

Asking this Critical Question Can Make a Difference: *“Have you or a loved one ever served in the military?”*

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Webinar

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SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

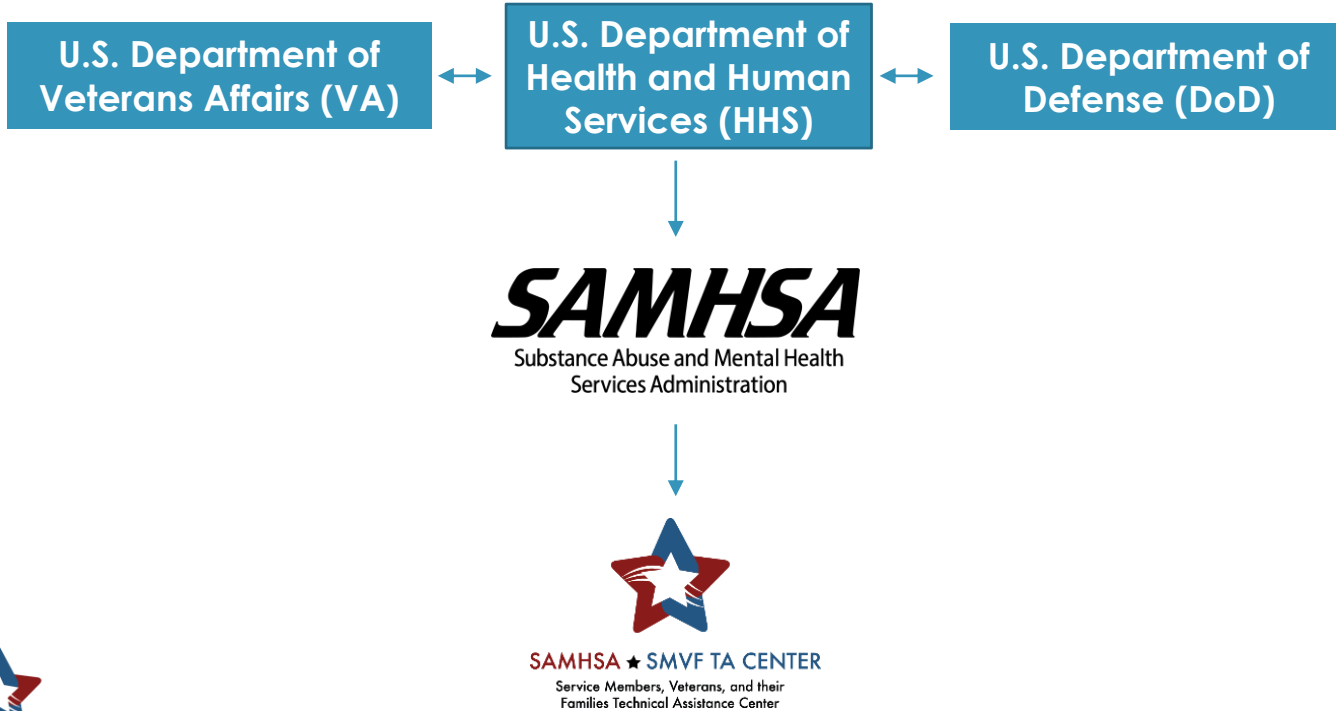
Welcome



Donna Aligata, R.N.C.

Project Director, SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and
their Families Technical Assistance (SMVF TA) Center,
Policy Research Associates, Inc.

