



Tribal Healing to Wellness Court

www.wellnesscourts.org

wellness@tlpi.org

NAVAJO VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH PROGRAM

September 29, 2020



DISCLAIMER

This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-DC-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justices, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office of Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.





BEFORE WE BEGIN...

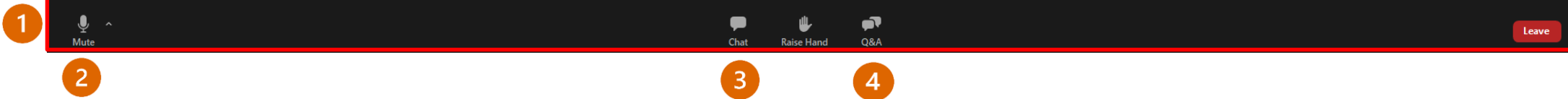
Here are some friendly housekeeping reminders

- 1 Your control panel will appear at the bottom of your user screen. (As shown below)
- 2 All attendees will be muted during the presentation.
- 3 Use the Chat box to submit a comment to “All Presenters” or “Presenters & Everyone”
- 4 If you have a question, please type it in the Q&A box

Please complete the CE Sign-in form, when the link is dropped in the chat box.

Please complete a workshop session evaluation.

This session will be recorded. Recordings will be available on this platform and EnhancementTraining.org.





PRESENTER



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GOALS OF THE NAVAJO PROJECT

- Help Native American veterans navigate the court systems, treatment systems and the VA systems so they can adjust back into being “civilians”
- Keep Native American veterans out of jail or prison
- Help them get “service connected disability” designation

Strategy is to use the New Mexico Human Services Department Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement (OPRE) to assist in training veterans on how to address drug and alcohol use. (Due to high usage of alcohol and drugs for Severe PTSD).

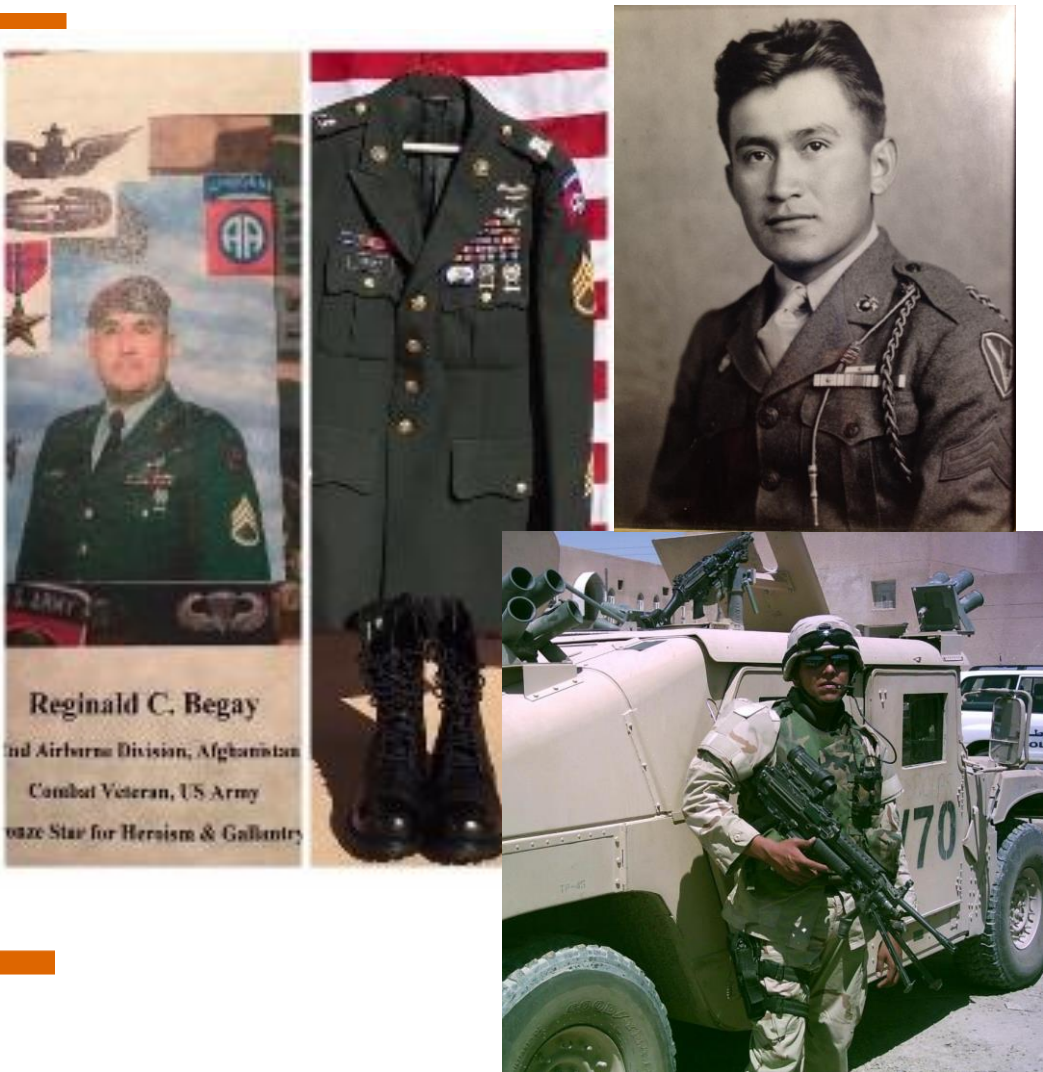
Community based services are needed even if a “service connected” disabled veterans with PTSD goes to in patient treatment. Veterans have life experiences that can aide returning combat veterans.

