

## **Chapter 2 Working with Veterans**

### **At a Glance Chapter Outline**

Case Study: Marine Corps Sergeant (E-5) Troy Franklin  
Transitioning from the Military  
Retiring, Separating Voluntarily or Involuntarily  
Documenting Military Service  
Differing Eras for Veterans  
Financial Implications  
The Military Life Cycle (MLC) Model and Life Stages  
U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Health  
Burials and Memorials  
Vet Centers  
The Disability Process  
Current Issues Involving Veterans  
Homelessness  
Vet Court  
Resources/Organizations for Veterans  
TRICARE/Military OneSource  
Veteran Service Organizations  
Case Study Continued: Marine Corps Sergeant (E-5) Troy Franklin  
Summary

### **Key Concepts**

The Military Life Cycle (MLC) Model  
Veterans Administration (VA)  
Vet Centers  
The Disability Claims Process  
Homelessness  
Vet Court  
TRICARE  
Military OneSource  
Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)

### **Chapter Objective**

1. Describe the ways in which veterans enter and transition from military service and how this influences the resources available to them and the challenges they may encounter.
2. Identify the different services and benefits available to veterans through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
3. Explain current issues involving veterans.
4. Review the different resources available to veterans.

### **Chapter Summary**

Military service members and their families face many obstacles while on active duty as well as when they return to civilian life. Social work clinicians are valuable in providing assistance for military members and their families and finding resources for their new needs. Members and their families face new obstacles in service as well as when they transition out. The transition process for military members, what services and benefits are available to them, as well as the issues that

veteran's faces are the main topics of this chapter.

The importance of the unique culture and values associated with the military is vital but it is important to know the differences in working with active duty, Reserve and National Guard service members who may be veterans, and those veterans who have ended their military service. Several factors influence how each veteran transition back into civilian life. This book focuses on veterans of the United States Military, noting that veterans in this book refer to persons who have previously served in the American military for any length of time.

For clinicians, it is important to know why each member joined for assessment purposes as well as the influence it may have on their perceptions, expectations and transition. After men and women enlist in the military service, a defined number of years are determined and when these obligations are met they are able to return to civilian life or re-enlist. The length of years in the military differs depending upon the way they went into the military. All military members are required to participate in the Transition Assistance Program. Also, a very important document for social workers is the DD214 to help military members apply for and obtain to determine eligibility for services.

While support for the military today has visibly been seen by bumper stickers and yellow ribbons, the social and political view of the military varies upon the different eras. The level of support differs from the Vietnam War era and the more recent wars overseas. Many who served in the Vietnam War were drafted involuntarily and the support from the United States decreased as casualties increased.

As military personnel transition out, there can be financial impacts depending on the time of leave. Compensation is given to those who qualify but it can be difficult to find employment. Mental health issues, lack of education for desired employment, and reduction in monthly income from military are a few of the instances that impact the financial transition. As clinicians, assistance with food, housing, employment and education may be needed. Along with the help from social workers, a new program within the department of defense has been implemented to help with the transition process. It includes the Military Life Cycle Model, a guide for service members from the day they begin the military service until they are out. The clinician, when looking at the life span of the client, should consider all issues and the family to ensure a plan and separation from the military could be done at the appropriate time.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a long history of providing care to veterans. There is an annual enrollment process for veterans to access medical benefits and the benefits are given after they apply and are assigned to one of eight priority groups. Veterans may also be eligible for burial allowances for up to \$2,000. There are 131 national cemeteries and the most well-known is the Arlington National Cemetery located in Washington, D.C. Along with these benefits, the vet center program was created by the VA to help Vietnam era vets with readjustment issues. Individual, group or family therapy counseling is provided to those who have served in a war zone.

When veterans suffer an injury or illness (physical or mental) during active duty they become eligible for compensation through a disability claims process. The Integrated Disability Evaluation Systems (IDES) was implemented to allow a claim to be initiated by the member is still on active duty. The Compensation and Pension Exam (C&P) is a medical examination for evaluation and is conducted by a C&P physician but the VA is charged with accurately determining disability and

identifying person who make false claims. Veterans who are denied are able to appeal their claim. This process can be lengthy in time and is processed through the SOC and possibly BVA. In an event that the military member dies, a Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a benefit that is paid to the survivors of the member.

Homelessness and incarceration have been identified as issues with Veteran mental health and substance abuse issues. The number of homeless veterans has declined since 2010 with the help of local communities partnering with Housing First and providing support and treatment if needed. Through Housing Choice Vouchers, Veterans are provided with housing prior to treatment and this has made a significant difference in the lives of homeless veterans.

With the first veteran's court started in 2008, a new belief surfaced that in order to reduce recidivism and homelessness for veterans, communities needed to address the underlying problems. Mental health and substance abuse resources are utilized by the veteran's court to treat veteran's exposure to combat, and mental, behavioral, and substance use issues. Veteran mentors have also partnered with veteran court participants to motivate a completion of the program.

Additional sources of assistance also include TRICARE and Military OneSource, for healthcare and the latter for overall benefits. Eligibility for TRICARE benefits depends upon the length of active duty and time of service. Clinicians can utilize the Military OneSource online to locate assistance for veterans. Veteran Service Organization's also serves the needs of veteran's and include organizations such as the American Legion and the American Red Cross among a long list of more throughout the nation.