Collaboration Across Federal Agencies

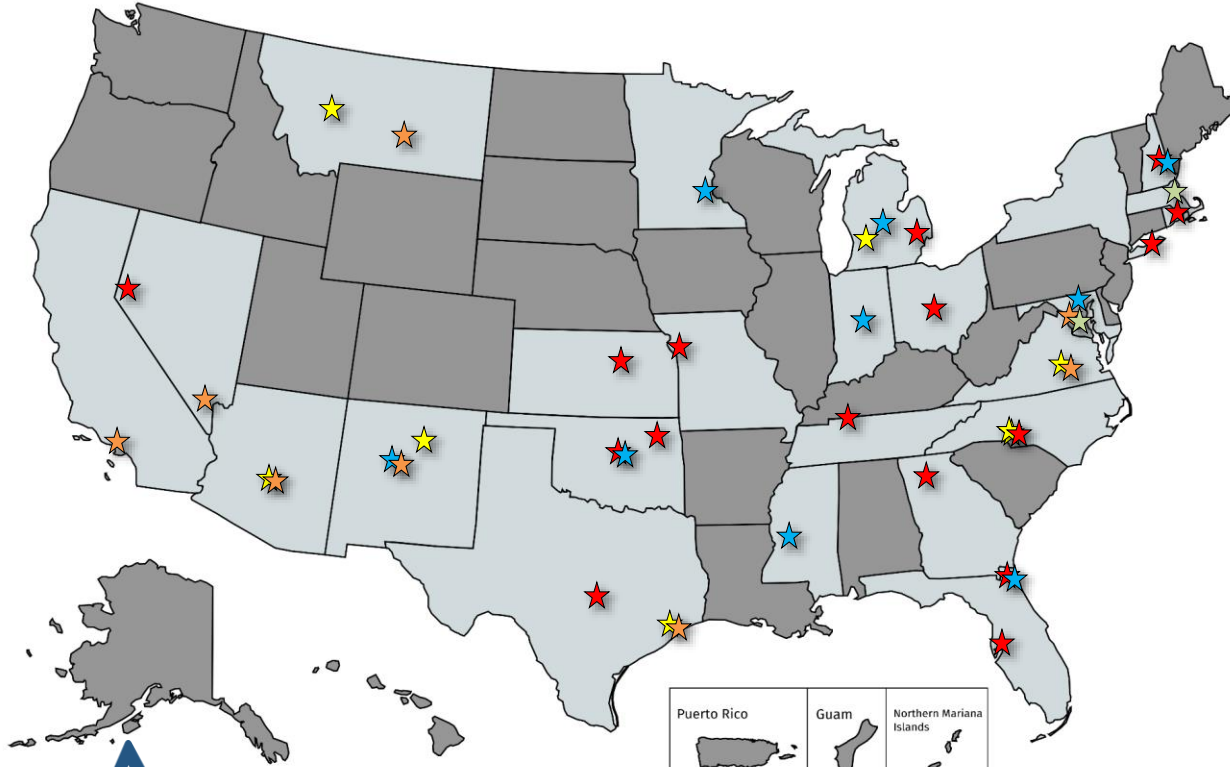


SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center

- Strengthening ongoing collaboration among military and civilian stakeholders
- Providing a centralized mechanism for cities, states, and territories to learn, connect, and share
- Increasing awareness of and access to resources and programs that strengthen behavioral health care systems for service members, veterans, and their families (SMVF)
- Supporting coordinated responses to the behavioral health needs of SMVF
- Encouraging cities, states, and territories to implement promising, best, and evidence-based practices



SMVF TA Center 2017-2018 Technical Assistance Resources



- ★ Crisis Intercept Map
- ★ Virtual Implementation Academy
- ★ VA Mayor's Challenge
- ★ CSAP *Talk. They Hear You.* Campaign to Prevent Underage Drinking
- ★ Policy Academy Sites
- ★ Other Site Visit



Webinar Objectives

- Provide an overview of how to ask about prior military experience when screening
- Review recent studies that outline how quality care is tied to screening for military service
- Describe successfully implemented initiatives to identify SMVF in systems of care
- Strengthen support structures within behavioral health agencies



Webinar Objectives (cont'd)

- Provide best-practice approaches to transforming a behavioral health system from within
- Describe how to engage stakeholders and leadership
- Discuss ways to create internal military liaisons and/or veteran and military family support teams
- Explore how to connect the Ask the Question campaign across all SMVF program areas



Veterans Affairs (VA) Utilization

- Many veterans receive care in the community
 - Forty-eight percent of all veterans used at least one VA benefit or service in FY 2016
 - Nearly all elderly (age 65+) veterans have Medicare coverage
 - Majority of younger veterans (more than seventy-five percent) have coverage options other than VHA

Why Asking the Question is Important

- Connecting SMVF to tailored resources
- Understanding behavioral health needs of SMVF at a community level
- Planning, funding, tracking, and measuring of impact



Which Question?

- How and what do we ask?
- Who?
 - Family
- When?

