



SPOKANE VETERANS FORUM

Mentor Handbook

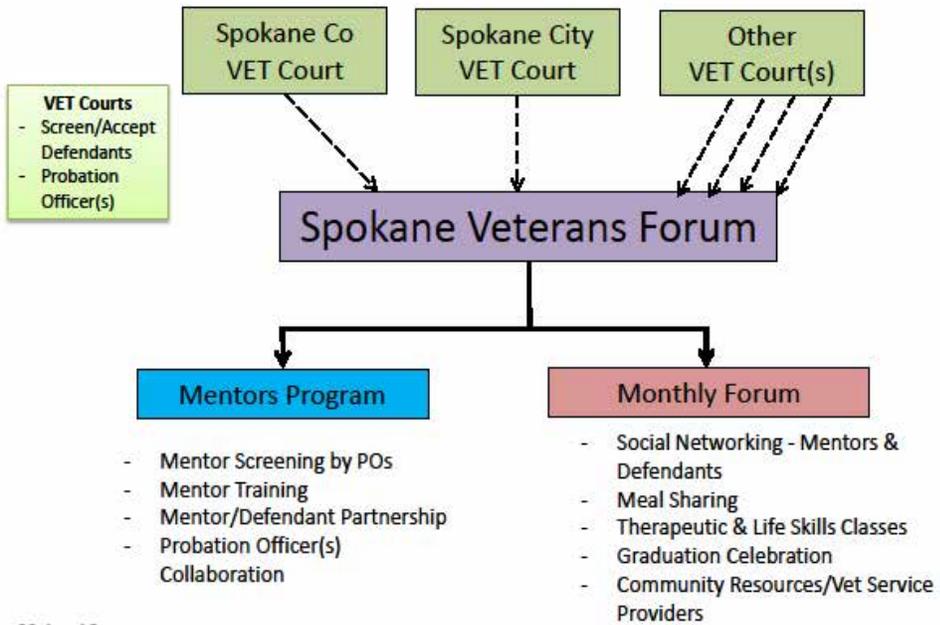
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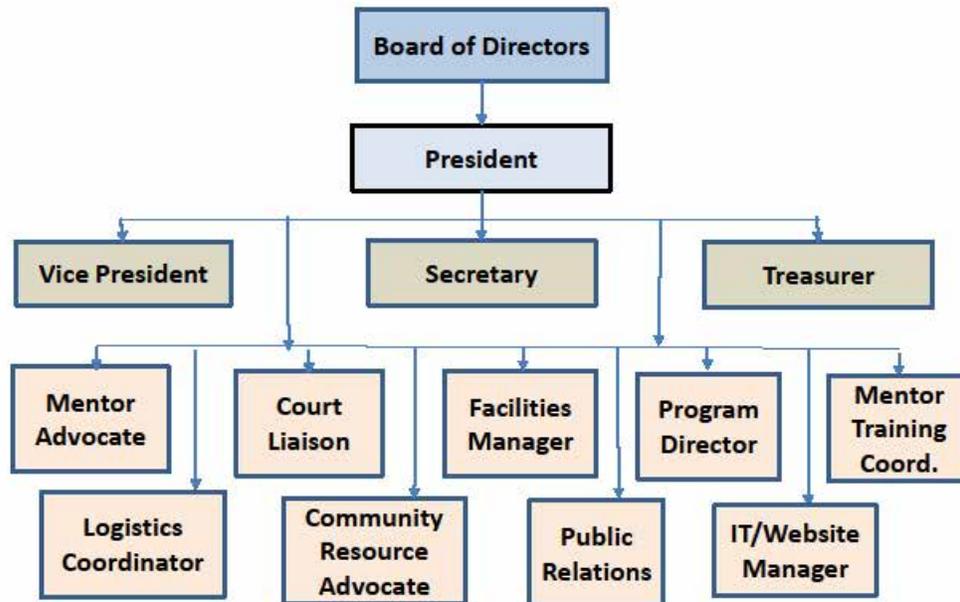
Spokane Veterans Forum Mentor Handbook

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"I was lost on the wrong path, looking for answers and something to hide my pain and anger through alcohol. That was the wrong way. The program has been a blessing in disguise. I had to hit rock bottom to see a much needed reality check and understand the seriousness of my actions that impacted my life and my family".

