

# ASK THE QUESTION

## Texas Statewide Initiative

### LET'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

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

Police officers, fire fighters, EMTs, and other first responders encounter veterans, service members, and military family members, and may never know it.

Veterans do not always identify themselves. They can be proud and stoic, and may be more comfortable helping others than asking for help themselves - even when they are in 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 else, 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. You may find this information increases your understanding of the situation, and can then help them identify veteran-specific programs, services, and benefits for further support.

#### Asking further questions will assist with:

- Building rapport and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Identifying potential risk factors to better ensure the safety of all parties in difficult or escalated crisis situations
- Identifying emotional and psychological issues that may be a contributing factor for the individual in distress
  - I.e. how to transport safely while recognizing triggers related to being restrained
- Connecting individuals to needed military-veteran resources and referrals, including VA and non-VA programs
- Collaborating effectively with military-veteran resources
- Identifying any mental health and/or physical or medical issues
- Addressing perceived barriers to seeking support and services
- Identify individual and family support systems and resources

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?"

# LAW ENFORCEMENT + FIRST RESPONDERS

## LET'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

**When you respond to an escalated situation, 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?**

- 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
- Explore deployment and reintegration challenges

#### **Is your child facing or 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 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



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