Examples of Other Ask the Question Campaigns

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS)
- Suicide prevention
- Military service



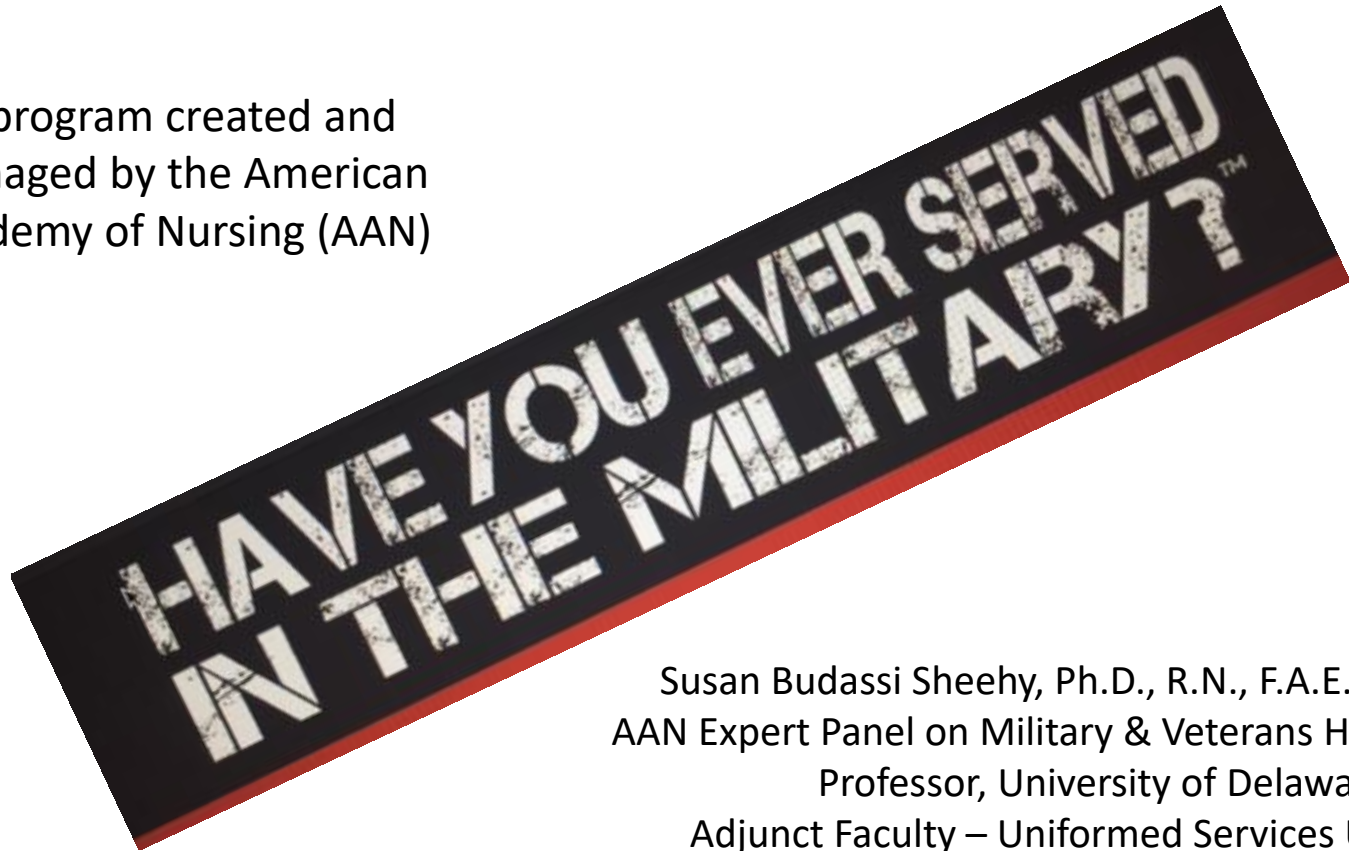


Susan Budassi Sheehy, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.E.N., F.A.A.N.

Professor, University of Delaware, College of Health Sciences,
The American Academy of Nursing

Ask Every Adult Patient

A program created and managed by the American Academy of Nursing (AAN)



Susan Budassi Sheehy, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.E.N., F.A.A.N.
AAN Expert Panel on Military & Veterans Health Co-Chair
Professor, University of Delaware
Adjunct Faculty – Uniformed Services University



Have You Ever Served (HYES) is an awareness initiative to improve veterans' health...knowing where and when someone served and what they did when they served may help to identify a diagnosis, etiology, treatment, and VA assistance.

If the answer to HYES is “Yes” ...

