



# Navigating Your Benefits for Norwood/Cincinnati Veterans



Interprofessional Colloquium Presentation

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# Population

## Social Determinants of Health

- Food insecurity
- Housing instability
- Transportation challenges
- Lack of employment opportunities

## Key Factors

- Veteran benefits are not well known
- Informations regarding benefits is spread via word of mouth
  - Inaccurate information



(U. S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2022).



# Program Needs Assessment

- Peer Veteran support is preferred
- Loss of military identity during transition to civilian society
- Community participation
- Difficulties balancing civilian life
  - Finding employment
  - Going to school
  - Financially supporting a family
  - While coping with physical and mental health



(Cogan et al., 2019; Kinney et al., 2020).

# Team Members

- Jennifer Green-Norwood Health Department and army veteran
- Dr. Darrell Smith - Student Manager at Cincinnati State and an army veteran
- Don Kerns of VA and marine veteran
- George Maurer- Whole Health representative and military veteran
- Tanner Wright - XU Clinical Psychology Doctorate student
- Carolyn Springer & Lénine Rukebesha XU Occupational Therapy Doctorate students



# Purpose of Program

## Priority Needs

- Connecting veterans to services in the community
- Benefits are present but hard to navigate
- Reduce suicide rates among vets
- Provide services after business hours
- Provide opportunities for social participation



(Cheney et al., 2018; Kinney et al., 2020).



# Shared Discussion

## Suggestions Discussed

- Veteran job placement
- Weekly community program
- STAND DOWN



# STAND DOWN Event

1-3 day annual event

- Cincinnati VA
- Local Veterans
- Norwood Health Department
- Volunteers
- Local community resources
- Physical activity
- Local government (DMV, legal services)
- Transportation
- Education
- Pet and childcare services
- Housing
- Self-care



# Supports

- Veteran community in Norwood
- Veteran centers
- Stand down is a nationwide event
- Close partnership with Northern Kentucky StandDown Event organizers
- Abundance of large corporation in Cincinnati area that employ veterans
- Underutilized local grants
  - Department of Labor STAND DOWN Grant (Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program)  
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/programs/StandDown>



# Contacts

- Erin Joyne Community Relation Officer  
[erin.joyner@voago.org](mailto:erin.joyner@voago.org) (513-675-2397)
- Shannon Hampton: Cincinnati STAND DOWN Organizer in 2019  
[shannon.hampton@va.gov](mailto:shannon.hampton@va.gov) (513-977-6811)
- Columbus STAND DOWN website:  
<https://www.centralohiostanddown.org/>
- Columbus STAND DOWN Organizer:  
[CentralOhioStandDown@gmail.com](mailto:CentralOhioStandDown@gmail.com)
- Nationwide database for upcoming STAND DOWN events:  
<https://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp>



# Barriers

- Logistics and coordinating
- Partnership collaborating for ownership of the event
- Need for advertising
- Need to locate funding sources





# Action Steps

1. Identify main organizer or coordinator
  2. Locate an appropriate and neutral public space
  3. Begin to contact large corporations for sponsorships
  4. Identify funding sources
    1. Grants
    2. Local student involvement
  5. Begin to contact local resources to build booths
  6. Advertise the event through local VA and community resources
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# Outcomes & Changes to the Population

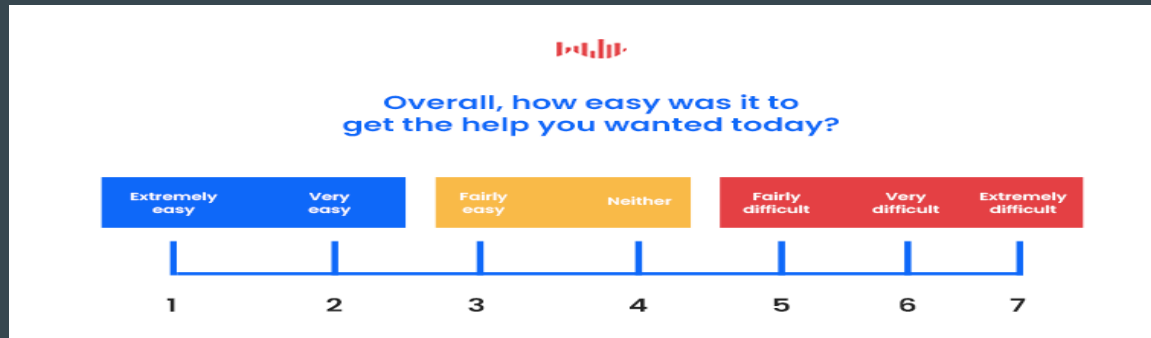
## Desired Outcomes/Results

- Educational benefits
- Health care
- Transportation
- Church
- Legal assistance
- Financial support
- Childcare/petcare
- Housing
- Job placement/employment
- Self-care
- Physical activity
- Peer support through connections with other Veterans



# Program Evaluation

- Pre assessment survey before attending STAND DOWN
  - How comfortable are you navigating your benefits?
- Post survey after attending STAND DOWN
  - What worked well?
  - What services should be included in the next STAND DOWN event?



# Policy/Social Systems Change Needed

- **Federal system change prior to military discharge**
  - Improving the discharge processes
  - Method of delivery to inform about benefits
  - Provide individualized local resources
- **Local systems change after transition into civilization**
  - Standardized ways for local VA outreach



Thank you!



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# References for Photos (in order as shown)

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