

Florida Bureau of Fire Standards and Training

# Understanding Student Veterans

Created by the Seminole State Office of Veteran Student  
Services



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# Steps Towards Achieving Student Veteran Success

## 1 | Understanding the Military Culture

- Demographics
- Why People Join
- DoD 101

## 2 | Serving Military Students

- Understanding the Challenges
- Helping with Reintegration
- Being Aware
- Having Flexibility
- Knowing the Requirements

## 3 | Helping Military Students

- Most Important Element in Student Veteran Success

# Student Veteran Demographics



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## Understanding the Military Culture

- **Demographics**
- Why People Join
- DoD 101



# Serving Military Students



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## Understanding Military Students

1. Appreciate that the student veteran is an adult learner.
2. Many are first-generation college students.
3. Some come with challenges.

STUDENT VETERANS ARE  
MORE LIKELY TO:



BE OLDER;  
BE MARRIED;  
HAVE CHILDREN;  
HAVE A DISABILITY;  
WORKING FULL OR PART-TIME;  
FIRST GENERATION STUDENT

From Boots on the Ground



to Books in the Backpack<sup>®</sup>



# Student Veteran Demographics



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## Understanding the Military Culture

- Demographics
- **Why People Join**
- DoD 101



# Why People Join



- Tradition (Family members served)
- Transition to adulthood
- To serve country
- Support family
- Follow a friend
- Get out of their current situation
- Do something noble/have purpose



- Protect country and way of life
- Be a part of team
- Inherent sense of selflessness
- College money
- Free medical care
- Travel the world
- Get out of poverty



# Military Student Demographics



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## Understanding the Military Culture

- Demographics
- Why People Join
- DoD 101



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# Understanding the Military Culture



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## DoD 101: About the Military

- Six Branches

1. Army
2. Navy
3. Marine Corps
4. Air Force
5. Space Force
6. Coast Guard (Falls under Homeland Security in times of peace, but DoD in war or when assigned to a military unit.)



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# Understanding the Military Culture



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## DoD 101: About the military

- Active Duty



- Wears the uniform and responsibilities 24/7, 365

- Reserves



- Wears the uniform two days a month (one weekend) and two weeks out of the year unless called to active service

- Florida National Guard



- National Guard Units are in all 50 states and 5 territories
- Wears the uniform two days a month (one weekend) and two weeks out of the year unless called to active duty service (Works for state. Only in federal service when on federal orders.)

# Understanding the Military Culture



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1. Discipline and military culture deeply impact student veterans
2. Military encourages group identification rather than individual and work in teams
3. An 18-year-old military member is not the same as peers



# Understanding the Military Culture



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4. Military has strong sense of mission and clearly defined core values
5. Military focuses on loyalty, duty, selflessness, honor, respect, and integrity
6. Many former military members find civilian life lacking direction and purpose



# Serving Military Students



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## Serving Military Students

- **Understanding the Challenges**
- Helping with Reintegration
- Being Aware
- Practicing Flexibility
- Knowing the Requirements

# Serving Military Students



## Understanding the Challenges

- Administrative (Policies, support, etc.)
- Identity/Social
- Visibility
- Stigma/Barriers
- Financial