Determine military history

- In which branch did you serve?
- When did you serve? Where?
- What did you do while you were in the military?
- Were you deployed to a hostile/combat area?
- Did you experience enemy fire/see combat/witness casualties?



Determine Military History - 2

**HAVE YOU EVER SERVED
IN THE MILITARY?**

- Were you wounded, injured, or hospitalized?
- Did you participate in any experimental projects or tests that you know of?
- Were you exposed to loud noises or explosives?
- Were you exposed to chemicals, gases, demolition, or other hazardous substances?



- Have you ever used VA for your health care?
 - Do you have a service-connected disability or condition?
 - When was your last visit to VA?
 - Do you have a VA primary care provider?
 - Do you have a place to live?



- **January 2016**
 - 39,471 veterans experiencing homelessness
 - Significant (56%) decrease since the 2010 count
 - [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

- **December 2017**
 - 45,056 veterans experiencing homelessness
 - Mostly on the West Coast (California and Washington)
 - 25,000 living in temporary facilities
 - >15,000 have no reliable shelter
 - [MilitaryTimes.com](#)

In addition...

- Forty-three percent of veterans receive food stamps
- Fifty-five percent of veterans with severe housing cost burdens fall below the poverty line



Female Veteran Homelessness

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED
IN THE MILITARY?™



- There are approximately 3,600 female veterans experiencing homelessness*
- Female veterans are three times more likely to become homeless than non-veteran females
- One in four say they have been sexually assaulted while in the military**



*U.S. Department Housing and Urban Development: The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress

** National Center for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Sexual Assault Screening

Post-Traumatic Stress

- Have you ever experienced a traumatic or stressful event when your life or the lives of those around you were in danger?
- Have you experienced trauma-related thoughts or feelings?
- Are you having nightmares, vivid memories, or flashbacks about the event?
- Do you feel anxious or jittery?
- Are you experiencing a sense of panic that something bad is about to happen?
- Are you having difficulty concentrating or sleeping?

Four out of five Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) warriors have a friend who was seriously wounded or killed in action.

Wounded Warrior Project, 2013



- Seventy-five percent of OIF and OEF Warriors report the memory of an upsetting military experience that has haunted them in the past month (Wounded Warrior Project, 2013)
- Thirty-five percent have been diagnosed with PTSD

- During military service, did you receive uninvited or unwanted sexual attention, such as touching, pressure for sexual favors, or sexual remarks?
- Did anyone ever use force or threat of force to have sexual contact with you against your will?
- Did you report the incident to your command and/or military or civilian authorities?
- Did you receive treatment?
- Were you offered medical or legal advice or both?
- Did you report this to VA?

- Did you experience heavy artillery fire; vehicular or aircraft accidents; explosions, such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or rocket propelled grenades (RPGs); shrapnel/fragments; or bullet wounds above the shoulders?
- Did you have any of these symptoms immediately afterwards:
 - Experiencing a loss of consciousness (being knocked out)
 - Being dazed (seeing stars)
 - Having trouble remembering the event
 - Being diagnosed with a concussion or head injury



- Veteran suicide prevention is VA's top priority
- The rate of suicide in 2016 was 1.5 times higher among veterans compared with non-veteran adults
- The rate of suicide among 18- to 34-year-old veterans continues to increase
- In 2016, rates of suicide were highest among younger veterans (ages 18 to 34)

(VA, September 2018)

- Shame
 - Humiliation
 - Irrational thinking
 - Paranoia
 - Agitation
 - Anxiety
 - Insomnia
 - Irritability
 - Despair
 - Profound social isolation
- Individual presents with or communicates that they are:
 - Deteriorating physical appearance
 - Feeling trapped, no way out
 - Feeling of failure
 - Feeling that life is not worth living
 - Feeling that life has no purpose
 - Decreasing performance
 - Having a sense of hopelessness
 - Having a sense of desperation
 - Neglecting their personal welfare

**HAVE YOU EVER SERVED
IN THE MILITARY?™**

Identified Military Health Risks by Conflict and/or Location

- World War II
- Amchitka, Alaska
- Hiroshima – Nagasaki – prisoners of war in Japan
- Korea – Submariners (exposed to nasopharyngeal radium treatment)
- Vietnam
- Gulf Wars
- Bosnia
- Afghanistan