Navajo Nation culture supports warriors (i.e. trust fund, veterans organizations and the Veterans Act of 2016).

[NAVAJO NATION PRESIDENT TO SIGN THE FIRST NATIVE VETERANS ACT INTO LAW](#)



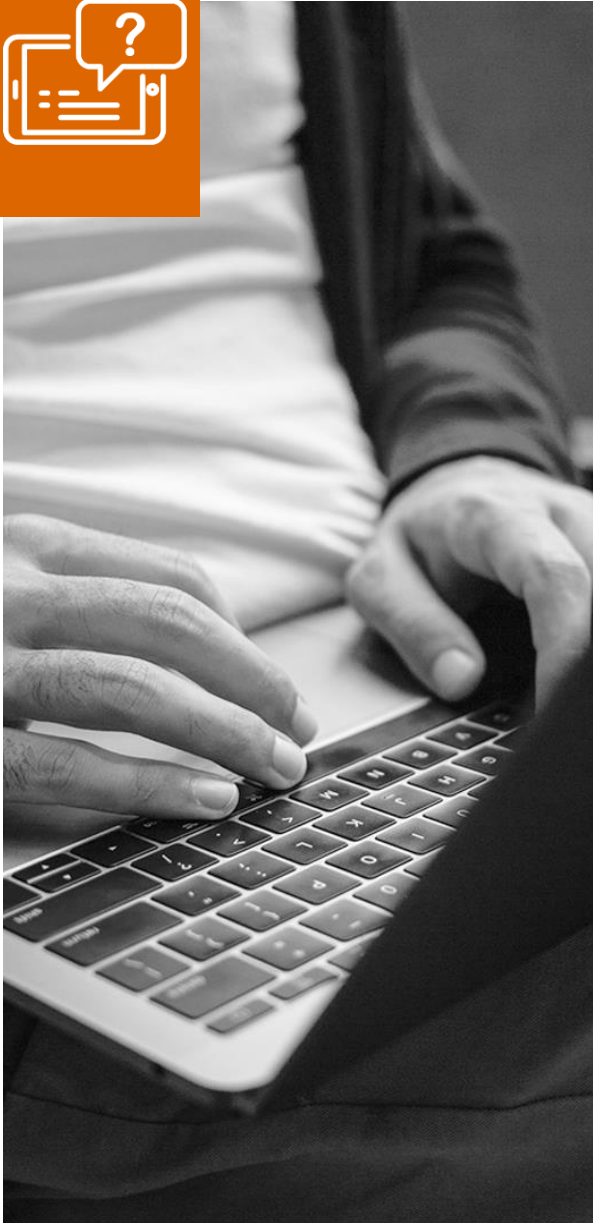
NAVAJO WELLNESS COURT DEVELOPMENT



Peer Support Enhancement to any Court off or on reservation - Mentoring

- Veterans in tribal communities are resources
- Military culture – a unique bond exists between veterans
- 110 local Chapter veteran organizations in the Navajo Nation (AZ, NM, UT)
- Peers helping peers. Knowledge of values that make them soldiers and patriots





POLL QUESTION

Did you serve in the U.S. Armed forces?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No



▶ Veterans have:

1. Gone to boot camp or for officers “basic camp” - taught to withstand lack of sleep, taught how to survive and take care of each other, and most of all how to be leaders.
2. They have served either in a combat role or combat support. They have lost good friends or even soldiers under their charge that they can never forget.
3. They believe and understand that they protect Americans, protect Lady Justice and what she stands for in their willingness to lay down their lives
4. They all took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States
5. They have a different mentality, must always be ready to deploy and defend at a moments notice
6. Some have seen dead bodies, and /or saw death first hand.
7. For myself, I grew up with a Navajo Code Talker and a U.S. Army veteran from the Korean War, so I have secondary PTSD.
8. When I go to the Eastern Navajo Agency veterans meeting, they call me Ma’am and honor my rank, even though I was honorable discharged in 1998. It was hard for me to be a civilian.
9. Sometimes its hard for Veterans to live and work in a civilian work environment.
10. VA offers training for Core Competencies for Health Care Professionals Military Organization and Roles. <https://deploymentpsych.org/Military-Culture-Enhancing-Competence-Course-Description>



