing homelessness. Are there things that, wow I thought that was going to be a lot harder than it was and it wasn't that hard, or I have no idea some of the challenges I would face, and what I wish I knew at that point, it would be great if you could share some of that.

Absolutely, thank you Cynthia.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Your local SSVF program isn't the easiest to partner with so navigating partnerships or relationships that maybe don't come easily or that maybe the partner isn't as open to... so does anyone have any strategies for how they've gotten through a situation similar to that?

I know that's probably a common one, not necessarily with the same type of partner but I'm sure everyone has experienced more or less, a difficult partnership.

Cynthia Forland: This is Cynthia again. I just think in this arena that it's not, unfortunately; it can be not uncommon to come across folks who see this as a competition.

Cynthia Forland: And worried that in partnering with you that potentially that would limit the number of folks who they could potentially serve.

Cynthia Forland: So that's what I'm sure that many of you have faced before and trying to communicate what's unique about each HVRP and the programs that are provided and the things that you provide relating to employment and things that other partners might be providing related specifically to housing and how can you work on that together.

Cynthia Forland: Because I'm sure that's something that comes up that can be a little bit difficult, as well as just personalities can be a challenge, and it looks like we do have another comment there in the chat, you kill them with kindness and remind them what it's about. It's about the veteran, exactly yes.

We have another one here. So, referrals can be a great way to break through the resistance of getting in touch with other local providers, having someone that already has a connection to the program, introduce you, can help overcome that initial reluctance. That's a great one, so not only referrals for HVRP but making it a mutually beneficial partnership, so what can you provide to the partner to kind of entice them to want to build up this relationship as well, so referrals both ways for you to the partner and the partner to HVRP.

That's a great one and having someone that already maybe has a really working relationship with that team to be able to kind of break the ice and start that partnership.

Sharing referrals is another one, and sometimes it takes some time for certain people to trust you, be consistent, follow up, be positive.

Not a sprint but a marathon. That's a fantastic one, so not just taking initial maybe reluctance and stopping, trying forever, but maybe trying a different approach and seeing if something else works or offering some other ideas that maybe would be better for that partner, just trying different creative ways to start that relationship or maybe checking in a little bit later and seeing if they're more open to it at another time but being consistent and following up. I loved it's not a sprint but a marathon, it's very true.

Cynthia Forland: And Jennifer you also talked earlier about just the importance of relationship building and I think that's what John's coming back around to again is that consistent contact and being able to deliver.

Cynthia Forland: Not like, oh I'd love some referrals from you, but you know not sure what we'll actually do or follow through on. No, demonstrating that you're providing valuable services that are meaningful to the folks you have in common.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Absolutely and coming with ideas too. You might need to sell the partnership to them, why is this beneficial to them, would you be a useful partner for them, and not just seeming like you're asking them for referrals but saying hey, this is what we can do for you and the veterans you serve. Let's see what we can do together, and someone mentioned before, make sure that you're reminding both yourself and your partners that it's the veteran that matters, and if you can partner together to better serve the veteran everyone wins.

These are some great examples. Does anyone else have any? I know one, a topic that we discussed today that a lot of people have trouble starting from scratch if they haven't done it before would be on the ground outreach so if you're used to serving veterans particularly like just by appointment in your office, how did you initially take the step to say hey, we're going to get out into the community and we're going to find these veterans where they spend their time.

That can be a daunting task for someone who, maybe hasn't done that before. So, does anyone have any great tips that have been helpful for them?

Oh, John has one more thing to add, be humble all the time, so I feel that can be applicable to pretty much everything we discussed today with partnerships and outreach, always be humble and I think you'll build better partnerships that way.

Any other thoughts also feel free to raise your hand, we can also unmute you to talk as well if you don't want to type it out, we'd love to hear from all of you really.

Cynthia Forland: One other thing to just to throw there into the conversation is, we know that we've seen across the economy. Folks not necessarily being in the labor force at the numbers and the rates that they were previously and that has impacted you as an employer trying to recruit staff who can do that outreach and who can do that work?

Cynthia Forland: So, any sort of challenges you've had there and any ideas you might want to share about that would be great as well.

Cynthia Forland: Because we know that you are not immune to the same economic conditions that we see across the board, so any challenges you've had, especially during COVID if we had trouble retaining folks or hiring new folks that would be great to hear about as well, absolutely.

Anyone have any thoughts or examples from their own experience about that?

I also think, one that we haven't, one of the outreach strategies we haven't touched on a lot in this question was cultural competence so if any organization has any great tips for where they started or even specific resources that they found super helpful trainings anything like that, those tips would be super helpful as well.

So, Jessica says hiring qualified candidates is competitive across all nonprofits in my area. I'm sure that is something that everyone is experiencing, to some degree in their area as well.

*Tech Support: Yes, we have a hand up.

*Tech Support: Sure, Michelle I will go ahead and unmute you.

*Tech Support: Michelle are you able to speak again?

