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Troops to Trojans

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“Troops to Trojans”

Karen McNulty, OTD, OTR/L
USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice
Disability Services & Programs
• Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 - August 1st, 2009

• It is estimated that over **2 million veterans** from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) will enroll in postsecondary education in the coming years (Madaus, 2009).

• **18%** Private University

• USC Veteran Enrollment:
  • 111-130 (2008 Pre Post 9/11 Bill)
  • 255 (Fall 2009)
  • 248 (spring 2010)
  • 325 (Fall 2010)
  • **400 approx.** (Spring 2011)
Outline

• Health and Disability
• Lifestyle
• Transition
• What USC Veterans had to say
• What USC is doing well
• Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 10-30%
• Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) 11-20%
• Veterans with multiple deployments: risk of mental health problems increases 60% with each consecutive deployment (Coleman, 2008)

“Returning veterans will have a wide range of medical diagnoses and related health problems that will have a temporary or chronic impact on their living, working, learning, and relationship functions.” (Church, 2009)
Health & Disability

- Depression
- Attempted suicide/ suicide (risk of suicide nearly twice the nonveteran population, a rate so high it has been labeled an “epidemic”)
- Learning disability
- Sensory impairments (hearing, vision, etc)
- Burns
- Physical Impairments


Lifestyle

- Alcohol / drug use
- Job acquisition
- Homelessness
- Family/ marriage difficulties: 90% divorce rate
Transition

- Marine: You can’t get a better high. It’s like crack, you know? Once you been shot at, you really can’t come down. You can’t top that.

Embedded Documentarian: How you gonna go back to the civilian world, then?

Marine: I have no idea.

-Restrepo, National Geographic Films1
Grand Jury Prize for U.S. Documentary, 2010 Sundance Film Festival Nominee, Documentary (Feature), 83rd Academy Awards

- “One day you’re carrying a rifle over your shoulder, and the next day you’re sipping a Slurpee.” -Gregg Taylor, Army Reservist

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Transition

• “Moving In (college)”
  – Connecting with peers
  – Blending in
  – Faculty


USC Student Veteran Interviews - Summer 2009

• Participant Demographics

**USC:**
- 4 undergraduate transfer students
  1 graduate student
- Marine corps
- Latin American
- Engineering, Economics (2), Public Policy & Planning, Social Work

**Vets Panel:**
- 6 students in city colleges (Pasadena City College, Long Beach City College, Santa Monica City College, LA City College)
- 5 Marines, 1 Airforce
- 3 Latin American, 3 Caucasian
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- Social Support and Networking with Vets
  - Student veteran organization
  - Speakers and events targeted to student vets
  - 1st year mentor at USC
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Visibility of Resources
  • Improved internet resources
  • Veteran website: sait.usc.edu/ca/tvsp
  • Veteran center- central location for resources
  • Orientation session for Veterans or information packet at orientation
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Workshops or classes for Veterans
  • “How to translate what you have learned in the military to everyday life”
  • Transition course- similar to “Boots to books”
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- Increased Recruitment of Veterans
  - Leadership skills
  - Experience
  - Diversity – 22% African-American, 11% Latino, 4% Asian, 3% other (NCD, 2009)
  - Veterans had more interactions with students of different races/ethnicities than non vets and more conversations with people of different religion/political beliefs/personality than non vets

Survey Finds. *National Survey of Student Engagement, 2010.*
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- Increased VA benefits and work opportunities
  - More information on scholarships
  - Yellow Ribbon Program-
    - Participants: Occupational Therapy, Rossier, School of Social Work, Marshall
    - The VA will match the amount given
  - Work study positions for veteran students
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Mental Health Services
  • Resources identified at Orientation
  • Veteran counselor at Counseling Services
  • PTSD specialty/ experience with veteran needs
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Faculty Education & Support
  • Disability related issues
    • Hypervigilance (PTSD)
  • War topics may trigger PTSD / anger
  • Distraction free environment for learning
  • Support of Faculty Veterans- symbol to identify as veteran
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- Lifestyle Needs
  - Exercise and Physical Fitness
    - Physical training class geared for veterans
  - Substance Use
  - Marriage/ family counseling
  - Job Skills
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- **Lifestyle Needs**
  - Time Management
  - Money Management
  - Techniques to handle stress
  - Cooking
  - Reestablishing identity: hobbies, goals
What USC is doing well!

- Veteran Appreciation Day Nov 11! 4th Annual
- Remembrance Day Roll Call
- USC Student Veterans Committee
- Veteran Affairs Office- financial assistance
- USC Veterans Association (student club)
- Yellow Ribbon Program
- Transfer and Veteran Student Programs
- Orientation participation
- Lifestyle Redesign® for Veterans: OT
Upcoming Events

• VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION 11.11.11
  Remembrance Day Roll Call :: 9am-4pm :: 11am National Moment of Silence :: (Hahn Plaza (across from Tommy Trojan)

• Discussion with author Thomas Steinbeck & Book Signing :: 12:30pm-2pm : Doheny Memorial Library 240
  Join us hear from noted author and Vietnam Veteran Thomas Steinbeck on his new book, The Silver Lotus & his experience as a veteran.

• Veterans Day Reception :: 5pm-7pm :: Radisson Midtown Hotel at USC

• Veteran Student Symposium: A panel discussion with student Veterans
  Tuesday, November 15, 2011 :: 4pm-6pm :: Doheny Memorial Library 240

• Troops to Trojans: Veteran Resume Workshop & Discussion
  Thursday, November 17, 2011 :: 4pm to 6pm :: Tutor Campus Center
Areas of Growth

• Transition programs and workshops
• Female Veteran programs
• Veteran specific counseling
• Yellow Ribbon
• Priority Registration
• Faculty Education
• Mentor program
• Other?


Suicide Among Male Veterans: A Prospective Population-Based Study. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 2007. http://jech.bmj.com/content/61/7/619.abstract?ijkey=e2f2f4b217096a fe60eb32e1d5181e78f070254f&keytype2=tf_ipsecsha


THANK YOU!

Questions? Comments? Ideas?

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