

ASK THE QUESTION

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE MILITARY?

One question can make a big difference.

Law Enforcement & First Responders

SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE BY:

Keeping veterans, families, and communities safe in times of personal and family crisis.

Building trust and rapport with service members in difficult situations.

Partnering with other providers to help military spouses in crisis.

WHY ASK THE QUESTION?

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Police officers, fire fighters, EMTs, and other first responders encounter veterans, service members, and military family members, but they don't always know it. Veterans do not always identify themselves. They can be proud and stoic, and tend to be more comfortable helping others than asking for help themselves—even when they are in some kind of trouble or crisis. Military life can impact an individual's safety in many ways and also the safety of others. *The best way to identify and respond effectively to service members and veterans is to ASK!*

When you respond to a situation—on the road, at a home, or anywhere

ASK THE QUESTION:

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

WHEN THE ANSWER IS YES, you may consider thanking them for their service. You may then also be able to increase your understanding of the situation, and help them identify veteran-specific programs, services, and benefits. Asking further questions will also help you to:

- Build rapport and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Identify potential risk factors and better ensure the safety of all involved parties in difficult or escalated situations
- Identify emotional and psychological issues that may impact how best to approach an individual in distress (ie how to transport safely while recognizing triggers related to being restrained)
- Link to any needed military and veteran resources and referrals, including VA and non-VA programs
- Identify individual and family support systems and resources
- Address perceived barriers to seeking support and services

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An Initiative of the NH Department of Military Affairs & Veterans Services



Following are some questions that could be asked in the context of gathering information for more effective referrals and services. Pay attention to non-verbal cues, and show respect, curiosity, and empathy. Also be aware that responsiveness and effective follow-up are critical to building trust and rapport.

- When did you/your family member serve? What service era? Which Branch?
- What was your/your family member's job while serving?
- In what ways may the situation you're dealing with now be connected to your/your family member's military service?
- What is your/your family member's discharge type/status?
- Did you/your family member experience deployment? If yes, where did you/your family deploy?
- Were you/your family member exposed to excessive noise, chemicals/gases/pesticides, explosions, or other hazardous substances?*
- Have you/your family member been diagnosed with or see yourself as experiencing PTS (Post-Traumatic Stress) or TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury)?*
- Have you/your family member ever experienced Military Sexual Trauma?*
- Have you/your family member ever experienced problems with anxiety/depression/anger management/substance use?*
- Have you/your family member ever had thoughts of killing yourself or harming others?
- Are you/your family member enrolled/connected to the VA or other veteran resources or organizations for support or services?
- Is there anything that might be a barrier to seeking needed assistance in the future?

* If Yes, see *PTS/MST/TBI/SUD Screening Tools and Referral Information sheet*

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