A written statement from a SVF Veteran Defendant

Overview

1. Significant Causes of Veterans' Dysfunctional Behavior Resulting in Damage to Relationships and Lives:

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

2. Range of Symptoms Resulting from PTSD and MST:

- Hyper-Vigilance
- Difficulty Controlling Anger/Emotions
- Sleep Issues
- Substance Abuse
- Depression
- Isolation
- Suicide

3. Range of Symptoms Resulting from TBI:

- Physical Disabilities
- Psychological and Behavioral Problems (See PTSD above)

4. Risk Factors for Veterans

The layering of risk factors accumulating over time causes the most difficulty and harm to veterans as they work on transitioning back into their community. Many veterans experience multiple challenges creating cycles of failure and enduring trauma. Some of these challenges include:

- Poverty
- Violence
- Substance abuse
- Involvement in crime
- Unemployment
- Lack of stable housing
- Lack of social support
- Lack of positive role models

"It was wonderful to feel a part of something where others understand your struggles and are there to genuinely help you make a difference in your life. I never once felt judged or looked down upon for my mistakes, instead there were open arms, listening ears and friends' help at every turn".

A written statement from a SVF Veteran Defendant

5. Organizations Supporting Veterans' Recovery Process

The organizations cited below are dedicated to assist veterans to address and overcome or avoid the risk factors above and to:

- Achieve a positive transition from military service to civilian society AND/OR
- Attain a role as a productive and stable member of society.

"I would never expect a Court system to be so rewarding. The monthly Forums are filled with volunteers who truly care and want to help veterans. It is a very positive atmosphere, filled with camaraderie. It has given me a sense of belonging that I haven't felt since my time in the service".

A written statement from a SVF Veteran Defendant

5.1 Veterans Enhanced Therapeutic Courts

A. Mission

Provide an effective structure that assists veterans to overcome the symptoms and challenges of military service related PTSD, MST and TBI and to achieve a rewarding, productive life.

Veterans Enhanced Therapeutic Courts (VET Court) are designed to provide a non-adversarial resolution process for veterans who have committed misdemeanor offenses and are either diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), or Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and/or were combat veterans. Veterans from all branches of service and theaters of combat are included.

B. Operation

When a veteran is arrested and charged with a gross or simple misdemeanor offence, the veteran defendant and their defense attorney are presented with an option of proceeding before the Veterans Court rather than choosing a trial before the Criminal Court.

Operative Concept:

The VET Court judge, probation officer (PO), the prosecuting attorney and the defense attorney form a loosely defined team with the objective of assisting the veteran to achieve a fresh start in life.

During the VET Court hearing, the veteran defendant pleads guilty to a criminal charge, the VET Court will impose the sentence for the criminal charge and order probation, usually for a period of two years.

Based on the charged offence, the requirements of the probation may include:

- Suspension of additional jail time.
- Payment of fines and financial penalties. *The VET Court may suspend or waive a portion of the financial penalties based on the veteran defendant's financial situation and completion of the probation terms.*
- Drug and alcohol evaluations.
- Participation and completion in the counselling and treatment programs prescribed by the VA or other specified agencies.
- Refraining from use of alcohol or controlled substances (drugs), including marijuana. *

- Fulfilling the minimum requirement to have contact with their mentor on a weekly basis.
- Attendance at the Spokane Veterans Forum (SVF) for a minimum of six monthly meetings.
- Compliance with penalties imposed by the Department of Licensing. *
** These restrictions may be imposed based on the category of offence committed by the veteran defendant.*

Operative Concept: *The VET Court will specify that probation will be reduced by one month for each meeting of the SVF attended by the veteran defendant, up to 12 months.*

Please refer to attached article: [Why is there a Need for a Veterans Court?](#)

5.2 Veterans' Administration and Other Veterans' Health Services and Delivery Agencies Provide:

- Drug/alcohol counselling
- Mental health counselling
- DV MRT
- PTSD Counselling
- Disability Benefits

5.3 Spokane Veterans Forum

A. Mission: No Veteran Left Behind

"I grudgingly, repeat grudgingly, agreed to veterans court. To my surprise and amazement...it gradually became something I looked forward to because I could and did actually measure my resiliency each month. I could see that next month I will be a little more recovered, a little bit better, a little closer to normal".

A written statement from a SVF Veteran Defendant

B. SVF Structure

The Spokane Veterans Forum is:

- A 501-(c)(3), non-profit organization that provides mentoring, educational, therapeutic, and life enhancing services to military veterans referred from regional Veterans Enhanced Therapeutic Courts (VET Court).
- A separate entity from the VET Courts.
- Designed to assemble and provide services in support of the veterans during their court ordered recovery process.
- An all-volunteer organization; there is no cost to Veteran Defendants.

