

Statewide Training: Veterans Treatment Courts Available Sessions

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and the Justice-Involved Veteran Population

This plenary will cover the epidemiology of ABI and the clinical and psychosocial characteristics of justice-involved veterans with ABI. The presenter will describe the VA's Polytrauma System of Care and the collaborative efforts of the DoD and VA to identify, assess, and treat ABI survivors, as well as the research and clinical and care coordination initiatives to provide lifelong care and support for this population.

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize ABI diagnoses and management
2. Review of the VA ABI/Polytrauma System of Care
3. Identify cognitive effects of ABI and symptoms that overlap with other mental health issues

Engaging Families and Other Primary Participant Support Networks in Your VTC

Although there is a dearth of research evidence on incorporating family and friends in the recovery process of veterans and treatment court participants, the research from related areas establishes the wisdom of making this a part of the treatment court practice. We can see that intentional family engagement leads to better outcomes for participants and the family unit. In addition, related systems such as schools, drug treatment programs, and mental health treatment programs have a significant evidence base indicating that integrating family and friends into the recovery model has positive benefits.

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the evidence base for family/personal support participation in treatment courts based on evidence from related fields.
2. Use the VTC Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) to assess the appropriateness of potential family/personal support participation.
3. Identify ways to incorporate family and emotional support into VTC models.



Identifying, Preventing, and Managing Professional Burnout in Working with Justice-Involved Veterans

Self-care has perhaps never been so clearly necessary as it is within our current societal circumstances. Serving justice-involved veterans brings its unique risks of developing compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization, and professional burnout, which can negatively affect personal and professional well-being. This session will help the audience better identify these conditions, including their related signs and symptoms, and will provide practical steps to prevent and mitigate their impact.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization, secondary traumatic stress, and professional burnout.
2. Examine contributing factors of compassion fatigue when working with justice-involved veterans with trauma.
3. Identify effective coping strategies to foster resiliency and prevent burnout.

Intimate (IPV) Partner Violence in Veterans

This plenary will focus on the problem of intimate partner violence (IPV) in a subset of the justice-involved veteran population. The speaker will discuss the etiology of IPV, focusing on how trauma and related problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder may influence how veterans interpret and respond to others in conflict situations. The discussion then shifts to a description of the Strength at Home program, including how motivational strategies facilitate accountability for abusive behavior. The session concludes with a review of the scientific evidence for the intervention.

Learning Objectives:

1. Review the social information processing model for intimate partner violence.
2. Discuss strategies for motivating those who use intimate partner violence to increase their engagement in the therapy process.
3. Describe suggested programmatic modifications that can enhance participant outcomes.



Leveraging the VA in Identifying Veterans in the Criminal Justice System (Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS) and The SQUARES Application)

The first step necessary for any veterans treatment court (VTC) is identifying their justice-involved veteran population. Justice For Vets Key Component #3 of the Ten Key Components of Veterans Treatment Courts is that “Eligible Participants are identified early and promptly placed in the veterans treatment court program.” Identification can be accomplished through various methods and at multiple points within the criminal justice system. This session will highlight two systems provided by the Dept. of Veterans Affairs to assist jurisdictions in identifying justice-involved veterans.

Learning objectives:

1. Identify two external Dept. of VA systems available to assist in the early identification of veterans within the criminal justice system, VRSS and SQUARES
2. Recognize who can access the systems and what information may be necessary to provide in order to achieve better outcomes.
3. Integrate veteran Identification information and systems into criminal justice and court case processing.

Military Sexual Trauma: Employing Interventions that Enhance Outcomes

This session provides an overview of military sexual trauma (MST). MST encompasses experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault during military service and is often associated with various mental health conditions, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Learning Objectives

1. Define military sexual trauma
2. Describe the adverse impact of MST on the individual
3. Identify services available to the individual in the VA System of Care



Motivating Change in Clients Who Use Violence

This training will discuss specific strategies for integrating a trauma informed approach to working with people who use violence and are court mandated to receive intervention. Potential motivational challenges with this population will be discussed along with strategies to overcome these barriers and promote behavioral change. The Stages of Change Model will be reviewed to describe stages of intentional behavior change. Specific “Motivational Interviewing” strategies for increasing motivation among violent individuals and eliciting personal change goals will be described, with video examples provided and opportunity for group practice.

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the Stages of Change model as it applies to those who use violence and aggression.
2. Describe motivational challenges for those court mandated to intervention for violent behavior.
3. Describe specific strategies for motivating violent individuals to change their behavior.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and the Veteran Population with Focus on JIVs

This session will first provide an overview of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including diagnostic features, the identification of biomarkers for PTSD, and interventions for PTSD. The second portion of this presentation will focus on how trauma and PTSD may impact the family, and interventions to prevent family conflict and domestic violence are discussed.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe common signs/reported symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.
2. Describe the available evidence-based interventions for PTSD offered through the VA.
3. Develop ways to respond to behaviors and symptoms without retraumatizing the participant.
4. Describe how PTSD may impact the family unit.