### **Sample Homework Assignments**

Review the case study below taken from the chapter and provide your answers to the questions listed.

#### **Case Study: Marine Corps Sergeant (E-5) Troy Franklin**

Sergeant Troy Franklin is a 25-year-old Caucasian male who served in the Marine Corps for seven years before returning to his hometown in South Carolina. Troy has one older brother and is the first member of the family to have served in the military since his great grandfather served in WWII. He joined the Marine Corps in response to 9/11 and served two combat tours in Afghanistan. He met girlfriend, Angela, between tours when he came home to visit his parents. Troy injured his back during his last tour in Afghanistan. This injury caused him to be medically separated about two years ago. His medical evaluation resulted in a 50% service-connected disability. He has chronic back pain that is not readily apparent to anyone outside his family. He has been having difficulties transitioning to life after the Marine Corps.

Troy had a couple odd jobs in construction and house painting but has not consistently sought full-time work. He was fired by one employer after getting in a verbal altercation with a co-worker on the job site. He is drinking more since he got out of the service. Troy sleeps in 2 to 3 hour bursts and frequently wakes up because of his dreams and back pain.

After he got out of the Marine Corps, Troy lived with Angela. Six months ago, she became frustrated with him for not getting a steady job and because he wanted to just hang out around their apartment and play video games. He is especially fond of role-playing video games and has episodically played for 24 hours at a time. Troy's parents are divorced, but both try to support him. He is living with his mother right

now, but she is quite concerned and upset with him and does not know what to do to help him to get better. She has threatened to kick him out unless he goes to the VA for mental health care.

As you read, consider the following questions related to Sergeant Franklin:

1. How might the way in which Sergeant Franklin ended his military service impact how prepared he was for the transition to civilian life?
2. What function might role-playing video games have in Sergeant Franklin's life?

### **Sample In-Class Exercises**

Request students to state/discuss their responses to the case study questions in small groups or as class.

### **End of Chapter Questions**

1. Summarize how men and women enter military service, the number of years each personnel is required to serve, and their eligibility for services.
2. Explain how the military service members benefit from the Military Life Cycle (MLC) model.
3. Summarize the disability claim process for veterans in case of serious injury or illness.
4. Paraphrase the appeal process when a disability claim is denied.
5. What kinds of programs are developed to help homeless veterans?
6. Describe the responsibilities of a veteran treatment court and the people employed to make it more effective.
7. In what ways do TRICARE and Military OneSource help veterans and their families?
8. Outline the different veteran service organizations and their functions.

### **Test Bank**

- 1.) A reduction in the number of homeless veterans since 2010 has occurred due to:
  - a.) local communities partnered with the VA, HUD and USICH through other programs such as Housing First
  - b.) the VA provided free housing to homeless veterans
  - c.) a large number of homeless veterans with mental health and substance abuse issues were incarcerated
  - d.) TRICARE eligibility expanded
- 2.) The Transition Assistance Program and newly established MLC model was designed to do all of the following except:
  - a.) help guide service members from the day they begin military service until they leave
  - b.) incorporates financial planning throughout the life stages in the military
  - c.) encompass continuing education to meet career goals
  - d.) provide housing vouchers to those leaving the military
- 3.) The benefits and services that a veteran may receive after active duty depends on the following:
  - a.) length of service, type of discharge, dates and locations of service
  - b.) length of service, type of discharge, attitude toward military

- c.) social and political view of the military at the time of leave
  - d.) type of discharge, spouse's career, length of service
- 4.) Vet courts approach to reduce recidivism include:
- a.) rehabilitative/treatment approach
  - b.) higher monthly compensation
  - c.) community- based treatment approach
  - d.) educational approach
- 5.) All of the following are financial impacts on the transition out of the military except:
- a.) lack of education
  - b.) reduction of monthly income
  - c.) mental health issues
  - d.) substance abuse issues
- 6.) The Vet Center Program was created in response to:
- a.) increase in homeless vets
  - b.) Vietnam era vets experiencing readjustment issues
  - c.) lack of burial space for veterans
  - d.) the need for medical services for veterans
- 7.) The Compensation and Pension exam evaluates:
- a.) mental health only
  - b.) mental health and medical conditions
  - c.) pace in mile run
  - d.) healthcare benefits
- 8.) The following is a website for social work clinicians to use to locate assistance for veterans:
- a.) TRICARE
  - b.) Military OneSource
  - c.) Integrated Disability Evaluation Systems
  - d.) Transition Assistance Program
- 9.) Some believe that Americans still do not pay adequate enough attention or fully understand the work and sacrifice involved in military service due to:
- a.) the all-volunteer force requires a small percentage of U.S citizens to serve
  - b.) the war not being taken seriously by citizens
  - c.) lack of knowledge about the every-day life of an active duty soldier
  - d.) seeing the war as pointless and a waste of time

**Test Bank Answers**

- 1.) a.
- 2.) d.
- 3.) a.
- 4.) a.
- 5.) d.
- 6.) b.

- 7.) b.
- 8.) a.
- 9.) d.