Military Cultural Competency Training

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TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

• Defining military culture
• Deployment
• Reintegration
• Invisible Wounds
• Transitioning from military service to the civilian workforce
QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

• Why is learning military culture important?
• Learning to use a strength based approach
• Assessing your own feelings about the military
IMPORTANCE OF THE WORLDVIEW

- Civilians must understand the veteran’s worldview and its contrast to a civilian’s world view.
CURRENT/PAST CONFLICTS

• Current:
  • Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)

• Past:
  • Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)
  • Operation New Dawn (OND)
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

• Military culture: Collective
  • Part of a group
  • The group’s goals would be placed ahead of personal goals
  • They have an emotional investment in the group

• Civilian culture: Individualistic
  • Emphasis is on individual achievement and self-reliance by western standards
MILITARY BRANCHES

- Army
- Navy
- Marines
- Air Force
- Coast Guard
U.S. CASUALTIES AND WOUNDED

• Through March 26, 2014:
  • OEF: 2,312 killed; 19,693 wounded
  • OIF: 4,423 killed; 31,942 wounded
  • OND: 66 killed; 295 wounded

STATISTICS:

• Since the 9/11 attacks, U.S. troops have deployed almost 3.3 million times to Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Defense Department data.

• As of March 2013, show that more than 2.5 million men and women have shouldered those deployments, with 1/3 of them deploying more than once.

• Nearly 37,000 Americans had been deployed more than five times, among them 10,000 members of guard or Reserve units. Records also show that 400,000 service members have done three or more deployments.
REASONS CIVILIANS JOIN THE MILITARY

• Family tradition
• Transition to manhood/womanhood
• To serve country
• Drafted
• Friends did it
• Do something noble with their life
• Give life (death) purpose
• Protect people, country and way of life
• Be part of a team – something bigger than self
• Inherent sense of selflessness
• College money, free medical care, travel
ACROSS ALL BRANCHES....

• The majority of service members;
  • Come from middle income families
  • Graduated high school with more than a GED
  • Minorities are not overrepresented in the military service
  • 70% of the Active Duty Force are White and almost 18% are African American and 5% are of Hispanic ethnicity
UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

• Officer vs. Enlisted
  • Officer
    • Must have 4 year college degree
    • Command positions
    • Success or failure ultimately their responsibility
    • Appointed by the President of the United States
    • Promotions approved by Congress
  • Enlisted
    • Must be high school graduate or have GED
    • Trained in a specialized job skill (MOS)
    • As they advance they too hold critical leadership positions
    • Enlisted leadership is the backbone of the military
    • Enlist traditionally for 4 year terms
UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

• National Guard vs. Reserves
  • National Guard
    • State Governor’s military force for dealing with state issues
    • Can only be called to serve on a national level with a mutual agreement between the Governor and the President
    • Each unit is state based
    • They don’t move (PCS) or have different duty stations
  • Reserves
    • Back up force for each service component
    • Enlist for 6 year terms
    • One weekend a month and 2 weeks during the summer
    • Can be mobilized by the individual service component and the Secretary of Defense
THE BREAKDOWN

**Active Duty Component**
- “Full-time” military
- On call 24/7/365
- About 1.36 million
- Tend to be younger
- Length of time married is shorter

**Reserve Component**
- Part time military
- 2 weeks per year plus 1 weekend per month
- National guard
  - Army National Guard
  - Air Guard
- Reserves
  - Army- Air Force
  - Navy- Marines
  - Coast Guard
- About 800,000 reserves
- Spouse of reservists tend to be employed
- Tend to live longer in their residences

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This chart presents the number of Active Duty personnel by Service branch. The Army has the largest number of personnel with 546,057 members, followed by the Air Force with 328,812 members, the Navy with 314,339 members, and the Marine Corps with 198,820 members.

DMDC Active Duty Military Personnel Master File (September 2012)
UNDERSTANDING DEMOGRAPHICS

2.36. Age of Active Duty Members
(N=1,388,028)

This pie graph presents the age breakdown of all Active Duty members. Over 40 percent (42.7%) of Active Duty members are 25 years of age or younger.

- 25 or Younger (n=592,445) 42.7%
- 26 to 30 (n=319,016) 23.0%
- 31 to 35 (n=203,789) 14.7%
- 36 to 40 (n=146,959) 10.6%
- 41 or Older (n=125,819) 9.1%

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

DMDC Active Duty Military Personnel Master File (September 2012)
3.05. Number of Selected Reserve Personnel by Reserve Component

The number of Selected Reserve personnel is presented below by Reserve component. The Army National Guard (358,078) has the largest number of Selected Reserve personnel, followed by the Army Reserve (201,166), Air National Guard (105,389), Air Force Reserve (71,428), Navy Reserve (64,715), Marine Corps Reserve (39,544) and the Coast Guard Reserve (7,982).
3.39. Age of Selected Reserve Members
(N=848,302)

This pie graph presents the age breakdown of all Selected Reserve members. Approximately one-third (33.8%) of Selected Reserve members are 25 years of age or younger.

