

ASK THE QUESTION

Texas Statewide Initiative

LET'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

Ask : "Have you or a family member served?"

Faith-based organizations provide communities with an opportunity to come together with shared purpose. Identifying individuals or families connected to the military can provide extra support amidst service-related stressors, as well as receive the benefits of diversifying their community's perspective.

For many, helping those in need is a key part of the mission. Many military families can be proud and quiet. They may participate in local services, but might not readily identify themselves as military. You might not know if 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 congregation or small group, ASK THE QUESTION: "Have you or a family member served in the military?"



WHEN THE ANSWER IS "YES"...

Consider thanking them for their service.

Also consider asking follow-up questions to find out more about their service experience or connection. This allows your community of faith to provide the best possible support, services and open up deep conversations about their spirituality, faith beliefs and values and the impact of military service in their life.

Asking further questions will assist with:

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

Not sure what follow-up questions to ask? Take a look at some examples provided on the other side of this sheet.

One question can make all the difference.

TEXANS ASK :

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

FAITH-BASED + RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

LET'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

When someone new attends or joins, ask: "DID YOU SERVE?"

Asking follow up questions can provide 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.

Follow-Up Questions

- 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 you/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 with the VA for support and services?
- Are you/your family member connected to any other spiritual or social support resources in the community?
- What types of supports are needed but not yet met?
- What reservations did you/your family member have about coming today?
- Is there anything that might be a barrier to getting further connected?

When Pastoral Counseling is involved...

- Why did you/your family member join?
- If deployment history, where did you/your family member deploy? did you/your family member experience enemy fire or witness casualties?
- Were you/your family member wounded, injured, or hospitalized?
- Did you/your family member lose a close friend in combat?
- 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?



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