

# REACHING RURAL VETERANS



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Engaging Faith Communities  
and Food Pantries in  
Serving Veterans in Rural Areas

# Military Culture and Terminology: Enhancing Competence In The Population of Rural Veterans



# Learning Objectives

- Recognize the armed service branches of the US Military
- Gain an understanding of military culture
- Identify why understanding military culture is important when working with military and veteran families
- Identify characteristics of the rural veteran population.

# Presentation Outline

- The United States Military
  - Armed Forces Branches
- Military Culture
  - Learn the basic elements of culture
  - General Terms and Acronyms
  - Why learn about military culture, why is it unique?
- Rural Veterans
  - Who are they?
  - What do we know about rural veterans?
  - What I can do?

# United States Military

The U.S Armed Forces are made up five armed service branches.

- Air Force= Airman



- Marine Corps= Marine



- Army= Soldier



- Navy= Sailor



- Coast Guard= Guardian



# United State Military

## Military Status

- Active Duty
  - Full Time
- Reserve/Guard
  - Federal/State
  - 39 days/year
  - Typically monthly drills two-week annual training
  - May be called to Active Duty for deployments
  - Lack the support system Active Duty has returning from deployment



# Before we begin talking about Military Culture...



- What makes you excited about working with Veterans and their families?
- What makes you most \_\_\_\_\_ (anxious, uncomfortable, uncertain) about working with the Veterans their families?
- What would you need to know to feel more comfortable working with this population?
- What do you find compelling about working with the military?

# Military Culture

## Why learn about military culture?

Knowledge and understanding of military culture can lead to:

- Increased ability to relate to and support Veterans
- Improved program success
- Deeper understanding of the context for mental health symptoms and conditions
- Increased appreciation for military service