Michele Figueroa: Okay mine was in the same line as the previously stated, getting people in because HVRP is a competitive grant when it's like once you meet your goals for 1418 right out to the need for it.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Michele Figueroa: it's a consistent thing, where you have to build relationships in order to maintain and meet those goals so that's critical but keeping staff. Without them getting, you know just burned out, especially the outreach worker because that's where it all starts, it becomes challenging to the point that we all have to become outreach workers, we don't just depend on that one outreach worker. When someone is looking for employment, we also tell them about our program.

Michele Figueroa: But getting people during the last two years, at the height of the pandemic, I was just grateful my team was able to stay together, and we only lost one or two.

Michele Figueroa: And once I lost the one or two, it has been very hard to replace those people, because once again HVRP is so competitive a lot of agencies think that when you go in to work with veterans they're thinking about their numbers, their stuff so you have to be real delicate and just making sure that you let them know that we're trying to take a holistic approach with you, the real focus is housing, and let us help you with the employment sector.

Michele Figueroa: And we can also help them, you have to bring what you have to the table and always focus on making sure you have veterans.

Michele Figueroa: But that has been very stressful with our team, especially during COVID, because of our population, a lot of people may not want to deal with a vulnerable population and, most of our population for that agency, online mobile population, so that has been very challenging to keep good, qualified help, it has been a very challenging part of this.

Absolutely. Thank you so much for sharing that, you know we've talked a lot about building and maintaining partnerships, but you can't have strong partnerships, if you don't have a strong team that you're able to maintain and I know a lot of people have had difficulties with turnover and staff burnout and things like that, so being able to maintain and build a strong team is really the center of being able to provide good services and build good partnerships as it starts with your team internally.

Cynthia Forland: And I'll just make a quick plug and a request too, that one in the next in the series of trainings is going to focus more on specific underserved populations so it's going to kind of expand on this and also, please do if there are things if you're thinking right now about hiring and retaining staff and struggles with that, let us know if that's a topic you'd like us to focus on in the future.

Cynthia Forland: I'm always open to some of those suggestions, because, as we start to break these things apart, I think it's helpful in this case, which is to think about external partnerships a lot, but how are you working in terms of retaining your staff and making sure these partnerships within your organization are strong so that you can continue to do that work? That's great.

Absolutely, and we have another great one in the chat so along the same lines...

So, a lot of our partners are short staffed on their end so communicating is difficult for referrals.

Most don't have enough staff to handle their own loads so if they're not able to keep up with their own internal work, they're not going to have much time to be building and maintaining relationships and partnerships so that goes back to what someone said earlier about being patient. It's a marathon, not a sprint so they may be facing something right now, where they don't have the capacity to be working on a relationship with your organization, but check back in, be persistent.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Of course, allow them time to fix some of those issues they're working through but checking back in later.

There's a lot of people, a lot of people are facing staff turnover and being understaffed and things like that, that's a great one.

Cynthia Forland: And then also that you can help them if they're having trouble handling their own caseload, how can you take some of the burden off of them, and that can be a real opportunity to support, whereas maybe a couple of years ago when they felt a little more stable, they weren't going to be as interested in partnering but now see the importance of partnering.

Absolutely.

And we do have someone saying a webinar on staff retention would be awesome. Thanks for offering. We will definitely keep that in mind.

Thank you for sharing interest in that.

Anyone else have any thoughts? These are some great tips that I know will be helpful for people, so feel free to keep sharing, raise your hand, type in the chat.

Okay anyone else?

Or even if you just have a topic, one of the topics that you don't have any tips for, but you aren't sure where to start, you can throw that out there as well.

Just something that maybe your organization is planning on working on moving forward.

Cynthia Forland: And that could be once again the seed for a future session of community of practice, make a plug for those, the monthly community of practice.

Cynthia Forland: Or these virtual learning courses, any ideas you have in terms of things, as Jennifer just said, that you want to tackle soon or you've been afraid to tackle, we can certainly help with putting together some resources to support that work.

Absolutely, and if you're not sharing because you're afraid you're the only one who's thinking that I promise you you're not.

If you are thinking that you need some additional resources or some information on a topic there is someone else out there who's thinking the same thing, so feel free to share all those things.

Okay, any last thoughts on this topic?

Okay.

01:01:04



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

So now we'll open it up for questions does anyone have questions about anything we've covered today? So, starting with NVTAC, what we do, what we can provide, any of the outreach strategies.

Like Cynthia mentioned, if you have any topics that you wanted to dive deeper into maybe we can use that for a future training or community of practice, anything like that, so the floor is open either type those in the chat or raise your hand and we'll unmute you.

Okay.

No questions.

Cynthia Forland: Evidently every single thing you presented was crystal clear Jennifer.

And so, if any questions come up after the presentation today about any of these topics, please feel free to reach out to us and we'd be more than happy to answer them or get the answer for you.

When will the recording be available? What time did this start? Our link stated 2pm. So, this session started at 2pm Eastern time.

How can we handle a caseload with other staff and so I'm assuming that means like, how do you divvy up the caseload between your team? You can correct me if I'm wrong. Does anyone have any examples of how they handle their caseload or maybe what a typical caseload looks like for their staff? That's a great question.

Your own caseload.