- 25 or Younger (n=286,460) 33.8%
- 26 to 30 (n=161,619) 19.1%
- 31 to 35 (n=114,723) 13.5%
- 36 to 40 (n=89,488) 10.5%
- 41 or Older (n=196,012) 23.1%

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

DMDC Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (September 2012)
MILITARY TRAINING...WHAT IS IT?

The socialization process:
1. Anticipatory
2. Encounter
3. Acquisition
4. Individual internalizes values and norms in identity

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TRAINING STAGES

1. Softening up stage
2. Individuals are complying to avoid punishment as a group
3. Recruits actively integrate the values of the group into their own
4. Consolidation

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FOUR CARDINAL RULES

1. Unit cohesion
2. Devotion to duty and mission
3. Stoicism
4. Chain of command
1.13. Gender of the Total Military Force
(N=2,228,348)

This pie graph presents the distribution of Active Duty and Selected Reserve members by gender. Overall, the total DoD force has 355,904 (16.0%) female members and 1,872,429 (84.0%) male members.

Note: Excludes 15 cases where gender was not reported.
Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

DMDC Active Duty Military Personnel Master File (September 2012);
DMDC Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (September 2012)
This chart presents the percentage of officers and enlisted members by Service branch and gender. Overall, 85.4 percent of Active Duty members are men and 14.6 percent of Active Duty members are women. In comparison, 53.1 percent of the U.S. civilian work force 16 years old and over was female in 2012. The Air Force has the largest percentage of female Service members (18.9%), while the Marine Corps has the smallest percentage of female Service members (7.0%).

Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

*DMDC Active Duty Military Personnel Master File (September 2012); Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012)*
FEMALE IDENTITY

• Women who enter a male dominant setting must learn how to redefine and manage their “femaleness”
• Women in the military may feel pressured to act more feminine, more masculine or both
WHO MAKES UP A MILITARY FAMILY?

• Only ‘Dependents’ – According to the Department of Defense
  • Spouse
  • Children
  • Stepchildren
5.07. Active Duty Member Parental Status
(N=1,388,028)

This pie graph displays the distribution of Active Duty members with and without children. Approximately 44 percent (43.9%) of Active Duty members have children.

- Active Duty Members with Children (n=608,659) 43.9%
- Active Duty Members without Children (n=779,369) 56.1%

Note: Children include minor dependents age 20 or younger or dependents age 22 and younger enrolled as full-time students.
Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.
DMDC Active Duty Military Family File (September 2012);
DMDC Active Duty Military Personnel Master File (September 2012)
5.30. Age of Children of Active Duty Members (N=1,220,941)

This pie graph depicts the number and percentage of children of Active Duty members by child’s age. The largest percentage of minor dependents of Active Duty members is between birth and five years old (42.4%). The next largest percentage is 6 to 11 years of age (30.8%). Almost one-quarter (22.4%) of minor dependents are 12 to 18 years of age.

- 0 to 5 Years (n=517,734) 42.4%
- 12 to 18 Years (n=273,524) 22.4%
- 6 to 11 Years (n=376,551) 30.8%
- 19 to 22 Years (n=53,132) 4.4%

Note: Children ages 21 to 22 must be enrolled as full-time students in order to qualify as dependents. Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

DMDC Active Duty Military Family File (September 2012)
6.07. Selected Reserve Member Parental Status (N=848,302)

This pie graph presents the distribution of Selected Reserve members with and without children. Overall, over forty percent (43.0%) of Selected Reserve members have children.

- Selected Reserve members with children (n=364,805) 43.0%
- Selected Reserve members without children (n=483,497) 57.0%

Note: Children include minor dependents age 20 or younger or dependents age 22 and younger enrolled as full-time students.
Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

DMDC Reserve Components Family File (September 2012);
DMDC Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (September 2012)
6.26. Age of Children of Selected Reserve Members
(N=731,632)

This pie graph displays the distribution of children of Selected Reserve members by age group. Approximately 30 percent of Selected Reserve members’ children are in each of the three following age groups: 0 to 5 years (29.3%), 6 to 11 years (29.7%), and 12 to 18 years (29.1%). Fewer children (11.9%) are 19 years of age or older.

