




From Soldier to Student

MISSION TRANSITION



Training Description

- This training will attempt to recommend the best academic advising approach for student veterans while looking at topics like PTSD, Battlemind, and the GI Bill. Participants will be able to better communicate the strengths, challenges and unique needs of our military student population.



Learning Objectives

- Describe the demographics and diversity of UNM veteran and military students.
- Summarize the unique strengths of veteran and military students.
- A better understanding of PTSD and TBI and their affect in the classroom.
- Identify the support veteran and military students want from staff and faculty.
- A better understanding of the various academic advising approaches in respect to the advisor-student veteran relationship.
- Identify the types of military educational benefits and how schedule changes can incur a student debt.

Demographics & Diversity

- Spring 2015 Data
- Military service is part of personal identity
 - Soldiers are immersed in a military culture that changes their understanding of society and self.
 - Intersects with minority status, first gen college student
- Unique students with unique experiences under the shared umbrella of military service
 - Range in age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and political affiliation

Battlemind

While Deployed	At Home
Buddies (cohesion)	Withdrawal
Accountability	Controlling
Targeted Aggression	Inappropriate Aggression
Tactical Awareness	Hyper vigilance
Lethally Armed	"Locked and Loaded" at Home
Emotional Control	Anger/Detachment
Mission OPSEC	Secretiveness
Individual Responsibility	Guilt
Non-Defensive Driving	Aggressive Driving
Discipline and Ordering	Conflict



Transition Strengths

- Veterans bring a unique perspective:
 - Military training
 - Life experience
 - Established identity
 - A more worldly view
- Skills taught in the military:
 - Self-discipline
 - Leadership
 - Teamwork
 - Time Management
 - Work Ethic

Transition Difficulties

- Difficulty translating their military skills into a new profession
- Military transfer credits may not count towards major
- Adjusting to a less structured and far more independent environment
- Being an older student
- Alienation from the difference in life experiences
- Understanding the requirements and process of the GI Bill

Disabilities on Campus

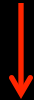
- Dealing with a disability for the first time
- Invisible Disabilities
 - PTSD
 - Development of PTSD
 - Wk 3: 94%
 - Wk 9: 47%
 - Years: 15 – 25% (30% in combat)
 - TBI
- ARC
 - Supports self identified students with disabilities at UNM.

What is PTSD?

- Stress
 - Any challenge, daily to major events
 - Return to normal when stressor is removed.
- Trauma
 - Subset of stress
 - Unusual, life threatening, (ex. Combat)
 - Lasting effects
 - There is a before and after
- Both Stress and Trauma require a response

What is PTSD?

Pre-existing risk factor



Trauma



Attentional resources directed towards trauma – relevant or emotional salient stimuli



Difficulty inhibiting responses to and disengaging attention from trauma-related stimuli.



Hyperarousal, hypervigilance, irritability, intrusive memories

Avoidance – when inhibition fails, alternative coping styles develop.



Avoiding

Difficulty maintaining attention on other stimuli in the environment



Difficulty concentrating, numbness

Non-Traditional Students and the Adult Learner

- Adult learners beginning their post secondary education are likely to have a gap in their academic development process.
- Have a more focused idea of what goals they hope to accomplish through educational attainment.
- Have had success in their non-academic lives.
 - They need to see benefit of new learning strategies rather than seeing new material as an introductory hoop leading to their true goals.
- Metacognitive strategies
 - Reading a technical manual or a report vs. reading a textbook.

Understanding the Student's Life Mission

Life Mission

- Core mission: Answering the question, "Who am I?"
 - Establish identity vs. the educational process affect on a student's core mission.
 - Adult learners constantly renegotiate their identities within the college context.
 - Disorienting dilemmas
- Working mission: the articulated or unarticulated reasoning behind a person's current roles (soldier, student, spouse, parent)
 - Active Duty vs. Reservists vs. Veterans vs. Retirees



The Importance of Life Mission

- Most military students take college courses in order to be promotable, learn a new skill, and/or transition into civilian life.
- Student Veterans are coming back to school to start a new career.
- We will look at the differences between viewing advising through a transient lens and a permanent lens.



Advising Approaches

Social Cognitive Career Theory

- Advising professionals can consider the variables affecting the military students' educational outlook and commitment to degree attainment.
- Used to better understand an individual's career and academic behaviors by placing emphasis on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals.



Advising Approaches

Prescriptive Advising

- Student Veterans want to be told what classes to take.
 - Similar to following orders (military culture)
- Disempowers students and decrease the likelihood of individuals increasing their self-efficacy practices.

Advising Approaches

Intrusive Model

- Empowers students to not only take control of their educational future but to meld their educational aspirations with their current position and understood life mission.
- Often used with students thought to be at-risk.
 - Study: Student veterans described themselves their initial approach to higher education unfocused. They also described themselves as underprepared for the difficulty of some courses and having unrealistic expectations of the learning environment – known characteristics of at-risk students.



Discussion

Which advising approach works best for the student veteran population?

How does your advising approach change when working with a military student?

GI Bill History

- Before the WWII, college and homeownership were, for the most part, unreachable dreams for the average American.
- Thanks to the GI Bill, millions who would have flooded the job market instead opted for education. In the peak year of 1947, Veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions. By the time the original GI Bill ended on July 25, 1956, 7.8 million of 16 million WWII Veterans had participated in an education or training program.

Student Responsibilities

- Students should be degree-seeking
 - Student can be non-degree for two semesters however the only courses that can be certified are those required for admission and those required if admitted)
- Student can take online classes
 - Correspondence course will not be certified until course is complete and grade is posted
- Students must submit a final concise student schedule to certifying official

Important thing for advisors and faculty to know about “W” grades

If the student drops a class or is withdrawn by the faculty, this may accrue a debit.

- It’s usually better for the student to get an “F” than a withdrawal
- Ask the student before choosing the “W” and “F” for them

Tips for Advisors, I

Courses that *can not* be certified:

- Courses that do not fulfill a program requirement.
(Example: excessive free electives)
- Audited courses

Tips for Advisors, II

Courses that can be certified:

- Courses that satisfy requirements outlined by the curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form
- Repeated courses that are failed or for which the grade does not meet minimum requirements for graduation
- Remedial courses
- Externship, internship, and practicum (similar to student teaching)

Tips for Advisors, III

Situations that will result in a student debt:

- The student never attended any classes for which he/she was certified, regardless of the reason for non-attendance
- The student completely withdraws on the first day of the term
- The student withdraws from a course after the first day
- The student receives a non-punitive grade (W or NC)

Tips for Advisors, IV

- All students using benefits will receive in-state rate on tuition
- UNM application fee is waived for undergraduates



Things to Remember

- Students veterans are a unique population with different experiences.
- There are numerous ways to help Student Veterans/ Servicemembers just as there are for other student populations.
- Developing trust with this population is important.
- Following-up with the Student Veterans/ Servicemembers and carrying out what you say you will do is essential.

COUN 492 Veteran Transition Course

- Course explore issues facing military veterans as they transition from the military to civilian lifestyle. Student swill examine themes such as power, authority, responsibility, transition, freedom, and autonomy.
- Course is taught by Aaron Smith, an 8 year veteran and Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

References

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