AGENT ORANGE: Painful legacy

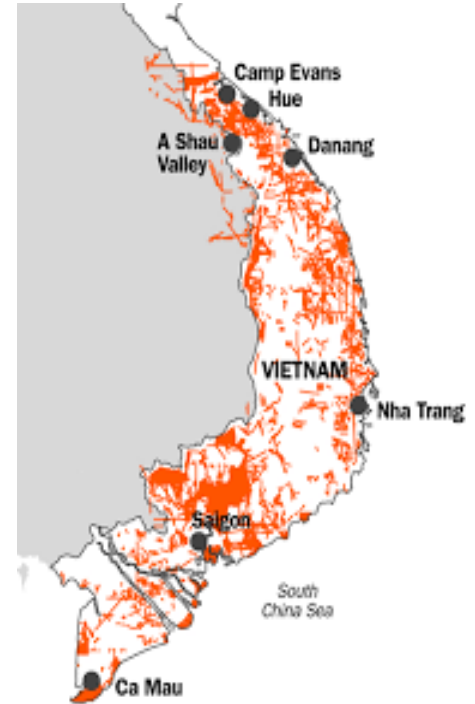
Agent Orange, a combination of herbicides and defoliants, was used by the U.S. military, particularly during the Vietnam War. The substance caused extensive medical problems, including cancers and birth defects, among people exposed to it.

In 1991, the **Agent Orange Act** made veterans exposed to the chemical eligible for compensation and medical care. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes a "presumptive" link between Agent Orange and a range of illnesses:

- Type II diabetes
- Hodgkin's disease
- Soft-tissue sarcoma
- Peripheral neuropathy
- Spina bifida in children of veterans
- Various other forms of cancer, including prostate and respiratory cases

Added to the list in August 2010:

- B-cell leukemias
- Parkinson's disease
- Ischemic heart disease



January 1, 1957 to December 31, 1987

Veterans **and family members** stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina who were exposed to chemical contaminants in the groundwater are at risk for the following cancers and conditions:

- Bladder
- Breast
- Esophageal
- Lung
- Renal
- Leukemia
- Blood dyscrasias
- Multiple myeloma
- Myelodysplastic syndromes
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Female infertility
- Miscarriage
- Hepatic stenosis
- Renal toxicity
- Scleroderma



- Hepatitis C
 - Transfusions prior to 1992
 - Battlefield exposures to blood and human fluids
 - Group use of needles, razors, toothbrushes, and other personal items

“The agent orange of the post 9/11 generation”

- Congresswoman and Veteran, Tulsi Gabbard

- Open-air burn pits
 - Everyday trash
 - Non-serviceable uniforms
 - Medical waste
 - Chemicals
 - Pesticides
 - Etc.
- High risk for respiratory illnesses and a wide variety of cancers, including leukemia

Gulf War Syndrome

- Characterized by:
 - Fibromyalgia
 - Chronic fatigue syndrome
 - Headaches
 - Gastrointestinal problems
 - Cognitive impairments
 - Pain
 - High rates of brain and testicular cancers
 - Neurodegenerative diseases (e.g., amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [ALS], multiple sclerosis [MS])

- Depleted uranium
 - Inhaled or ingested microparticles → heavy metal toxicity
 - High risk for respiratory and renal diseases

Infectious Diseases

- Malaria
- Typhoid fever
- Viral hepatitis
- Leishmaniasis (from sandflies)
- Tuberculosis
- Rabies (from animal bites)



- Christine Kasper, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.
 - Lead poisoning from ammunitions packed in lead powder (Navy Seals)
 - Long-term effects of embedded metals (shrapnel)



Always ask the question of each patient you see...

“Have you ever served in the military?”
(or “Has anyone in your family served?”)

...so we can better identify possible diagnoses and etiologies of diseases and provide the appropriate treatments, support, and financial assistance that our veterans and their family members need and deserve.

For more information or for copy-permissive material

www.haveyoueverserved.com



Thank You!



Jo Moncher

Former Bureau Chief, Community-based Military Programs,
New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Overview



Ask the Question...

“Have you or a family member ever served in the military?”



The “Ask the Question” Campaign is dedicated to Lt. Col. Stephanie Riley, a former nurse with the New Hampshire National Guard. Lt. Col. Riley died of lung cancer in December 2014.

“Ask the Question” Provides an Opportunity to...

