

Considerations for EAP Providers

Suggestions for Supporting Veterans Transition to Civilian Teams

When providing EAP services to a Veteran, as part of your assessment and/or intervention (which should include screening for military service

[\[http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/screening.asp\]](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/screening.asp) and PTSD

[\[http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/clinic_ptsd.asp\]](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/clinic_ptsd.asp), you might want to include basic questions (and as needed probe for more information) such as:

1. What is your past/current preferred work style?
2. Do you prefer to work alone or with others?
 - a. Why do you prefer that style?
 - b. Is this in any way related to your job while you were in the military?
3. What are some of the benefits of this style in your current position?
4. Are there any costs associated with this?

Review the Veteran's responses to these questions, then:

- Discuss the benefits and costs from the Veteran's perspective. Explore with the Veteran regarding perspectives of others such as supervisors or co-workers.
- Work collaboratively with the Veteran.
- Discuss/explore and agree upon some ways to optimize the Veteran's skills, experiences, and preferred work style into his/her current role and tasks.
- Develop behavioral goals and an action plan to optimize Veteran's performance.

When working with a Supervisor:

- Help the supervisor to be flexible in his or her thinking about the issue/s regarding the Veteran.
- Review with the supervisor that some employees have a general dispositional preference for working alone.
- Remind the supervisor that sometimes a preference to work alone has more to do with the work, the workplace, or other relevant factors such as:
 - Military training and experiences are likely to have developed a sense of self-reliance in the Veteran.
 - The Veteran is used to a focused, fast-paced, "can do" attitude towards work.
 - Military training and experiences often require physical and mental sacrifice and stoicism. The Veteran may bring these same attitudes to the civilian workplace.
 - The Veteran, like many civilian employees, may feel he or she works more efficiently on his own.
 - The Veteran may have experienced the loss of fellow service members to whom he/she was emotionally close. The Veteran may prefer to keep relationships in the workplace as "all business" as a way to attempt to manage emotions and minimize future losses.

- Educate the Supervisor to think about the Veteran with the same kind of leeway that you would another employee (e.g., there are likely times/tasks suitable for teamwork and other times more suitable for working alone).
- Some additional points to explore with the supervisor include:
 1. Why is the supervisor concerned? (i.e., does the work require team interaction? Is the supervisor worried about the Veteran's well-being?)
 2. Has the supervisor discussed his/her concerns with the Veteran?
 3. Has the supervisor been clear about the expectations with the Veteran?
 4. Has the supervisor asked the Veteran why he or she seems to prefer to work alone?
 5. What, if any changes in the Veteran's workplace behaviors have been agreed upon/tried?
 - a. Did these effect positive changes?
 - b. If yes, why? If not, why not?
 6. Explore with the supervisor other ways to facilitate more team involvement for the Veteran.
 7. Are there any HR issues with this employee?
 8. Should accommodations be considered for this employee? If so, what kind?