**22%**  
of veterans suffer from  
post-traumatic stress disorder  
or major depression



**34%**  
suffer from other  
mental concerns

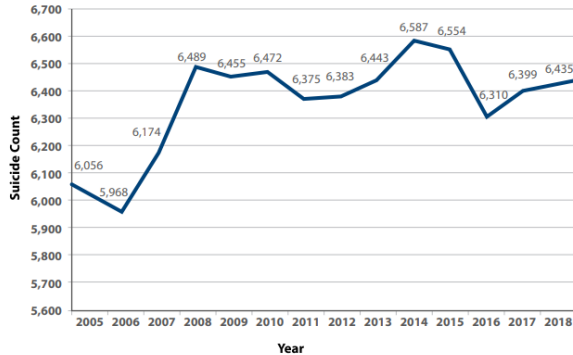


**1 out of 3**  
of these people seek help

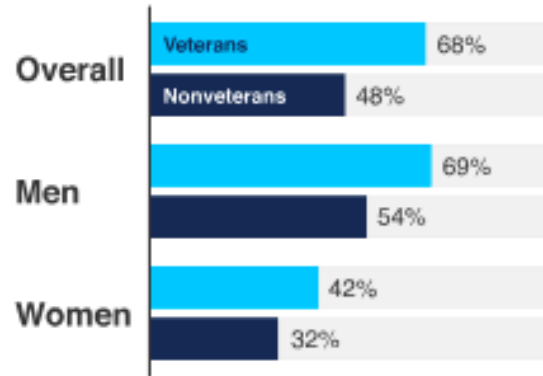
# Serving Military Students

## Understanding the Challenges

- Suicide



**Suicide Rates Among Veterans and Nonveterans, 2005–2018**



**Percentage of Veterans and Nonveterans Who Died by Suicide in 2018**

**17-22**  
Veteran  
Suicides  
a day

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## Serving Military Students

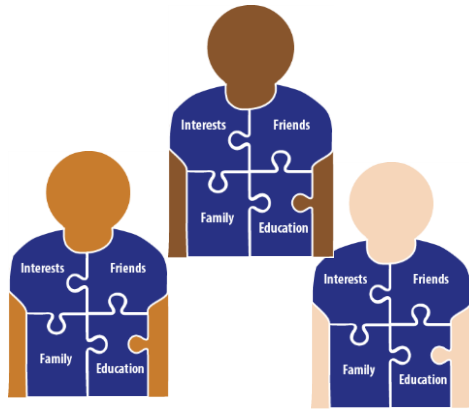
- Understanding the Challenges
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# Serving Military Students

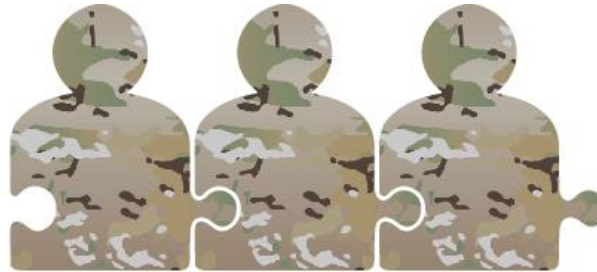


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## Reintegration



Before the Military



Becoming a part of the Military



After the Military



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## Serving Military Students

- Understanding the Challenges
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# Serving Military Students



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## Awareness: What Student Veterans want us to know

1. “We are having normal reactions to an abnormal experience.”
2. “No two veterans are alike.”
3. “Each of us has had different experiences.”
4. “DO NOT assume that you know my politics or beliefs just because I was in the military.”
5. “I may or may not be ready to talk about my experiences.”
6. “Trust can be an issue for me.”
7. “Being friendly and listening can go a long way toward building trust.”
8. “Please DO NOT be afraid of me.”
9. “We are accustomed to being successful and may be too proud to ask for help.”



# Serving Military Students



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## Awareness: Please do not generalize about Veterans

- The military is a reflection of society
- Not all are “broken”
  - Many have physical disabilities
  - Some have mental health issues
  - All are trying for a better life by getting an education



# Serving Military Students



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## Serving Military Students

- Understanding the Challenges
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- Being Aware
- **Practicing Flexibility**
- Knowing the Requirements

# Tips to Better Serve Military Students



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## Practicing Flexibility

- Being flexible is the key
  - Military members typically do not have a choice when called upon to deploy
    - They want to continue their classes
  - They want to finish college, but have to balance commitment to service, family, and school



# Serving Military Students



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## Serving Military Students

- Understanding the Challenges
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- **Knowing the Requirements**

# Serving Military Students



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## Requirement-8 Keys to Veterans' Success

- Understand the "8 Keys to Veterans' Success"
  - A voluntary initiative through the Departments of Education, Veterans Affairs, and Department of Defense.
  - Highlights specific ways that colleges and universities can support veterans.



# Serving Military Students



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## Requirement-8 Keys to Veterans' Success (Continued)

1. Create a **culture of trust and connectedness** across the campus community to promote well-being and success for Veterans.
2. Ensure **consistent and sustained support from campus leadership**.
3. Implement an **early alert system** to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.
4. **Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all Veterans**, together with the creation of a designated space for them (even if limited in size).



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## Requirement-8 Keys to Veterans' Student Success (Continued)

5. Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for Veterans.
6. Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on Veterans, including demographics, retention, and degree completion.
7. Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to Veterans.
8. Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for Veterans.

# Serving Military Students



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Most Important Element in Student Veteran Success

# YOU!