▶ WARRIOR TRADITION-DUTY HONOR

COUNTRY

- Native men and women served with uncommon valor and selflessness
- Example: Navajo Code Talkers, even before they could vote in state elections in NM
- Ke'yah – the Land, protecting the land and the people
- Women are warriors – Nonabah (“bah”) Akeh ha bah
- Multi-generational service within families
- <https://video.nhpbs.org/video/warrior-tradition-trailer-vgnjfi/>



▶ BARRIERS FOR ACCESSING VA BENEFITS

- Rural frontier areas of the Navajo Reservation
- Lack of Legal Counsel to fight denials in claims for service connected disabilities
- Don't want anything to do with the military...anymore
- Just don't know about "presumptive" eligibility or how to apply
- Forms, and more forms, no DD214, lost documents (i.e. burnt in the fire at the Personnel Center).
- "other than honorable", bad conduct or dishonorable discharges



▶ GETTING VETERANS TO SIGN UP

- Presumptive disabilities
- Surviving spouses
- Healthcare through VA medical centers / outpatient clinics
- Non healthcare benefits: disability compensation, voc rehab, education assistance, home loans, life insurance, burial/memorial benefits.
- Indian Country has the highest numbers of military serving and veterans who have served per capita than any other group in the United States



▶ OUTREACH IN NAVAJO NATION

*highest numbers of Navajo Veterans is in McKinley County (i.e. Eastern Navajo Agency, Gallup & Crownpoint, NM)

*City of Gallup, HUD VASH, Vet Center, VA Office of Tribal Government Relations, Navajo President's Office, Navajo Department of Behavioral Health Services, Navajo Alamo-To'Hajiilee Judicial District = "Military Support Group"

*Planning of "Operation Veteran Wellness", Veterans Summits in Gallup and Tsaile/Chinle Arizona, virtual runs, Veteran "Stand Downs" for the homeless



▶ PTSD

Every day, 22 Veterans commit suicide
Suicide by alcohol and drugs years later

That's too many!