C. SVF Operation

- Veteran defendants attend the monthly Veterans Forum and become part of a community of veterans.

Operative Concept: *To achieve a positive, lasting outcome for each veteran defendant, it is important that they be in the company of other veterans as early and as often possible.*

D. Monthly Forum Meetings Consist of:

- An unstructured hour to meet and build relationship with other veterans over a hot meal provided by the SVF.
- Access to community and veteran service providers who attend the Forum.
- Two training sessions which cover therapeutic and life skills topics relevant to veterans' recovery process.
- Group ceremonies which acknowledge individual veteran's recovery progress and graduation from the SVF.

5.4 Community Service Providers

Several organizations participate in the SVF to extend assistance to veterans in the critical areas which include: Medical treatment, monetary assistance, housing, jobs, transportation, food, legal, child support, VA benefits.

6. Responsibilities of the Veteran Defendant:

- Comply with the treatment and financial requirements of the VET Court Order.
- Maintain regular contact with the probation officer as required by the VET Court.
- Initiate regular contact with the Mentor.
- Attend the Spokane Veterans Forum meetings.

"I knew that the veterans Court was a blessing in disguise but didn't know the potential of opportunity behind it. With the support and resources that I have acquired from the Forum and my mentor, I have done better in school and re-established my relationship with my wife and family."

A written statement from a veteran defendant

Operative Concepts:

- ***The veteran defendant bears the ultimate responsibility to overcome or control the challenges caused by the symptoms of PTSD, MST and/or TBI which have disrupted his/her life.***
- ***The role of the VET Court and the SVF is to provide direct support to assist the veteran defendant to achieve success in this often difficult and challenging process.***

7. SVF Mentors

7.1 Mentor Qualifications

A. Must pass criminal and personal background checks.

B. Must meet one of the following criteria:

- 1) Military Service: Currently serving or veteran with honorable or medical discharge;
- 2) Spouse of a military member or veteran;
- 3) Successfully completed/graduated from the VET Court program and satisfied a six month waiting period after graduation.

C. Age is *not* a limiting factor.

7.2 Role of the SVF Mentor: Coach, Facilitator, Advisor, Supporter and Advocate.

Mentors play a vital role to assure that *No Veteran Is Left Behind*:

- A. Listen and Provide Positive Reinforcement and Guidance
- B. Build Relationship - Trust
- C. Reinforce Positive Choices and Actions
- D. Guide Toward Better Choices or Corrective Actions

Operative Concepts:

- ***A mentor is most effective in his/her role by providing positive reinforcement and guidance to the veteran defendant.***
- ***The effectiveness of the mentor's function is diminished if the mentor assumes an enforcement role. The VET Court Probation Officer is responsible for enforcement of the conditions contained in the Court Order.***

Role of the SVF Mentor

A. Listen and Provide Positive Reinforcement and Guidance

Listen to the concerns and problems of the veteran defendant and guide the veteran to identify challenging issues, form solutions, set goals and develop action plans.

Operative Concepts:

- ***“Active Listening” is an invaluable skill when applied to guide the veteran toward self-confidence, self-discovery and recovery.***
- ***If the veteran thinks that the mentor is not listening/not interested in his/her issue, the relationship will suffer, thus the effectiveness and credibility of the mentor will be damaged.***

B. Build Relationship - Trust

- Interactions between the Veteran Mentor and Veteran Defendant are on the level of peers rather than one of the parties, the mentor, acting from a position of authority.
- The peer-to-peer relationship encourages the Veteran Defendant to develop trust: First in the mentor and then trust in the VET Court/SVF system, rather than harbor resentment based on their arrest and the imposition of the Court Order.

Operative Concepts. The mentor will gain credibility with the veteran defendant when the mentor:

- ***Makes the effort to accompany and to stand with the veteran when the veteran is periodically summoned to appear at the VET Court.***
- ***Returns telephone calls and messages.***
- ***Encourages rather than criticizes.***

C. Reinforce Positive Choices & Actions

- Represent a voice of reason and objectivity during a time of stress and confusion.
- Applaud and reinforce constructive decisions and actions.

- Assist the veteran defendant to navigate the requirements of the VET Court and the VA benefit and treatment systems.
- Assist the veteran defendant to identify and secure needed assistance from community support agencies.

