

ASK THE QUESTION

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE MILITARY?

One question can make a big difference.

Women's Services & Crisis Centers

SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SERVE BY:

*Partnering with veteran service providers in crisis situations.
Identifying service-related triggers and risk factors.
Identifying individuals affected by military sexual trauma.*

WHY ASK THE QUESTION?

Service providers who specialize in women's services, crisis support, and domestic violence encounter service members, veterans, and military families, but they might not know it. Veterans and military spouses do not always identify themselves. They can be proud and stoic, and tend to be more comfortable helping others than asking for help themselves – even when they need it. Combat traumas, Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and reintegrating after a military deployment can impact family relationships, anger management, and domestic safety. *The best way to identify service members, veterans, and their families is to ASK!*

As part of the initial Intake with a new client,

ASK THE QUESTION:

“Have you or a family member ever served in the military?”

WHEN THE ANSWER IS “YES,” you may consider thanking them for their service. You may also then be able to increase your understanding of their challenges and help them to safely access the resources and services they need. Asking further questions will also help you to:

- Build rapport and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Link to military and veteran resources and referrals, including VA and non-VA programs
- Identify past and present service-related stressors
- Identify individual and family strengths, supports, and resources as well as areas in need of support
- Explore sources of income and financial stability
- Address perceived barriers to seeking support
- If engaging in clinical counseling, identify mental health concerns that will eventually need further diagnostic and treatment work and will impact treatment goals

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Following are some questions that could be asked in the context of gathering information for more effective referrals and services. Pay attention to non-verbal cues, and show respect, curiosity, and empathy. Also be aware that responsiveness and effective follow-up are critical to building trust and rapport.

- When did you/your family member serve? What service era? Which Branch?
- In what ways may the services that you're here for be connected to your/your family member's military service?
- Are you experiencing any issues and stressors related to employment or financial needs?
- Did you/your family member experience deployment?
- Have you/your family member had a recent deployment and/or are you/your family member facing a deployment?
- Are you/your family member enrolled/connected to the VA or other veteran resources and organizations for support and services?
- Are you/your family member connected to any other behavioral health, spiritual or social support resources in the community? If yes, do you/your family member use them?
- What types of support are needed but not yet met?
- What reservations did you/your family member have about coming in to seek assistance? Is there anything that might be a barrier to further seeking assistance?

Where Clinical Counseling is involved,

- What did you/your family member do while serving?
- What is your/your family member's discharge type/status?
- If deployment history, where were you/your family member deployed?
- If deployment history, did you/your family member experience enemy fire or witness casualties?*
- Did you/your family member lose a close friend in combat?*
- Were you/your family member wounded, injured, or hospitalized?*
- Do you/your family member have a service-connected disability or condition?
- Were you/your family member exposed to excessive noise, chemicals/gases/pesticides, explosions, or other hazardous substances?*
- Have you/your family member been diagnosed with or see yourself as experiencing PTS (Post-Traumatic Stress) or TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury)?*
- Have you/your family member ever experienced Military Sexual Trauma?*
- Have you/your family member experienced problems with anxiety/depression/anger management/substance use?*
- Have you/your family member ever had thoughts of killing yourself or harming others?

If yes, see **PTS/MST/TBI/SUD Screening Tools and Referral Information sheet*

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