

Veterans Onward Protocol



VETERANS

ONWARD

18 September 2020

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PURPOSE

The primary goal of Veterans Onward is to empower transitioning service members (TSMs) to successfully address their personal and professional needs during the transition process back into the broader American *civilian* community. Veterans Onward assists the TSM in achieving a “soft-landing” for Veterans and their families. Reducing transition stress can reduce the risk of Veteran suicide.

ETS-SP Veterans Onward Protocol is an effective training program that prepares the service member for the transition process to the destination civilian community.

The program includes over 30 training sessions addressing five key areas:

1. **Self-in-Context:** to shore-up strengths, mitigate vulnerabilities and strengthen relationships. These sessions include:
 - Identity
 - Self-Awareness
 - Self and Social Landscape
 - Relationship Development - Strengthening and Dealing with Challenges
 - Expectation Management - Veteran and Significant Other
 - Problem Development and Problem-Solving
 - Identifying High-Risk Situations
 - Social Skills and Behaviors
 - Interpersonal Communication
2. **Health:** a comprehensive approach to mental and physical well-being. The sessions include:
 - Mind-Body Connection
 - Well-Being
 - Resilience
 - Anger Management
 - Nutrition and Alcohol Consumption
 - Pain Management
 - Sleep Health
 - Procrastination
 - Anxiety
3. **Education:** including the GI Bill, college degrees, and vocational training. The sessions include:
 - Higher Education Overview (college, graduate degrees)
 - Vocational Training
 - Online Courses/Certification
 - GI Bill Eligibility
4. **Career:** preparation for securing meaningful employment. The sessions include:
 - From Boots to Suits
 - Exploring Career Paths
 - Strengths, Interests and Setting Goals
 - Veteran Career Services
 - Financial Literacy
 - Communication Skills in a Professional Setting

- Cover Letters and Resumes
- Career Fairs
- Career Resources for Significant Other

5. **Reintegration:** an encompassing perspective on the transition process. The sessions include:

- Veterans Onward Training Program Overview
- Action Plans
- Civil-Military Dynamics
- Community Integration
- Community Integration Activities
- One-on-One Counseling
- AARs/Lessons Learned/Feedback

ASSUMPTIONS

- SFL-TAP publicizes Veterans Onward to TSMs; TSMs sign up to participate 6-12 months prior to ETS date.
- ETS-SP sponsors are matched with TSMs before the Veterans Onward training program begins.
- ETS-SP sponsors and TSMs connect and build rapport before participating in Veterans Onward training.

PROTOCOL

- ETS-SP sponsors attend virtual training sessions (# TBD) to understand the Veterans Onward training program.
- ETS-SP sponsors assist TSMs by understanding their needs and helping them set general long- and short-goals.
- TSMs participate in the Veterans Onward training program as cohorts to create and build a “Soldier for Life” *culture and mindset*. This is “Veteranhood.”
- Sponsors monitor their respective TSMs progress in the Veterans Onward training program and assist TSMs in developing their tailored Action Plans. Action Plans are digital, and include output from assessment tools, goal-setting exercises, useful resources, community engagement opportunities, etc. specific to the TSM/V.

The Veterans Onward program ensures that both the TSM and sponsor are better informed and better prepared to march through the transition process together.

To be determined: when a TSM has not yet decided upon a destination community a “designated-sponsor” may be assigned to coach the TSM through Veterans Onward.