



National Veterans'
Technical Assistance Center

Serving Individuals with Mental Health and Physical Health Challenges in the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP)

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NVTAC Introduction

NVTAC Background

- Contracted by Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Services (DOL-VETS) to provide support to HVRP grantees
- Provide technical assistance (TA) designed to increase grantees' ability to establish and operate successful HVRP grants
- Support HVRP grantees throughout their period of performance to ensure that challenges are resolved quickly
- Provide effective training and peer-to-peer learning opportunities that result in increased knowledge and adoption of innovative practices among HVRP programs nationwide

TA Services (1 of 2)

- Providing one-on-one TA support to HVRP grantees
- Facilitating monthly Community of Practice (CoP) sessions
- Hosting biannual Virtual Learning Series
- Providing consistent training opportunities
- Mentoring and relationship building
- Providing leadership support and development
- Assisting with resource identification and navigation

TA Services (2 of 2)

- Collaboration and partnerships
- Outreach to veterans, employers, or partners
- Training for new staff
- Intake, assessment, and case management
- Embedding diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in service delivery and operating processes
- Integrating services
- Career-driven training and career pathways
- Leadership skills
- And more!

Mental Health Challenges

Statistics

As of 2019:

- 15.3 percent of U.S. veterans experienced a mental illness
 - Roughly 31.3 million people
- 20.8 percent of adults experiencing homelessness in the U.S. have reported a mental health challenge
- 6.4 percent of U.S. adults experiencing unemployment have reported a mental health challenge

(source: NAMI)

Engagement and Outreach Strategies



- Ensure outreach staff are trained in Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)
 - Understanding the intersections involved in experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges
- Partnering with organizations that specialize in mental health (ex: Assertive Community Treatment [ACT] and Projects for Assistance in Transitions from Homelessness [PATH])
 - Utilize these resources rather than calling law enforcement for crisis situations
- Understanding that employment services can be provided concurrently with traditional mental health modalities

Case Management Strategies (1 of 2)



- Connecting veterans experiencing homelessness with counseling and mental health support
- Partnering with organizations that provide supportive employment
 - Vocational rehabilitation approach for individuals experiencing serious mental illnesses, which emphasizes helping them obtain competitive work in the community and providing the supports necessary to ensure workplace success (source: SAMHSA)
- Providing referrals and connections for resources that HVRP cannot provide
- Veteran-centered case conferencing with all partners

Case Management Strategies (2 of 2)



- Follow up after job placement to support participant
- Work with American Job Center (AJC) to help the veteran become job ready, connect with and leverage resources, and find supportive employers
- Connect the veteran with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) resources

Job Development Techniques

- Identifying transferrable skills from their military experience that can be utilized in the workforce
- Connecting with employers who provide accommodations to fit employee needs
- Emphasize skills rather than mental health challenges
- Sharing your belief that individuals with mental health challenges can be successful in the workforce
 - Dismantling stigma
- Advocating for your veterans with possible challenges that may arise

Resources

- [Lack of Housing and Mental Health Disabilities Exacerbate One Another](#)
- [Supported Employment: Building Your Program](#)
- [Mental Health by the Numbers](#)
- [The Never-Ending Loop: Homelessness, Psychiatric Disorder, and Mortality](#)

Interactive Activity

What challenges have you experienced reaching and serving veterans with mental health challenges?

What best practices or innovative solutions have you utilized when serving veterans with mental health challenges?

Physical Health Challenges

Statistics

As of 2019:

- Individuals experiencing homelessness experience higher rates of illness and die on average 12 years sooner than the general population

(source: NHCHC)

- Individuals living in a shelter experience a disability at twice the rate of the general population
- In individuals experiencing homelessness, conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS are found at rates up to three to six times higher than that of the general population

(source: NAEH)

Engagement and Outreach Strategies



- Being prepared to provide accommodations to individuals with physical health challenges
 - Accessible on-site location and street outreach
- Hosting or identifying accessibility-focused employment event or job fair
- Acknowledging that not all physical health challenges are visible
 - Utilize Trauma Informed Care
 - Addressing stigma around hidden physical health challenges
- Emphasize that individuals with physical health challenges can be successful in the workforce

Case Management Strategies

- Partnering with transportation services for individuals with physical health challenges and disabilities
- Providing referrals for wrap-around services that HVRP cannot provide
- Discussing with the veteran how their physical health challenge could impact their work goal
 - Identifying solutions for the potential challenges
- Identifying skills the veteran has that are not impacted by their physical health challenge
 - Strengths-based approach

Job Development Techniques (1 of 2)



- Identify accessible employment opportunities
- Understand elements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Preparing veterans to advocate for needed accommodations in the workplace
- Seek training opportunities for HVRP staff, partners, and employers
- Target disability-friendly employers

Job Development Techniques (2 of 2)

- Consider location and public transportation routes when searching for jobs
- Utilize Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Work with AJC partners to leverage resources

Resources

- [Homelessness & Health: What's the Connection?](#)
- [National Alliance to End Homelessness: Health](#)
- [Healthcare and Homelessness](#)
- [Understanding the Impact of Homelessness on Health and Wellbeing](#)

Interactive Activity

What challenges have you experienced reaching and serving veterans with physical health challenges?

What best practices or innovative solutions have you utilized when serving veterans with physical health challenges?



Questions?

Thank you!

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