D. Mentors Guide Toward Better Choices or Corrective Actions

- Coach the veteran defendant to identify better alternatives when he/she makes a poor personal decision or if he/she violates the VET Court Order.

Operative Concept:

- ***The mentor should counsel the Veteran Defendant to contact the probation officer and “self-report” if he/she has violated the VET Court Order.***
 - ***“Self-Report” means for the Veteran Defendant to contact the PO and voluntarily acknowledge that he/she has violated the Court Order regarding one or more prohibited activities: consuming alcoholic beverages, using drugs, driving a motor vehicle, or if arrested for a new alleged offence.***
 - ***The VET Court may extend additional consideration to the Veteran Defendant who acknowledges that they have violated a condition of their probation but remain committed to work for recovery.***

“It’s hard to imagine where I would have been without all the support and guidance that I have received here. This program is not a cure or a free handout, but with a little hard work and determination, anyone can find help here. I believe that all probation programs should be like this one”.

A written statement from a SVF Veteran Defendant

7.3 Guidelines for Mentor Participation

- A. Attend monthly Forum meetings.
- B. Attend monthly Mentor training meetings.
- C. Encourage/Enforce that the Veteran Defendant initiate weekly contacts with the Mentor as required by the Probation Order of the VET Court.
Utilize in-person meetings or telephone communication, rather than Text messaging to:
 - Develop the Mentor/Veteran Defendant relationship;
 - Maintain effective communication through which the Mentor will be able to effectively support the Veteran Defendant in his/her efforts to recover from PTSD, TBI and/or MST and to reintegrate into civilian society.
- D. Accompany Veteran Defendant to VET Court.
 - Check the VET Court docket generated by the probation officers to confirm when the Veteran Defendant is required to appear in Court.

- Contact a mentor advocate and request assistance to stand with the Veteran Defendant if he/she cannot attend the Court.
 - Stand with the Veteran Defendant before the Court.
- E. Make a statement to the Court in support of the Veteran Defendant's effort and progress in his/her recovery and participation in the SVF Program.
- F. Encourage the Veteran Defendant to "self-report" to the Court if they have violated the conditions of their probation.
- The Veteran Defendant's recovery from the symptoms of PTSD, TBI and/or MST may require reinforcement of the structure ordered by the VET Court.
- G. Assist the Veteran Defendant to contact community service providers: Housing, transportation, employment, financial assistance, legal assistance or medical care.
- In response to the Veteran Defendant's needs or requirements.
 - At monthly Forum meetings.
- H. Request assistance/guidance from a SVF mentor advocate or the appropriate VET Court probation officer if the Veteran Defendant encounters a difficult situation that could impact his/her safety, recovery process and/or participation in the SVF Program.

8. Mentor Partnership with the Probation Officer

It is highly beneficial for all persons involved when the mentor and VET Court probation officer form a working partnership to guide the veteran defendant through his/her recovery process and to successfully complete the requirements of the VET Court and the SVF Program

9. Limitations of the Mentor's Function

A Mentor should avoid acting in the following roles or undertaking the following actions when relating to a veteran defendant:

- An attorney
- A therapist
- An authority figure such a probation officer
- Promotion of a religious belief
- Promotion of a political ideology
- Enable questionable or destructive behavior
- Lend money
- Accept money or expensive gifts from a veteran defendant
- Ask the defendant to perform work for the mentor

Operative Concept:

If a mentor is unsure how to handle a situation encountered with the veteran defendant, he/she needs to seek counsel from a mentor advocate or a VET Court probation officer.

Please refer to attached article: [A Strategy for Mentors](#)

10. SVF Policies: *Mentors are subject to the policies of the SVF organization; they must:*

- Read and understand those policies (Refer to Policies on the SVF Website).
- Act in compliance with SVF Policies.
- Report to a SVF officer or Board member, a violation of a SVF Policy or an event which may violate the law; the reportable violation/event may involve or impact any person associated with the SVF or a guest of the SVF organization.

"A recap of what I've learned over the past year:

1. I am not sick or broken. I am me.
2. It's OK to walk away from confrontation.
3. When I am stressed/triggered - Go workout.
4. We are not alone.
5. It's not magic. Maintain - work to maintain".

A written statement from a SVF Veteran Defendant

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR VETERANS COURT?

