Creating Support Services for At-Risk Student Veterans

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Supporting Through Transitions

Moving into the University: Warrior to Student
- Office Veterans Affairs
- Orientation to Campus
- University Seminar
- Veteran Alliance of TxState (student organization)

Moving through the University: Student Veteran
- Other Student Vets
- Faculty mentoring
- Academic Advising
- Link to campus services
- Link to community resources
- Veterans Advisory Council initiatives

Moving out to Work: Student Veteran to Civilian Worker
- Career Services
- Resume
- Job finding
- Link to community resources

Texas State University Model: Transitional Services for Student Veterans: Connecting and Supporting (Adapted from DiRamio et al. 2008)
Holistic Framework for Understanding Student Veterans

- Prior Military Experience
  - Combat and Deployments
  - Career Specialty
  - Academic Skills

- Family
  - Financial Issues
  - Adjustment to Veteran Transitions
  - Health & Mental Health Needs of Family

- University Environment
  - Connecting with Other Student Veterans
  - Supportive Services for Student Veterans
  - Faculty & Staff Support
  - Military-Friendly Environment

- Health/Mental Health
  - Disabilities
  - Combat Stress Reaction and PTSD
  - Other Health Factors: Sleep, Injuries
  - Attitude Towards Accessing Resources

- Career Factors
  - Academic Preparation
  - Academic Major
  - Prior Work Experience
  - Preparation for Job Search

(Adapted, DiRamio et al.2008)
Key Components of Working with At-Risk Vets

1. Stay Veteran Centered
2. Peer- to Peer Support
3. Active Outreach
4. Counseling Services
5. Case Management- Linkage & referral
6. Faculty / Staff Training & Assistance
7. Array of health, behavioral health, adaptive sports activities
#1. Keeping Us Veteran-Centered

Focus Groups- yearly

Individual Interviews with Vets-
Each semester 30 interviews

Needs Assessment on-line

Veteran participation & input in all events & activities
Texas State Student Veterans are At-Risk

- Multiple deployments (71%)
- To combat zones (94% Iraq) (17% Afghanistan)
- Wounded, injured or physically hurt during military service (41%)
- Still having trouble with injuries (44%)
- Having health problem related to deployment other than wound or physical injury (38%)
Student Veterans Reported Unmet Health Needs

- Overall medical needs (32%)
- Sleep needs (40%)
- Psychological needs (23%)
- Needs concussive event (6%)
#2. Peer-to-Peer Support

Veterans Alliance @ TxState

It’s a Lifeline not just a student organization
Hold regular events 2-3 per month
Have a bench of leaders
Educate them about signs and red flags
#3 Active Outreach

Variety of events to reach different types of veterans on different parts of campus

vet resource fair, socials, tailgating, community partners as guest speakers, Combat Papermakers, river clean up, fundraising events, Golf Tournament
# 4 Counseling on Campus & Community

- Individual & Group Counseling Services by Vets - our staff & Austin Vet Center staff
#5. Case Management

Assessment, Referral, Linkage, Follow-up

- Social Work Masters Interns Assigned to Veterans Initiative
- Faculty Supervised
- Called Veterans Interns
- Outreach to vets
  - From Veterans Affairs Office
  - Calls for those on Alert List due to low GPA
  - Self referrals
  - Referrals from faculty, staff- disability services
  - Voluntary
- Focus on first year vets
Campus-Wide Training for Faculty & Staff: Helping Veterans Succeed: who are vets, where have they been, challenges, tips for working with, campus resources
Workshop format 1 ½ to 3 hours
Twice a semester & by special request
Tied into Veteran Friendly Office Program Award Plaque
Started with Academic advisors
Campus Training

• Social Work Elective Course/Next Step Certificate
  – Train social work and others to work with troops/vets
  – Student Vet Interviews & Team Projects
#7 An Array of Supports on the Continuum

Sleep Study with Respiratory Care Department- Dr. Gregg Marshall

*Outreach for Pilot Sample
*Actigraph Watches
*Preliminary Results – less total sleep time, increased time to fall asleep, increased time lying awake in bed after being awakened
*Refer to Sleep Clinic & VA
*Meditation Group Starting-Mindfulness Meditation
Wounded Warrior Alternative Scuba Diving

*Partnership with Center for the Intrepid Ft. Sam Houston

*Texas State Aquarena

*Outreach to recruit to campus as students

*Veterans Alliance gives back
# Developing Peer Model: *Navigating the Campus Zone (CampusNav)*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Develop Self Care</th>
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Credits

• Thanks to Dominque LaVista for communication design work on photos
• Thanks to my son for his photos from his combat deployments and for his service and sacrifice.
• Thanks to all the troops and student veterans for what they teach me every day. It is an honor to serve them.