

Have You Ever Served in the Military?

One question can make all the difference.

Social Services - Federal/State/Local/Non-Profit

SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE BY:

- Engaging reluctant veteran clients in acknowledging needs for support.
- Meeting a military family's unique needs.
- Coordinating services between military and civilian providers.



Ask the Question
**Did You
Serve?**

Why Ask the Question?

Whether in a non-profit or government agency, human services providers encounter service members, veterans, and their families, but they might not 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 need support. Military life can impact an individual or family in many ways that affect their access to different programs, services, and benefits. The best way to ensure service members and veterans get the best possible care is to ASK!

ASK THE QUESTION:

When working with a new client applying for services, ask, "**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 increase your understanding of their challenges and assist them in accessing the programs and services they need by asking further questions.**

This will also help you to:

- **Build rapport and demonstrate interest and cultural competency**
- **Link to any needed military and veteran resources and referrals, including both VA and non-VA programs**
- **Identify any mental health, physical and/or medical issues related to service experience that are impacting access to services and benefits**
- **Identify potential sources of income and assess financial stability**
- **Identify individual and family supports and resources**
- **Address perceived barriers to seeking support and 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?**

- Build rapport with the parent and child and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Identify family supports and resources as well as needs for support not yet met

In what ways may your need for services here be connected to you/your family member's military service?

- Identify any deployment-related stressors on the child and family, as well as any related behavioral, emotional, social, and academic implications for the child
- Explore deployment and reintegration challenges

Is your child facing or has recently faced a family member's deployment or military duty away from home? If yes, when?

- Identify any deployment-related stressors on the child and family as well as any related behavioral, emotional, social, and academic implications for the child
- Explore deployment and reintegration challenges

Are you/your family member enrolled/connected to the VA or other veteran resource or organizations for support or services?

- Link to any needed military and veteran resources and benefits, including both VA and non-VA programs
- Identify family supports and resources as well as needs for support not yet met

What types of support are needed but not yet met?

- Link to any needed military and veteran resources and benefits, including both VA and non-VA programs
- Identify family supports and resources as well as needs for support not yet met

What reservations did you/your child have about coming in to seek support and assistance? Is there anything that might be a barrier to further seeking assistance?

- Address perceived barriers to the child or parent(s) in seeking support

Please note: This is not a monitored site so should you or someone you know be experiencing thoughts of doing harm to oneself, contact (800) 273-8255, for Veterans press 1.

