

ASK THE QUESTION

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE MILITARY?

One question can make a big difference.

Faith-Based Groups

SUPPORT THOSE WHO SERVE BY:

*Identifying families in need of extra help because of service-related stressors.
Motivating communities to come together on behalf of those who serve.
Connecting military families to the supports and services they need.*

WHY ASK THE QUESTION?

Faith-based organizations provide communities with an opportunity to come together with shared purpose. For many, helping those in need is a key part of the mission. Many military families are proud and quiet. They may participate in local services, but might not readily identify themselves as military. You might not know whether or not a family is dealing with military deployment, the wounds of war, or other challenges common to military-veteran life. *The only way to find out is to ASK!*

When an individual or family joins your group,
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 also then be able to find out more about their military experience which can help you and your group to provide the best possible services, support, and referrals. Asking further questions will also help you to:

- Build rapport and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Link to any needed military and veteran resources and referrals, including VA and non-VA programs
- Enhance fellowship and find ways that your group can provide support
- Identify service-related stressors as well as individual and family strengths, supports, and resources
- Explore deployment and reintegration challenges and provide support to families during these times
- Highlight their spiritual and religious practices that bring them comfort
- Address perceived barriers to seeking support
- If engaging in pastoral counseling, identify mental health concerns that will need further diagnostic and treatment work and will impact treatment goals

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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?
- In what ways may the services that you're here for be connected to your/your family member's military service?
- Did you/your family member experience deployment?
- Have you/your family member had a recent deployment and/or are you/your family member facing a deployment?
- Are you/your family member enrolled at or connected to the VA or other veteran resources or organizations for support and services?
- Are you/your family member connected to any other behavioral health, spiritual or social support resources in the community?
- What types of support are needed but not yet met?
- Do you/your family member have a service-connected disability or condition?
- What reservations did you/your family member have about coming in to seek assistance? Is there anything that might be a barrier to seeking further assistance?

Where Pastoral Counseling is involved:

- What was your/your family member's job while serving?
- Why did you/your family member join?
- What is your/your family member's discharge type/status?
- If deployment history, where did you/your family member deploy?
- If deployment history, did you/your family member experience enemy fire or witness casualties?*
- Did you/your family member lose a close friend in combat?*
- Were you/your family member wounded, injured, or hospitalized?*
- 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?

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

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