If you're reading this Guidebook, you probably already know many of the facts about the problems veterans face when trying to deal with civilian life. We include some of those facts for you here, simply as a review. This way, you can explain them to other members of your own circle, and in that way more people will come to understand the gravity of the obstacles veterans face.

Issues and Problems Facing Veterans

Men and women in the United States military endure high costs of service. Some of these costs are immediate and obvious, like death or injury. However, other costs may not surface or be fully realized until years later. The impact of military service on veterans can be immense and long-lasting. As a mentor, you will see most or all of these problems at one time or another. So, you should know something about them.

Unemployment

Veterans face higher unemployment rates than their non-veteran counterparts. This is particularly true for veterans from August 1990 forward. Among veterans experiencing unemployment, the hardest hit are the youngest veterans. In 2005, the Bureau of Labor Statistics calculated an unemployment rate of 18.7% for Gulf War era veterans aged eighteen to twenty-four years old. For non-veterans aged eighteen to twenty-four the unemployment rate was only 9.9%.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Alcohol and substance abuse exists across all classes, ages, and races of people in the United States. It is a problem that knows no boundaries and impacts nearly everyone's life in some way. The veteran population is just as susceptible to alcohol and substance abuse as other populations in America. The 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 56.6% of veterans had used alcohol, and 7.5% reported heavy alcohol use in the previous month. Results of the 2003 survey also indicated a higher use of marijuana by veterans than nonveterans in the past month. However, of the 256,000 veterans in need of treatment for illicit drug use in the past year, [only] 20 percent had received treatment.

Strained Relationships

When service members deploy, they leave behind family and friends. Military life and deployment can have a lasting and significant impact not only on service members, but also the people in their lives. When veterans return from deployment they are changed by their experiences. Research indicates that

the military experience, particularly multiple deployments, places great strain on marriages and other relationships. These strained relationships may have further consequences. For example, in 2006, 20% of service members planned on separating or divorcing.

Homelessness

Homelessness disproportionately affects veterans. It is estimated that 23% of the homeless population in the United States is comprised of veterans. It is also estimated that on any given night anywhere from 154,000 to 200,000 veterans are homeless. In any given year, approximately 400,000 veterans will experience homelessness. Problems like homelessness are often accompanied by other problems. Within the homeless veteran population itself, 45% suffer from mental illness, and half have substance abuse problems.

Mental Health

Research indicates that among the most pervasive and potentially disabling consequences of military service is the threat to the psychological health of our nations fighting forces, their families, and their survivors." The incidence of mental illness in veterans spans all ages and all periods of conflict. Signature injuries of the Iraq and Afghanistan operations are Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). In particular, 10% to 18% of brigade combat teams are at risk for serious symptoms of PTSD; 3% to 25% are at risk for depression.

The Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health (the Task Force) has determined that the current system of care for physiological health is insufficient in meeting the needs of service members and their families.

The military's mental health care system reflects trends in American health care and mental health treatment. These trends demonstrate a shift towards acute, short-term treatment models.

It is questionable whether such treatment models promote the military's goal of a healthy and resilient force. The Task Force has identified current barriers to service members accessing mental health treatment, including gaps in insurance coverage and the stigma or perceived stigma associated with treatment. Many veterans are reluctant to seek assistance for their mental health needs. This reluctance may be linked in part to the veteran's warrior mentality. The costs, both human and financial, of failing to address problems related to mental health are expected to increase over time.

Guard and Reserve

These mental health issues are presenting themselves not only in active duty soldiers and Marines, but increasingly among National Guard and Reserve members. The recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have called for a significant number of deployments for National Guard and Reserve troops, who, in the past, were less likely to be deployed. Studies indicate that special considerations are needed for these service members.

Women in the military

Female veterans are an area of unique concern. The impact of military service on women may be distinctive, particularly with effects on mental health. Currently, 8% of the 23,442,000 veterans are female. As a sub-population, female veterans face unique issues as a result of their military experience. Deployed women are currently facing more combat situations than in past wars. Along with this comes a higher likelihood of PTSD, as well as the potential psychological impact of sexual trauma perpetuated by fellow military personnel.

Co-Occurring Disorders

When left untreated, mental health problems can lead to other serious issues, like substance abuse. Individuals may use drugs and alcohol to self-medicate and to alleviate the symptoms of underlying mental health issues. More than half of individuals with alcohol or substance abuse issues have experienced a mental health disorder at some point in time.

