Houston Community College

Veteran Students On Campus

Dr. Sabrina Y. Lewis-Jones
Director, Veterans Affairs
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Information regarding Veterans

- 99.2% Veterans are High School Graduates
- 25.3% = Average age of Veteran
- 84% are male and 16% are female who enter the service/military.
- 96.6% of service members/military say education is the number one reason for joining the military.

Enrollment into a 2 or 4 year institute has tripled due to current GI Bill Educational Benefits. Veterans coming back from the current conflict can go back to school and receive housing allowance, tuition paid in full and a book stipend.

Source: City of Houston, Department of Veteran Affairs.
Source: Returning Veterans: Implications for Higher Education.

Mental Health Effects of Servicing in Afghanistan and Iraq

- The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are the longest combat operations since Vietnam. Many stressors face these Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) troops.

- One early study looked at the mental health of service members in Afghanistan and Iraq. The study asked Soldiers and Marines about war-zone experiences and about their symptoms of distress. Soldiers and Marines in Iraq reported more combat stressors than Soldiers in Afghanistan.

United States Department of Veteran Affairs: http://www.gibill.va.gov/
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Combat Stressors

This table describes the kinds of stressors faced in each combat:

- Seeing dead bodies: Iraq Army 95%, Iraq Marines 94% and Afghanistan Army 39%.
- Being shot at: Iraq Army 93%, Iraq Marines 97%, Afghanistan Army 66%
- Being attacked/ambushed: Iraq Army 89%, Iraq Marines 95%, Afghanistan Army 58%
- Receiving rocket or mortar fire: Iraq Army 86%, Iraq Marines 92%, Afghanistan Army 84%
- Know someone killed/seriously injured: Iraq Army 86%, Iraq Marines 87%, Afghanistan Army 43%

United States Department of Veteran Affairs: http://www.gibill.va.gov/
From civilian to soldier to warrior

- Security to Insecurity
- Safety to Danger
- Law to Lawlessness
- Comfort to Discomfort
- Trust to Mistrust
- Cooperation to Survival “us” to “me”.
- Order to Chaos

Source: My Military Education

Transitioning Soldiers

- “Those from Iraq and Afghanistan have almost all been ambushed, attacked, shot at, and know someone who was seriously injured or killed”.

- “Veterans with disabilities have a hard time admitting they are disabled and asking for accommodations since they see themselves as warriors”.

- “Ex-military men and women have a hard time relating to their campus peers everyday concerns and issues after being in combat”.

Source: Returning Veterans Implications on Higher Education.
Common problems that can occur after a trauma

After going through a trauma, survivors often say that their first feeling is relief to be alive. This may be followed by stress, fear, and anger. Trauma survivors may also find they are unable to stop thinking about what happened. Many survivors will show a high level of arousal, which causes them to react strongly to sounds and sights around them.

- PSTD
- Depression
- Self Blame, Guilt, and shame
- Suicidal thoughts
- Anger and aggressive behavior
- Alcohol and drug abuse


Why Veterans struggle in College

- Veterans do not feel welcome
- Overwhelmed
- Too many time conflicts
- “Civilians don’t understand me”
- Mental, physical and behavioral health needs

Source: Disability Compliance for Higher Education
Vet Success on Campus

• The Vet Success on Campus program is a collaborative effort between Houston Community College (HCC) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with the purpose of providing a supportive on-campus environment for student Veterans and their dependents. Services provided will enable them to make a smooth transition to college life and successfully complete their educational programs.

• The VA has placed a full-time, experienced Vocational Counselor on the HCC campus. This counselor will serve as a “one-stop liaison” for Veterans, active duty military and their eligible family members who attend or plan to attend HCC.

Regarding Veterans In The Classroom

• If student has issues/problems within the classroom contact Dr. Sabrina Y. Lewis-Jones, HCC VA @ 87089, or our Veterans Call Center at 713-718-8522. You may email sabrina.lewis@hccs.edu or our veterans email address - vaonline@hccs.edu

• Immediate issue/concern with veteran/crisis: Vet Success Program on Campus: Ms. Evette Ned, VA Counselor, 713-718-2309 or email her at ned.evette@hccs.edu

• CRISIS: Call HCC Police and identify student as a veteran.