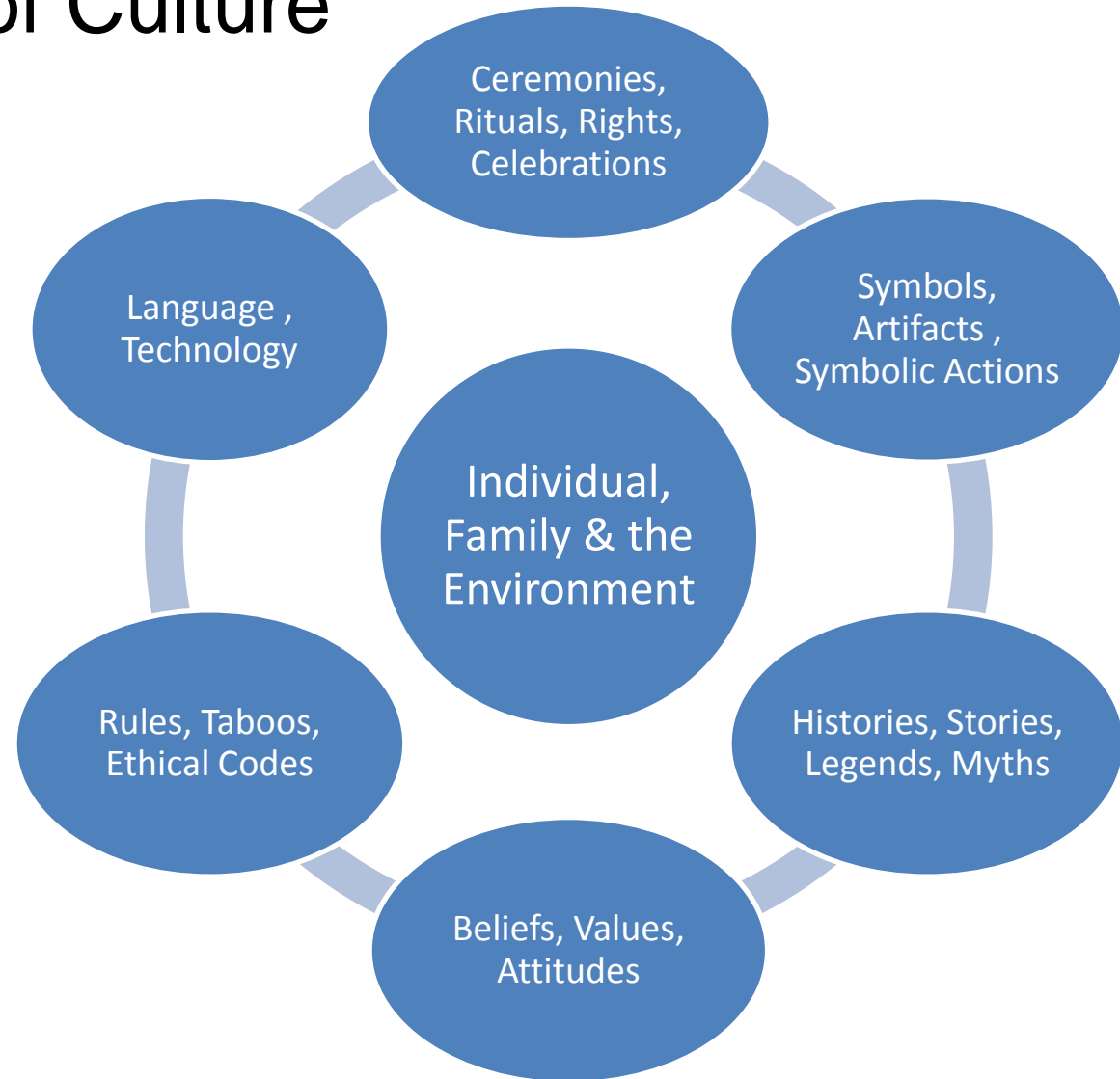
# Military Culture

Learning about military culture includes a deeper understanding of both the:

- Structure of the military such as branches and ranks
- Mission, ideals and core values of military culture



# Basic Elements of Culture Common to All



# Military Culture

- The Military Culture is a Dynamic Culture
  - The Decision to Belong is a Conscious One
    - You don't wake up one day and determine you are a part of it, to the contrary – you go looking for it
- Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes:
  - Are instilled from day one (Boot Camp)
  - Are passed on without question
  - Are acceptable to the individual



# Military Culture

## Military Core Values

- Army- Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage
- Air Force- Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence In All We Do
- Coast Guard- Honor and Integrity, Greater Good of the Coast Guard, Innovation, Personal Initiative, Drive for Success, and Teamwork
- Marines- Honor, Courage, Commitment
- Navy- Honor, Courage, Commitment