3. Fundamental Elements

The following paragraphs explain the fundamental elements upon which the Spokane Veterans Court is based. You'll see that the Court is actually a community-wide systematic approach to providing help to veteran defendant.

Fundamental 1: Non-Adversarial Team Approach - Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participant's due process rights. It is the belief of the Court that the veterans approved to enter the Veterans Court do not belong incarcerated, that they are better off in their communities and getting help. Further, it's the Court's belief that the wider community is better served when the veteran Client is exposed to a program that is so extensive.

Veterans Court relies on a Team Approach. Here are the members of the core team:

Judge. Ongoing judicial interaction with all veteran defendants is essential. The Judge is the leader of the Veterans Court team. This proactive, supervising relationship is maintained throughout the veteran defendant's participation in the program. In this way, there is a message to the veteran defendant - someone with authority cares about them and is closely monitoring them.

Probation Office: The Probation Office monitors the veteran defendant to ensure compliance with the conditions set by the Court. The Probation Office will provide the Veteran with the material to accomplish the task(s) assigned by the Court. The Probation Office will communicate with the Veteran and other agencies as needed. The Probation Office acts as a liaison between the mentor and the veteran defendant.

Mentors. Mentors are essential to the Veterans Court team. Their ongoing interaction with the veteran defendant is essential. Active support from a veteran mentor throughout the veteran defendant's participation in the program can greatly increase the likelihood that the veteran defendant will remain in the program and increase his/her chances for sobriety, law-abiding behavior, and a successful civilian life.

Prosecution and Defense Attorneys. To facilitate the veteran's progress, the prosecutor and defense counsel shed their traditional adversarial courtroom relationship and work together as a team on behalf of the defendant.

Once a veteran is accepted as a veteran defendant in the treatment court program, the team focuses on providing him/her with the skills, tools and processes necessary to succeed in civilian life. The team also provides the veteran defendant with opportunities to prove that he/she is capable of succeeding in civilian life.

Fundamental 2: Early Identification - Eligible veterans are identified early in the process and placed in the Veterans Court program as quickly as possible. An arrest can be a traumatic event in a person's life. It creates a personal crisis that can result in anger and inappropriate behavior. It's up to the court to differentiate between: 1) veterans who want to succeed in civilian life but are simply having a tough time, and 2) veterans who, for whatever reason, choose not to follow the rules of society.

Fundamental 3: Community Resources - The Veterans Court provides access to a comprehensive spectrum of alcohol, drug, mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.

Veterans come through the Veterans Court because they made questionable decisions that involved some kind of unlawful behavior. However, while the judicial system is primarily concerned with criminal activity, Veterans Court becomes the defendant's link to appropriate solutions. Those solutions can address:

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Mental illness
- Medical problems
- Transmittable diseases
- Homelessness
- Basic educational deficits
- Unemployment and poor job preparation
- Spouse and family troubles especially domestic violence
- The ongoing effects of war-time trauma

Since many veteran defendants have several issues and needs, all issues must be adequately addressed. The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans says that veterans need a coordinated effort that provides secure housing and nutritional meals, essential physical health care, substance abuse aftercare, and mental health counseling. Beyond that, they need personal development and empowerment guidance. Finally, they need job assessment, training and placement assistance.

The Spokane Veterans Court is the forum to deliver all of those needed services and more. The program is based on the belief that all people need services, support, skills, and spirit to be successful. The court's experience is that when one of these elements is weak or does not exist, bad things can happen. That's when the alcohol, drugs, mental health, and criminal problems become exacerbated. And, it's at that time that the criminal justice system, treatment, veteran's services, and the community come together on behalf of the veteran.

In pursuit of doing the best job for veterans, the Spokane Veterans Court pursues partnerships, coalitions and relationships with the Veterans Administration, public agencies, community based organizations, public criminal justice agencies, veterans and veteran's families support organizations, and mental health treatment delivery systems. We are finding that it really does take a village...

Attachment 2

A Strategy for Mentors

Your conversations with your veteran defendant are purposeful and generally follow the strategy outlined here. Each conversation builds on the previous one, thus it is vital that you keep accurate, up-to-date notes on every communication. Remember, it is your responsibility to meet in person, communicate by email with your veteran defendant at least on a weekly basis and to call them back if you receive a message.

Initial Conversation

Your goal in this conversation is to let the veteran defendant know that you are on his/her side, that you are an advocate and that you represent safety. Safety is paramount because the relationship will fail if the veteran defendant does not feel safe with you. This conversation should be short, just long enough for you to give the veteran defendant the sense that you are on his/her side. Let the veteran defendant go away and mentally process this unique situation and relationship.