Note: Children ages 21 to 22 must be enrolled as full-time students in order to qualify as dependents. Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

DMDC Reserve Components Family File (September 2012)
MILITARY FAMILIES

- Research on the functioning of Vietnam veterans’ families showed the following risk factors:
  - Increased intimate partner violence
  - Reduced family cohesion
  - Less effective coping in spouses
  - Difficulty parenting
  - Child behavior problems

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THE DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

PRE-DEPLOYMENT

RETURN FROM DEPLOYMENT

DEPLOYMENT

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PRE – Deployment
Reactions
DEPLOYMENT

- Military members and their spouses in both active and reserve components frequently identify positive aspects of deployment:
  - Personal growth (added roles)
  - Opportunities for service members to apply their military training and to advance their career
  - Increased income for families
  - Travel
  - Better cultural awareness and understanding

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STRESS INVOLVED WITH DEPLOYMENT

- Fear is ever-present
- Unit members will be injured and killed
- There will be communication breakdowns
- Leadership failures will be perceived
- Combat has lasting mental health effects
- Service members are afraid to admit that they have a mental health problem
- Strain upon families
- Combat environments are harsh and demanding
  - Each conflict presents different challenges

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Sgt. Brian Keith’s Story
CHALLENGES FACED AT HOME

• While the service member was deployed, family members probably:
  • Experienced loneliness, concern, and worry
  • Learned new skills
  • Took on new responsibilities
  • Had to deal with problems without your help
  • Created new support systems and friendships

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INVISIBLE WOUNDS: PTSD

• Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can occur after you have been through a traumatic event. A traumatic event is something horrible and scary that you see or that happens to you. During this type of event, you think that your life or others’ lives are in danger. You may feel afraid or feel that you have no control over what is happening.
INVISIBLE WOUNDS: PTSD

• Reliving the event
• Avoiding situations that remind you of the event
• Feeling numb
• Feeling keyed up
• Other common problems related to PTSD:
  • Drinking or drug problems
  • Feelings of hopelessness, shame, or despair
  • Employment problems
  • Relationship problems including divorce and violence
  • Physical symptoms
INVISIBLE WOUNDS: TBI

• TBI can be classified as mild, moderate, severe or penetrating
• TBI is a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain
• Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI
RISK FACTOR: SUICIDE

• 30,000 - 32,000 US deaths from suicide per year among the population overall (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

• Approximately:
  • 20 percent are Veterans (National Violent Death Reporting System).
  • 22 deaths from suicide per day are Veterans (National Violent Death Reporting System).  VHA Suicide Prevention Program, 2013
RISK FACTORS: HOMELESSNESS

- Veterans are overrepresented among the homeless population.
- 13% of the homeless adult population are veterans.
- 20% of the male homeless population are veterans.
- 68% reside in principal cities.
- 32% reside in suburban/rural areas.
- 51% of individual homeless veterans have disabilities.
- 50% have serious mental illness.
- 70% have substance abuse problems.
- 51% are white males, compared to 38% of non-veterans.
- 50% are age 51 or older, compared to 19% non-veterans.
REINTEGRATION CHALLENGES

• 5 critical challenges/tasks service members need to master:
  1. Overcome alienation
  2. Move from simplicity to complexity
  3. Replace war/service with another form of high
  4. Move beyond war and find meaning on life
  5. Come to peace with self, God and others
RESERVE CHALLENGES

- Return to civilian life
- Job may no longer be available
- Can have a reduction in income
- Transition of health care/loss of health coverage
- Loss of unit/military support system
- Loss of unit/military support system for family
- Lack of follow-up/observation by unit commanders to assess needs
WHAT TO SAY...AND NOT TO SAY

• **DO**
  - Thank veteran for their service
  - Keep the politics out
  - Be mindful & curious of what branch of service member was in
  - Be curious of their lives outside of the military, remember they have other identities and roles.
  - Let the veteran tell you their story when they are ready and respect their process

• **DON’T**
  - Don’t ask when you first meet a veteran “did your friends die? Or “Did you see people die?” Or “Did you kill anyone?” Or “How was it over there?”
  - Don’t assume every service member was in combat
  - Don’t make assumptions about one’s military career. Remember that the service members is the expert in their own military career.

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RESOURCE LIST

- www.armymwr.com (community services and deployment info)
- www.MilitaryOneSource.com (comprehensive help resource)
- www.lifelines.navy.mil (Navy)
- www.esrnational.org
- www.goacs.org (Army site, family readiness)
- www.guardfamily.org (National Guard)
- www.defenselink.mil/ra (Reserves)
- www.nmfa.org (National Military Families Association)
- www.militarychild.org (Military Child Education Coalition)
- http://www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/bestpractices.html
RESOURCE LIST

• Tricare, www.tricareonline.com
• National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, www.ncptsd.va.gov
• War-Related Illness and Injury Study Center, www.warrelatedillness.va.gov
• Support for Military Children and Adolescents, www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment