

Post Veteran Cultural Competencies for First Responders

CERTIFICATION II

POST VETERAN CULTURAL COMPETENCIES FOR FIRST RESPONDERS COURSE (8 Hours)

Course Purpose – This course is designed for law enforcement, fire, EMS and other public safety personnel who may encounter Veterans and military personnel in crisis in their communities.

Learning Outcomes (Optional) - When responding to incidents involving Veterans and military personnel, public safety personnel will be able to appropriately identify Veteran and Military members, recognize signs and symptoms of Veterans with mental health issues, identify Veterans in crisis, use learned officer safety skills to help stabilize and secure the scene, employ de-escalation techniques when applicable and know of appropriate resources to further assist Veterans.

Registration, Introduction, Orientation, and Course Overview

I. Military and Veteran culture.

A. Active Duty vs Veteran

- Understanding the differences between active service in the military and what constitutes being a Veteran.

A. Reserve Service vs Veteran

- Understanding the difference of being in the military reserve or National Guard as opposed to Veteran status.

A. Types of Discharges – the difference in the types of discharges military members receive and how that impact the types of care they can receive at the VA

- Honorable discharges
- Dishonorable discharges
- Bad Conduct discharges
- Medical discharges
- Administrative Discharges

A. Combat vs Non-Combat Vets

- How being in combat vs non-combat situations can affect a Veterans MH and perspectives towards law enforcement.

A. Stolen Valor

- Federal Statute - **18 U.S.C. § 704 - U.S. Code**
- Ca Penal Code - **532b**

A. The differences between cultures

- The experience Veterans have upon returning back to civilian life and the struggles they have.

II. Indicators of military service.

- A. Overview of military services – Discussion on the differences in the services, terminology and rank structure of each service.
 - Army
 - Navy
 - Air Force
 - Marines
 - Army National Guard
 - Air National Guard
 - Space Force
- A. Mission, Vision and Values of Military services
 - Discuss the training and indoctrination of the military services and the correlations between first responders and military members.
- A. Signs, Symbols and Indicators of Military and Veteran Culture
 - Graphics and pictures that display common military and Veteran uniforms, customs, rituals and types of clothing associated with the Veteran community.

III. Basic understanding of mental health issues facing military and Veterans.

- A. Introduction to Military PTSD and associated Mental Health conditions.
 - Definitions of common mental health conditions that affect the military and Veteran community. Overview of symptoms and how Veterans might present to first responders with mental health conditions.
- A. Overview of veteran Suicide statistics/demographics.
 - Discussion of current suicide levels within the Veteran community and where the most Veterans and Military communities are located.

IV. Rapport building and de-escalation techniques.

- A. Engagement strategies designed to build rapport and lower anxiety of situation.
 - Discussion of crisis intervention strategies to utilize with Veterans.
 - De-Escalation tactics.
 - How to gain voluntary compliance.
- A. High risk w/o use of force.
 - Discussion of military combat training and officer safety
 - Barricade situations
 - Utilizing time and talk to get Veteran to get help.

A. MILO Simulator scenarios to demonstrate competency.

- Simulated scenarios in which officer have to demonstrate good verbal commands, weapons manipulation, use of force vs de-escalation decision making. Focus is on crisis intervention techniques, verbal skills, officer safety tactics and positive outcomes.

V. Resources available to assist first responder.

A. Regional Resources available to First Responders to help Veterans

- Veteran Mental Evaluation Team – VA program that pairs a VA Police Officer and a VA clinician that responds with local agencies to assist Veterans in crisis
- Veteran Peer Access Network – A peer program developed by the LA County Department of Mental Health that provides further supportive services to Veterans after they are out of crisis.
- TAPS- Transition Assistance Program – Military program designed to help active service member have a smooth transition back to civilian status.

A. Public Safety Resources Guide (Handout)

- Useful numbers and links to federal, state and local agencies that provide services or can assist Veterans and Military members.

A. **Offer/Engage VA resources to assist Veteran**

- Utilizing course information, students will perform classroom scenarios on how to approach Veterans and what services they could relay that would be beneficial to a Veteran in need or in crisis.

Review and Evaluations