Initial Need – Being Heard

It is highly likely that your veteran defendant will feel as though no one listens to him/her. This is all too common in our culture. Thus, listening is a skill you must seek to improve. The common mistake many people make is to confuse silence with listening. When your veteran defendant speaks, focus intensely in what he/she is saying. If you catch your mind going in any other direction, bite the inside of your lip and refocus on what your veteran defendant is saying.

One of the most effective listening strategies is to tell yourself that your veteran defendant is the most interesting, fascinating person you've ever met. Think of this as Proactive Listening. Tell yourself that he/she is going to tell you something that will change your life, so you need to listen closely for it. Because safety is paramount in your relationship, recognize that if the veteran defendant thinks you are not listening, your relationship will suffer, thus your effectiveness and credibility as a mentor will be damaged.

Many new Mentors attempt to illustrate points they seek to make by telling their own stories. Beware of doing that. When you're telling your own stories, your veteran defendant is losing an opportunity to tell his/hers. Simply remember that your relationship is one-sided; it focuses on the veteran defendant, not on you.

Second Conversation

The main objectives of this conversation are: 1) continue to maintain safety, and 2) begin to identify resources the veteran defendant might need.

During this conversation begin to help your veteran defendant make sense of the four things that need to intersect correctly in order for him/her to create a successful civilian life. Those four things are:

- Values
- Fears
- Goals
- Capabilities (skill/talents/education)

It is possible that the best way you can help your veteran defendant is by helping him/her understand his/her values, fears, goals and capabilities. This is especially true for younger vets who have not yet had the opportunities in civilian life to explore and identify these things.

Values. All people tend to make their decisions based on their values. Sometimes those values are misplaced or dysfunctional. Your objective in the second conversation is to begin making note of what your veteran defendant's values are. Questions you might ask to initiate that conversation are:

- What do you like to do?
- How do you have fun?
- Why did you join the military?
- Why did you leave the military?
- What do you like most about civilian life?

You'll find that your veteran defendant's values fall within specific categories:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Fun & Recreation | 7. Personal/Social Relationships |
| 2. Education | 8. Career |
| 3. Health & Wellness | 9. Physical Environment |
| 4. Personal Development | 10. Money & Financial Security |
| 5. Romantic Relationship | 11. Faith |
| 6. Family | |

Fears. Approximately half the population is motivated to avoid something they fear. For example, many successful people fear poverty, so they do whatever it takes to avoid it. That motivates them to get jobs, save money and invest their money. Fear of rejection is another common one. It causes people to shy away from forming new relationships. Sometimes, the fears are illogical, unreasonable or misplaced. You can bring much needed clarity to your veteran defendant by discussing those fears objectively.

Goals. This is an area of civilian life that most people need help with. Many goals are illogical because the person is not in control of the outcome, or he/she is not prepared to invest the time or effort to achieving the goal. Again, you can bring much needed clarity to your veteran defendant's life by facilitating multiple conversations about his/her goals.

Capabilities. These are the skills, talents and education possessed by your veteran defendant. Those are the internal tools your veteran defendant will use to achieve his/her goals. And, the achievement of the goals will be driven by the veteran defendant's values. The hardest question your veteran defendant might face is if he/she has the capabilities to achieve stated goals. For example, if the goal is to run her own company, but she has never held a job, then there is a capability void.

Rapport Building

People naturally and unconsciously seek to establish rapport with other people. When you know what those natural rapport-building processes are, you can be far more effective at building and maintaining a rapport with your veteran defendant.

In Person. The most important rapport-building skill is to match the veteran defendant's facial expressions. You are not to mimic them; simply approximate them. If he raises his eyebrows, you need to raise yours or tilt your head back a little. If she looks worried or concerned, put that same type of frown onto your own face. In that way, you display to your veteran defendant that you are following along, understand and empathize. And, if you neglect to do that, the veteran defendant will begin to see you as insurmountably different from him/her. When the veteran defendant begins to think that you don't understand him/her, your effectiveness and credibility as a mentor could be destroyed.

Some people are more comfortable leaning back when they engage in conversation, and some are more comfortable leaning forward. Note which is true for your veteran defendant, then match that posture. Leaning forward is an indication that the person has energy connected with that topic. If he leans forward and you lean back, you're creating distance.

