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?**

If your patient answers “yes” to any of the following questions, ask:

- 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 1-877-4AID-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?**

Interpersonal violence can include intimate partner violence, sexual assault/harassment and human trafficking.

- 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 1-888-827-1000 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