And so, do you mean your caseload with clients or...?

You can also, if you want to, if you want us to unmute you, we can do that as well Lindsay.

If you want to raise your hand.

Cynthia Forland: I wonder, maybe if Lindsay's thinking about how you manage your own caseload when you're sharing that caseload with other organizations or other staff teams.

Cynthia Forland: Yes.

Okay, yes.

Cynthia Forland: So yeah, I'll jump in really quick and then Jennifer you can certainly add on but the key there is, of course, going to be communication which, if you're both understaffed that can be a challenge, because that alone takes time.

Cynthia Forland: But how do you have a session and maybe if there's an organization that you work with a lot and do share caseloads, have people you serve in common.

Cynthia Forland: Maybe setting up a 30-minute call one day a week, so every Monday morning at 8am your local time you spend 30 minutes on a zoom call or teams, whatever tool or support you use.

Cynthia Forland: And to just do a quick check in on those people that you have in common.



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Cynthia Forland: So, you make sure you do that, making it, you know, a kind of a huddle meeting where it's very quick it's just what are the key items to discuss, what's new, what's different? That can be one way, maybe to approach it but Jennifer anything you want to add on there?

No, I think that was great I do want to echo your idea for regular check ins.

So, whether that looks like a huddle or whatever, but highlighting those next steps that you are focusing on in the short term, so if you're doing these check-ins once a week... Okay, what are we going to do this week before we meet next and then we'll check on that topic next week? Just to keep everyone, both on the same page and working towards whatever the outcome that you're working towards is, just making sure everyone's on the same page, has their next steps and is actively working on their part.

Cynthia Forland: And I would just add to think low tech. It can be very frustrating... So, while I have this case management system or we keep our stuff in this Access Database and they keep it in that system, just jot down notes on a piece of paper to have the conversation with someone else, please don't let technology get in the way.

Cynthia Forland: And what's a really simple way to be able to share that information about shared clients, even if you have very different systems within each of your own organizations?

Cynthia Forland: I also want to point out too, there was a question about the recording. It will be posted on the NVTAC site within a week after this session, and it looks like we have another question, how can we connect with other organizations?

That is a great question. I always recommend starting with or like systems that are already in place, so if there's maybe a working group in your area with partners who are maybe either all working with veterans experiencing homelessness or if it's employment, whatever that may be, if you start there you can in that sort of meeting or working group, you can meet a multitude of partners who you may be able to partner with who you may not have thought of beforehand, so that's a great one.

And then also reaching out to kind of those staples in your community so if it's the VA, if that's the local COC.

Different workforce agencies, just a one on one.

All it takes us reaching out trying to set up like an initial meeting and then you can try to decide what works best for both of you for what that partnership could look like, but I would always recommend going into that initial meeting with some thoughts on how you can provide benefit to them as well as what you're asking from them.

Cynthia Forland: Yeah, and I, and we see another comment here that Google is a great tool to find different organizations, absolutely.

Cynthia Forland: And you will see in some of the courses coming up over the next two weeks, you will see some resources relating to especially specific underserved populations.

Cynthia Forland: But one other thing I would add, in terms of kind of the way people's schedules are and are they working remotely or not, is doing some sort of initial outreach, if it's an initial phone call, an initial email, just say what's a convenient time for you?



Virtual Learning Course-Session 1
Outreach 101 Presentation Transcript
Tuesday, 19 April 2022

Cynthia Forland: Providing just a little bit, maybe a little blurb about HVRP if you're able to have first contact or an email just to let them know here's kind of what we're about and what we do and what we focus on.

Cynthia Forland: And then yeah set up a time that's convenient for both of you so you're not just catching somebody on the fly.

Cynthia Forland: Because otherwise, it can be like, oh, this is really a bad time, but I don't want to say that to somebody, but being mindful of their schedule and the way that they're operating and how you can work around that schedule and best become a partner, not seen as someone who's just a drain.

Absolutely, and this also goes back to when we were discussing social media. If you're having trouble maybe finding partners in your location that you should be partnering with, LinkedIn could be a great place to start, Google, obviously, of course, and then LinkedIn as well.

So, all it takes is a couple searches and maybe even when you're talking to other partners, they may have ideas of who else you can reach out to, it really just takes getting out there and having those conversations to get started.

Any other questions or comments?

Cynthia Forland: Looks like we got a link.

Oh okay, so Sean linked findhealth.org, a great database for other service providers. Thank you so much. So, if you're looking for partners definitely save that website.

Anyone else?

Okay.

So, once again, this is our email, so contact@nvtac.org you can reach out to us for any comments, questions, or requests for technical assistance, so we can all be reached from there.

And like I mentioned at the beginning, this is the first of a four-part series so at the end of the series we're going to be sending out a survey to participants, but in the meantime, if you have any feedback for today's presentation, or any of the future presentations feel free to reach to us at this email, but the survey will be going out at the end of the four-part series, so at the end of next week.

Alright, well, thank you so much to everyone for coming today and participating. Thank you everyone who gave feedback, and that was all very helpful, and we will see those of you who are participating on Thursday's session.