On the phone. Make sure to let the veteran defendant know that you are following what he/she is saying. That means saying, "Uh huh...OK...I see" and other utterances that give the veteran defendant an indication that you are following along, that you understand and empathize. If you do not do that, you will be putting distance between you and your veteran defendant, thus damaging the safety of the relationship.

Adjust your voice to match the veteran defendant's voice by just a bit. That includes the speed of speech, types of words commonly used and quality of voice.

Fourth Conversation

By this time, you should be speaking easily with your veteran defendant. Continue to keep track of the value words used by the veteran defendant, and follow the rapport-building skills explained above. Beyond that, allow the veteran defendant to initiate the conversation. That keeps you from sounding like you're preaching or lecturing, and it gives your veteran defendant an opportunity to feel in control.

Spokane Veterans Forum Mentor Guide Setting Boundaries

Have you encountered an uncomfortable situation while interacting with your Veteran Defendant that involved?

- **An Excessive Commitment of Your Time?**
- **A Request for Money?**
- **An Inquiry about Your Personal Information?**
- **Another Issue that Made You Uncomfortable?**

Spokane Veterans Forum Mentor Guide Setting Boundaries

What is a Boundary?

- **A mentor sets a boundary when he/she determines *AND* communicates, to a Veteran Defendant, a limit regarding an activity or conversation.**
- **Mentors must set boundaries to maintain a healthy and safe relationship for both the Mentor and the Veteran Defendant.**
- **For a boundary to be effective the mentor must consistently apply the limit that he/she has established.**

You Know that a Personal Boundaries Have Been Violated When You Feel:

- **That you have been used, taken advantage of or manipulated.**
- **Uncomfortable or frustrated with the situation.**

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Boundary Categories Include:

Time

Questions to ask yourself:

- How much scheduled (*non-emergency*) time do I feel comfortable committing with this Veteran Defendant each week?
- How often should I meet in person with my Veteran Defendant?
- Do I prefer receiving phone calls, texts, or emails?
- What should I do if my veteran defendant does not show up for a meeting?

Keys for Setting Time Boundaries:

- Set consistent schedules for meetings and/or telephone conversations.
- Establish preferred times to receive *non-emergency* telephone calls or e-mails.
- Discuss your expectations and boundaries with the veteran defendant:
 - In general at the beginning of your relationship.
 - Immediately when you encounter an uncomfortable situation.

Caution:

- Committing too much time may lead to BURN OUT!
- Know your limits.

Have you experienced a situation regarding time boundaries that you were uncomfortable with?

Money

No Money Should Change Hands:

- In a time of crisis.
- To help with basic needs.
- To buy gifts.

Keys for Setting Money Boundaries:

- You may reinforce financial dependence.
- May lead to manipulation.

How can you help your Veteran Defendant overcome money/financial problems?

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Self-Disclosure

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What information am I comfortable sharing?
- What purpose does it serve to share your personal information?
- Am I sharing this information because I need support?
- Why is my veteran defendant asking me about this; what is the real issue?

Keys to Setting Self-Disclosure Boundaries:

- **Be honest**
 - a. "I don't feel comfortable talking about this now."
 - b. If you do share make sure that it is an appropriate topic.
- **If you do share information, include:**
 - a. How the situation affected you.
 - b. How the situation affected others.
 - c. Ask the Veteran Defendant: What lessons have you learned from this information?

Have you experienced a situation regarding sharing your personal information that caused you discomfort?

What Are Examples of Other Types of Boundaries?

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Boundary Scenarios

How Would You Handle Each Situation?

Scenario 1

You and your Veteran Defendant are talking and they mention that they are going to be losing their apartment if they can't come up with the rent in the next few days. They are scared, panicked, and don't know where to turn. They tell you that they are \$150 dollars short and ask you for help. What should you do?

Scenario 2

Periodically you have given a ride to your Veteran Defendant to an appointment or drop them off somewhere as a favor after your regular meeting. You notice that your veteran defendant is now asking for more rides outside of your meeting time and wants you to take them to the store or mall. How do you handle this situation?

Scenario 3

You have been meeting with your Veteran Defendant for a few months now and have developed a level of comfort with each other. Your Veteran Defendant asks you about topic that is personal and sensitive to you.

- You know that sharing information can build trust but the thought of disclosing this personal information causes you to feel uncomfortable.
- You are also unsure how this information would benefit your Veteran Defendant.

How would you respond to this situation?