Military Health History

Pocket Card For Health Professions Trainees and Clinicians

Asking the questions on this card will clarify a Veterans’ medical concerns.

- Ask these questions in a safe and private place.
- Engage with good eye contact.
- Use a supportive tone of voice.
- Thank Veterans if they disclose stressful or traumatic experiences.
- If you suspect someone is actively at risk for suicide, do not leave them alone.

Suicide Prevention Questions

- Would it be okay if I asked you about suicide? (self-directed violence includes suicidal thoughts, self-harm, attempts of suicide, etc.)
- Are you having thoughts of suicide? Have you ever exhibited self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse, risky use of weapons, etc.?

Veterans Crisis Line
Dial 988, then Press 1
### General Health Questions

**Would it be okay if I asked about your current state of health?**

- Have you been diagnosed with any illnesses?
- Are you currently taking any medications?
- Are you experiencing any chronic pain?
- Are your vaccinations up to date?

### Military-Related Questions

**Would it be okay if I talked with you about your military experience? When and where did you serve? In what branch? What type of work did you do while in the service?**

- Can you tell me more...?
- Did you ever become ill while you were in the service?
- Were you or anyone you knew wounded, injured or hospitalized?
- Did you have a head injury with loss of consciousness, loss of memory, "seeing stars" or being temporarily disoriented?
- Were you deployed overseas?
- Did you see combat, enemy fire or casualties?
- Were you a prisoner of war?

### Living Conditions

**Would it be okay to talk about your living situation?**

- Where do you live and who do you live with?
- Is your housing safe?
- Are you at risk of losing your housing?
- Do you need assistance in caring for yourself and/or dependents?

Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness are strongly encouraged to contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4-AID-VET for assistance. Veterans are also encouraged to call or visit their local VA medical center and ask for a Homeless Coordinator.

### Interpersonal Violence Experience

**Would it be okay to ask you about interpersonal violence you may have experienced?**

- Have you ever experienced physical or emotional abuse, harassment (sexual or identity related) or sexual trauma?
- Is that incident(s) causing you concern now, such as difficulty sleeping, depression, anger, etc.?
- Many Veterans find it helpful to get support; VA is here to help. Would you like a referral to discuss support services?

### Compensation and Benefits

**Do you have medical conditions you feel may be connected to your service?**

- Would you like assistance with filing for compensation for injuries/illnesses related to your service?
- Call VA at 1-800-827-1000 or 1-800-698-2411
Questions Focused on Exposure Concerns and Behavior

Behavior
Would it be okay if we talked about emotional responses related to your service?

PTSD
• Have you been concerned that you might suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder?
• Symptoms can include numbing, re-experiencing symptoms, hyperarousal/being on guard and/or avoiding situations that remind(s) you of the trauma.

Depression
• Have you been experiencing sadness, feelings of hopelessness/helplessness, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating and/or poor sleep?

Risk Assessment
• Have you had thoughts of harming yourself or others?

Blood Borne Viruses (Hepatitis and HIV)
• Do you have tattoos? Have you ever injected or snorted drugs, such as heroin, cocaine or methamphetamine?
• Have you ever been tested for Hepatitis C or HIV? If not, would you like to be tested for these?

Exposure Concerns
Would it be okay if I asked about any environmental factors you may have been exposed to during your service?

• What (refer to list below) were you exposed to?
  • Chemical (pollution, solvents, weapons, etc.)
  • Biological (infectious diseases, weapons)
  • Psychological trauma or abuse
  • Physical injury
    • Blast or explosion
    • Excessive noise
    • Heat
    • Munitions or bullet wound
    • Radiation
    • Shell fragment
    • Vehicular crash
    • Other injury

• What precautions were taken? (avoidance, PPE, treatment)
• How long was the exposure?
• How concerned are you about the exposure?
• Where were you exposed?
• When were you exposed?
• Who else may have been affected? Unit name, etc.
General Exposure Concerns

- Burn Pit Smoke
- Cold Injuries Contaminated Water – (Benzene, Trichloroethylene, Vinyl Chloride)
- Endemic Diseases
- Heat Stroke/Exhaustion Hexavalent Chromium
- Herbicides and other Dioxins like Agent Orange
- Mustard Gas
- Nerve Agents
- Noise-Induced Hearing Loss/Ringing in the Ears
- Pesticides
- Radiation (Ionizing and Non-Ionizing)
- Sand, Dust, Smoke and Particulates

**Occupational Hazards:** Asbestos, Chemical Agent Resistant Coating (CARC), Fuels, Industrial Solvents, Lead, Noise/Vibration, PCBs, Radiation

Gulf War/Southwest Asia (Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq)

- Animal Bites/Rabies
- Blunt Trauma
- Burn Injuries (Blast Injuries)
- Chemical or Biological Agents
- Chemical Munitions Demolition
- Combined Penetrating Injuries
- Depleted Uranium (DU)
- Dermatologic Issues
- Embedded Fragments (Shrapnel)
- Hearing Loss
- Malaria Prevention: Mefloquine/Lariam
- Mental Health Challenges
- Multi-Drug Resistant Acinetobacter
- Oil Well Fires
- Reproductive Health Issues
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Tinnitus
- Traumatic Amputation
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Vision Loss

**Immunizations:** Anthrax, Botulinum Toxoid, Cholera, Hepatitis B, Meningitis, Polio, Smallpox, Tetanus, Typhoid, Whooping Cough, Yellow Fever

**Infectious Diseases:** Brucellosis, Campylobacter Jejuni, Coxiella Burnetii, Malaria, Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, Nontyphoid Salmonella, Shigella, Visceral Leishmaniasis, West Nile Virus

Vietnam, Korean DMZ and Thailand

- Agent Orange Exposure
- Cold Injuries
- Hepatitis C Risk

Cold War

- Chemical Warfare Agent Experiments
- Nuclear Weapons Testing or Cleanup

World War II and Korean War

- Chemical Warfare Agent Experiments
- Cold Injuries
- Nuclear Weapons Testing or Cleanup
- Biological Warfare Agents

Tell your patients about VA’s [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) Gateway to Veteran Health Benefits and Services

**Important Resources**

- Office of Academic Affiliations Military Health History Pocket Card
- Compensation & Pension Benefits
- Post-Deployment Health Services
- VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Veterans’ Health Initiative Independent Study Courses
- War Related Illness and Injury Study Center
- Military Exposures