- Acknowledge that military service is important
- Open up a dialogue of support
- Understand the relationship between military experiences and today’s medical symptoms
- Help connect veterans to VA
- Identify a warrior’s transferable job skills
- Address service-related barriers to stable housing
- Assist military widows to access survivor benefits
- Help a student thrive when a parent is deployed

“Ask the Question” provides an opportunity to create a well-informed and collaborative system of care and services for veterans, service members, and military families!

It's Okay to "Ask the Question!"

www.askthequestionnh.com

Home About Providers Get Involved Connect - f t i in YouTube

ASK THE QUESTION

ONE QUESTION
can make a big difference.

Call Us
Email Us

Select your profession to see how:

- Health Care & Medical Services
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
- Law Enforcement & First Responders
- Legal & Advocacy Services
- Housing & Homelessness Services

What Are Your Barriers in Accessing Care?

2012-2013: 1,200 New Hampshire veterans responded

1. Stigma, embarrassment, and shame
2. “I do not feel understood by the providers who serve me”
3. Don’t know where to go; nothing available to help; I will only speak to another veteran; no one wants to help

2017-2018: 950 NH veterans responded

1. Stigma, embarrassment, and shame (*Making significant headway!*)
2. “I do not feel understood by the providers who serve me” (*Making significant headway!*)

Seventy-five percent of veterans surveyed said **yes**—they have been “asked the question” in the last 2 years.

Seventy percent of veterans surveyed said **yes**—coordination and communication between military, VA, and/or civilian healthcare providers has improved.

Community Mental Health Center Military Liaison Initiative

To improve access to and quality of care for veterans, service members, and military families by:

1. Strengthening systems for identifying military members being served
 - “Ask the Question” has identified 18 percent of clients served monthly as military-connected (21,000 clients served monthly)
 - Increased TRICARE enrollment from 2 to 9 centers ☐ over 250 credentialed clinicians

Community Mental Health Center Military Liaison Initiative (cont'd)

2. Enhancing military cultural competence

- Providing military culture training to staff, board, and volunteers

3. Partnering with civilian-military partners and the community

- Client referral coordination/support with VA Medical Centers, Vet Centers, and National Guard

The “Ask the Question” Campaign Supporting Military Communities Across the Country