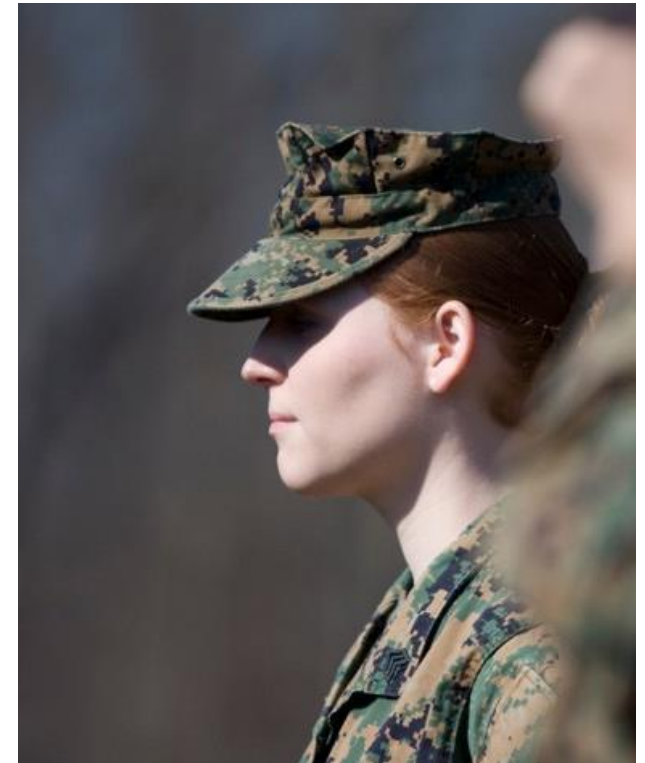
# Military Culture

- Chain of Command (CoC)
  - Is perhaps the most salient feature of military culture
  - Clearly defines individuals' roles, responsibilities, and anticipated behaviors.
- Military Rank
  - Enlisted Personnel (E-1 through E-9)
  - Warrant Officers (W-1 through W-5) highly specialized experts (2% of military)
  - Commissioned Officers (O-1 through O10)
    - May determine who may speak to whom & when
    - Determines who lives where
    - Defines and shapes roles and responsibilities

# Military Culture

## Language and Terminology

- Some common acronyms and phrases you should know:
  - **MOS**- Military Occupational Speciality
  - **PCS** – Permanent Change of Station (Relocating)
  - **TDY** - Temporary Duty
  - **Leave** - Off Duty - (usually vacation)
  - **AWOL** - (“ A-Wall”)- Absent without Leave
  - **MEB** – Medical Evaluation Board



# Military Culture

## Language and Terminology

- Some common acronyms and phrases you should know
  - **CONUS/OCONUS** – Continental US/ Outside Continental US
  - **Post and Forts** - Army installation
  - **Base** - Air Force or Navy Installation
  - **Joint Bases** – is a base utilized by multiple military services
  - **Camp** - Marine Corps Installation
    - Marines also use Base for Aviation Installations

# Military Culture

## Why do they/we join?

- Family tradition
- Transition to man/womanhood
- To serve country
- Support family
- Friend did it
- Get out of trouble with the law
- Do something noble with life
- Give life (death) a purpose
- Get out of Poverty
- Protect people, country and way of life
- Be part of a team- something bigger than self
- Inherent sense of selflessness
- College money
- Free medical care
- Travel
- Leave unhealthy family environment



# Military Culture

## About the Veteran Community

- Veterans are a unique subset of the U.S population that differ from those who have never served in the military.
- In order to serve in the military, individuals must meet certain requirements which make Veterans a selective population based on characteristics such as education, physical fitness level, health and criminal history.

# Rural Veterans

## Who are they?



# Understanding Rural Veterans

- 24% of Veterans live in rural areas today
- Growing number of female Veterans – fastest growing Veteran cohort (7% of rural veterans)
- 36% of Veterans with a service-connected disability live in rural or highly rural areas
- Higher percentage of rural Veterans report at least one disability compared to those in urban areas

# Understanding Rural Veterans

The geographic isolation of rural areas creates different circumstances and challenges for Veterans who live in these communities.

Veterans in rural communities do **not** have easy access to infrastructure within their daily living such as

- Public transportation
- Health care
- Government agencies
- Recreational, health and entertainment outlets

# Understanding Rural Veterans

- Homelessness for rural Veterans is becoming more prevalent.
- Increased number of rural Veterans are living in substandard housing
- What leads to homelessness: poor housing quality, insufficient income, poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, PTSD (no different in urban/rural areas)
- Rural Veterans face barriers to accessing health care



# Engaging the Culture with Confidence



# Talking to Veterans

## Some Opening Questions

- What branch of service are you (were you) in?
- What is/was your Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC), or Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)? (Army & Marines both use MOS)
- Why did you join the military? Why did you join the specific branch of service that you did?
- How can I help?

# How to help

- Expand access to care and supportive services
- Improve serving Veterans between community and VA
- Expand transportation access
- Increase community based services
- Expand Veteran outreach programs
- Improve cultural competence of providers
- Enhance understanding of the needs of rural Veterans



# Questions?



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