Tackling Sleep Hygiene in Justice-Involved Veterans

Insomnia is a symptom of almost every significant mental health problem found in veterans treatment courts, including substance use disorders, PTSD, depression, and chronic pain. Nonetheless, it often goes unaddressed until later in treatment, even though treating insomnia would improve every one of those diagnostic problems. This plenary will address the links between insomnia and other mental health disorders.

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize common signs and reported symptoms commonly associated with sleep deprivation/insomnia
2. Identify how symptomology can mimic other common psychiatric disorders.
3. Describe a systematic approach to sleep hygiene that can dramatically improve sleep and decrease insomnia by 30-50 percent.

Translating Core Principles of Military Leadership to VTC Teams

This session reviews the guiding principles of military leadership. Teams will learn how these leadership principles may be utilized by the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) Team with their participants, regardless of each team member's role. Additionally, this session will identify some leadership "don'ts" to avoid that may be unique to the military and veteran population.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify military leadership principles and the practical application of those principles in their VTC.
2. Explain how these principles may impact VTC participants in the court and community.
3. Describe how improper application of cultural principles can cause harm to the team and participant.



Applying the Criminogenic Principles of R-N-R to Your Veterans Treatment Court

Failure to recognize and address the needs of a veteran who is justice-involved or a service member at risk for continued criminal behavior can result in the person returning to the criminal justice system repeatedly. This session will focus on identifying the most significant risk factors for criminal justice involvement and responsivity actions that can be implemented to reduce a veteran participant's likelihood of further criminal involvement.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe criminogenic risk factors and the responsivity actions that can be implemented to address and alter dynamic needs.
2. Identify and discuss screening and assessment tools commonly implemented to assist decision-making for the justice-involved veteran population.
3. Discuss overall treatment trends that effectively address this unique population.

Essential Elements and Growing Trends in Veterans Treatment Courts

As VTC programs or specialized dockets expand, the VTC's multidisciplinary team should periodically review the essential elements and core principles that contribute to the positive outcomes of VTC participants. This plenary identifies the core tenets of VTCs and explores growing trends and promising practices that VTCs are implementing in different jurisdictions nationwide.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the essential elements and foundational principles of all VTCs.
2. Describe best-practice standards that contribute to programmatic success.
3. Review evolving and growing trends, taking the VTC model to the "next level" over the next three to five years

Revisiting Social Connectedness with the Veteran Population that is Justice-Involved

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, social connectedness is when an individual feels like they belong, has the support and care they need, and has the number, quality, and diversity of relationships they want. Evidence suggests that social connectedness



plays a crucial role in our well-being and overall health, as high-quality relationships can help people live longer, healthier lives by mitigating the harmful effects of loneliness and isolation.

Learning Objectives

1. Review and identify short- and long-term tools/resources that the JIV participant can readily access to enhance social connectedness.
2. Describe community engagement strategies during and after program completion that will empower the individual towards a recovery-oriented lifestyle.
3. Describe the relation among All Rise Best Practice Standards, team responsibility, and social connectedness.

Restoring Hope and Purpose in the Veteran Participant

Participants in a veterans treatment court or veterans treatment docket will often face multiple challenges that are both seen and unseen. As they propel towards program completion, each multidisciplinary team member's relationship and approach to guiding and empowering them through these challenges will vary from team member to team member. However, what should remain the same is each team member's intent to foster or restore a sense of hope, meaning-making, and purpose in the justice-involved veteran participant, which extends far beyond the program's duration. This session will emphasize working with participants in a holistic manner that empowers them in their everyday accomplishments while also encouraging them to lead a purposeful life. This session will explore skills that team members can use to assist them when working with participants that may result in the individual practicing or developing behaviors that positively influence their quality-of-life choices in the present and future.

Learning Objectives

1. Define the complexity of the justice-involved population concerning potential VTC team member assumptions and biases that may impact their approach in the judicial setting.
2. Identify literature and research concerning the role of hope, meaning making, and purpose in the health and well-being of specific populations.
3. Describe the impact of social connectedness and ways of developing and enhancing it.



The VTC Team: Turning Insight into Action

As multidisciplinary team members, you are a role model and set the stage for influencing long-term recovery and non-justice involvement. Defining roles and recognizing how we communicate with each other will impact our interactions with justice-involved veteran (JIV) participants. This session will address each core member's role on the team and provide guidance on how to communicate effectively with one another.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe each team member's role on the VTC Team.
2. Identify damaging communication practices that increase conflict and diminish team morale.
3. Describe how the Network for the Improvement of Addiction Treatment (NIATx) Organizational Improvement Model can be applied to the team.
4. Discuss how successful teams have shared visions and goals.