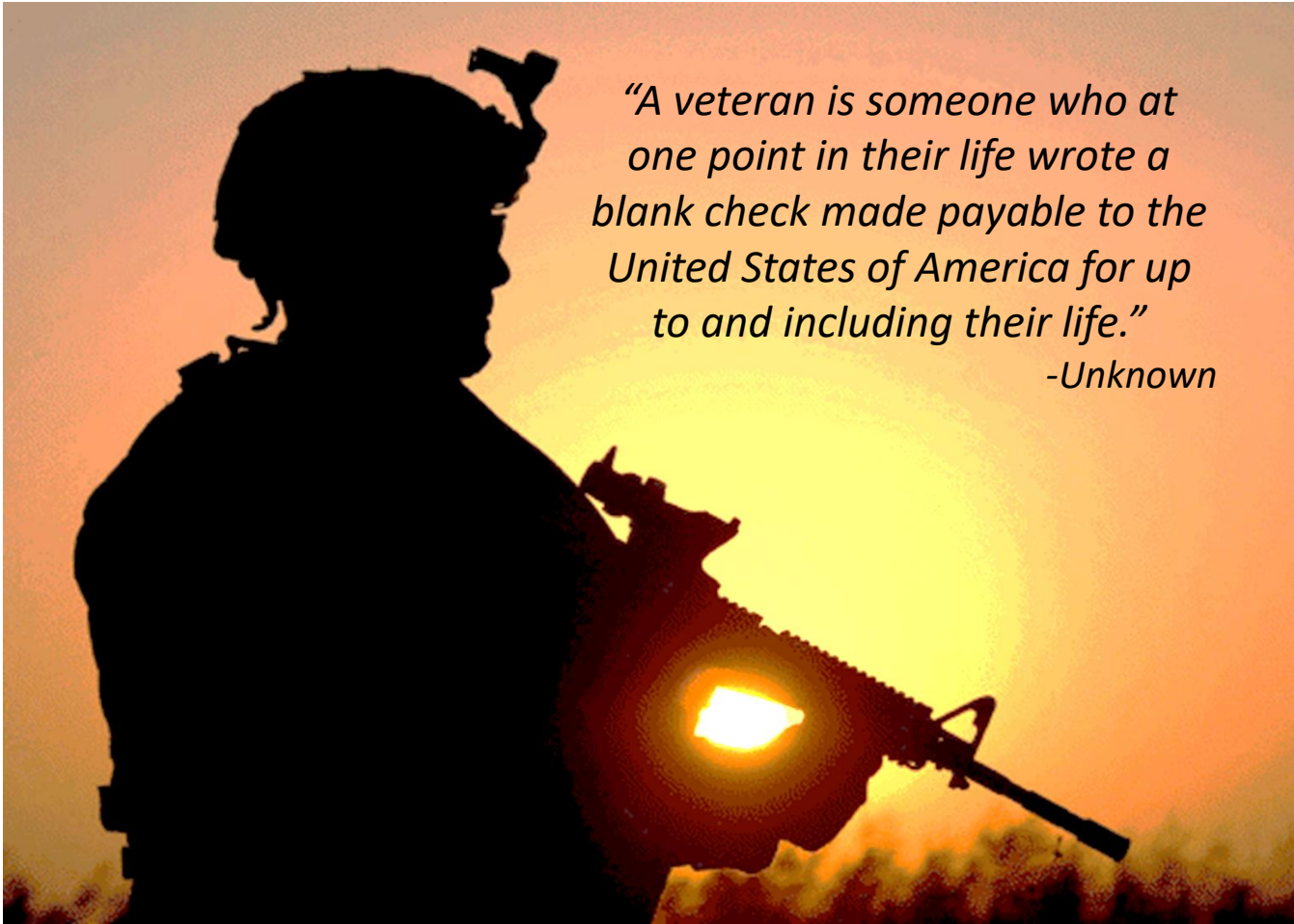
Date	Event
September 22, 2015	SAMHSA National Webinar (700 participants)
November 6, 2015	VA Presents “Ask the Question” at International Trauma Conference
January 15, 2016	White House Joining Forces Conference Call
May 3, 2016	National Military Mental Health Summit (San Diego, California)
June 13, 2016	Association of American Medical Conferences
July 20, 2017	DoD, VA, and HHS–DC Mental Health Summit
August 6, 2017	National Legislative Summit (Boston, Massachusetts)
August 28, 2017	George W. Bush Institute Conference Call
August 30, 2018	Home and Community-based Care Services Conference (Baltimore, Maryland)

Transforming a Healthcare System

1. Secure top leadership
2. Organize internal military team
3. Identify a military liaison
4. Host a military culture training
5. Share **resources**
6. Train intake staff
7. Engage information technology (IT) staff
8. Partner with VA and military partners



Definition of a Veteran



“A veteran is someone who at one point in their life wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America for up to and including their life.”

-Unknown

Ask the Question – New Hampshire - <https://askthequestionnh.com/>

Thank You



Military Culture Resources

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 - *Community Provider Toolkit* -
<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/>
 - *Military Culture Training for Community Providers* -
https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/providers/VA-FS_Military-Culture-Training.pdf
- Uniformed Services University, Center for Deployment Psychology -
<https://deploymentpsych.org/search/node/military%20culture>

Military Culture Resources (cont'd)

- Psychological Health Center of Excellence (formerly Deployment Health Clinical Center) - <http://www.pdhealth.mil/education-training>
 - Real Warriors Campaign (Understanding and Using Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines) -
<https://www.realwarriors.net/healthprofessionals/guidelines/clinical>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network - <https://learn.nctsn.org/>
- PsychArmor Institute (online training resources) - <https://psycharmor.org/>
- American Academy of Nursing – Have You Ever Served in the Military -
www.haveyoueverserved.com
- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Ask the Question initiative - <https://askthequestionnh.com/>

Rebroadcasting This Webinar

Join the SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center in celebrating Veterans Day throughout November by sharing this important webinar!

Throughout the month of November, in honor of our service members, veterans, and their families, SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center will be featuring this webinar on YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRB0o73fyfB4P6H6hXysjZQ>.

You will receive the direct link to the webinar archive by 11/9/18. Please pass it along to others so they can learn about the critical question!

For Technical Assistance Questions, Please Contact

SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and
their Families Technical Assistance Center

345 Delaware Avenue

Delmar, NY 12054

Phone: 518-439-7415, ext. 5272

Email: smvftacenter@prainc.com

Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

www.samhsa.gov

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)