

ASK THE QUESTION

Texas Statewide Initiative

LET'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

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

Mental health and substance-use disorder service providers 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 may be more comfortable helping others than asking for help themselves - even when they need it. Military experience can impact an individual's mental health, habits, and relationships. Appropriate diagnosis and treatment depends on understanding a client's history-and can even make a life-or-death difference. The best way to ensure service members and veterans get the best possible care 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?"



Texans Ask: DID YOU SERVE?

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 their challenges and facilitates more accurate diagnoses, treatment planning, and referrals.

Asking further questions will assist with:

- Building rapport and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Exploring deployment and reintegration challenges
- Connecting individuals to needed military-veteran resources and referrals, including VA and non-VA programs
- Collaborating effectively with military-veteran resources
- Identifying mental health concerns that may need further diagnostic work and impact treatment planning or goals
- Assessing for any past and present service-related stressors
- Identifying individual and family strengths, support systems and resources
- Addressing perceived barriers to seeking support and services

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?"

MENTAL HEALTH + SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES

LET'S CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

Providers, when completing intake assessments, 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 did you/they serve in?
- What was your/your family member's job while serving?
- What is your/your family member's discharge type/status?
- In what ways may your mental health difficulties be connected to your/your family member's military service?
- Did you/your family member experience deployment?
- If yes, where did you/your family member deploy?
- If yes, 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, hospitalized, or do you/your family member have any other physical problems related to military service?
- Do you/your family member have a service-connected disability or condition?
- Were you/your family member exposed to excessive noise, chemicals/gases/pesticides, explosions, or other hazardous substances?
- 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 and services?
- What needs for support do you have that are not yet met?
- What reservations did you/your family member have about coming in to seek assistance?



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