OPERATION VETERAN WELLNESS

Benefits, Job & Health Fair and Gourd Dance



- 2016 -2020
- “MSG” Military Support Group (state, tribal and federal partners)
- One Saturday each year – benefits and gourd dancing
- Increase access for returning combat veterans in an off reservation community (Gallup, NM)
- Speakers: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Former Cabinet Secretary Jack Fox, NM Veterans Administration, Other tribal officials and leaders
- Over 200 people attended each year except this year due to pandemic



▶ NAVAJO VETERANS SUMMITS



Partnership with Navajo Veterans Administration & VA

- Chinle, Gallup from 2016 – 2019
- Military Support Group working with volunteers on the Gallup “Stand Down”
- Benefits and claims fair
- Traditional teaching



Strategic Planning for 32 Chapters in Eastern Navajo

- Helping local non-profit associations to develop a strategic plan
- Training for peer support
- Mental health first aid
- Identifying priorities: health access and education
- Grass roots to the core



Need	Goals	PROGRAM	Strategies & Activities	"If-Then" Statements/Theory of Change	Outcomes
All Veterans on/off reservation	Help reintegrate veterans into a healthy sober lifestyle successfully.	1. Life Skills curriculum for veterans and families 2. Community readiness assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify veterans through benefit fairs. 2. Conduct training for TBI & Suicide Prevention, Mental Health First Aid. 3. Incorporate PM program presentations that are culturally appropriate. Help veterans with coping skills, teach ceremonies, manage emotions, improve family relationships, communications skills, avoiding risk taking, harm reducing and etc. 4. Peacemaking Talking Circles. 5. Coordinate Educational sessions on families and PTSD. 6. Coordinate with VA families and Psychologist. 7. Group-CBT- Journaling 8. Chapter – Honoring Veterans 9. Community dinner – Bike Run 10. Breakfasts – Meet and Greets with other veterans 11. Spending more time with family 12. Retreat- emotional regulation, education about traditional healing for veterans. 12. Develop self help guide for veterans. 13. Connect with housing programs and shelters, - 14. Educate youth at High School Level about the traditional teachings of joining the military 15. Strengthen the Carl D. Hayden Traditional healing program with VA for veterans – (funding stream through Navajo Nation). For VA enrolled veterans. 16. Develop “orientation” materials for veterans and families – recorded virtual 	<p>If VJO coordinator coordinates a prevention program for veterans and families then there is participation and engagement will be identified.</p> <p>If veterans and families can be identified then life skills can be implemented.</p> <p>If life skill is implemented you will see a healthy and functioning veteran and family.</p>	<p>Short Term: Program participation sobriety increased skills in emotional regulation and family participation.</p> <p>Long Term: Sobriety more than 30 days Maintenance of successful relationship Regain self-respect and communication</p>



<p>Services for veterans who are justice involved</p>	<p>Heal the person Reduce or prevent recidivism in justice involved activities Enhance family stability Help veteran reintegrate into the community</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify veterans work with probation, parole, corrections, courts, shelters, VA, NMDVS, VSO 2. Conduct social and family summary/assessment for service needs 3. Develop Case Management Plan 4. Develop MOU with appropriate stable 5. Incorporate PM program in interventions. 	<p>If the VJO coordinator does outreach then veterans will be located. If veterans are located then be assessed for needs then they will receive services. If the vet received services, then they will be less likely to commit offenses against self, family, and community</p>	<p>Short Term Increase knowledge of resource and services Support and benefits Increase knowledge of K'e Increase knowledge of how to seek help Educate how to upgrade discharge</p> <p>Long Term Increase skills in advocacy for self and regain self-respect</p> <p>Change attitude and behavior for healthy living.</p>
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TREATMENT ACCESS

Navajo Area Indian Health Services, or any I.H.S. and the Veterans Affairs MOU



VA Veterans Health Administration MOU

- Reimbursement for Direct Health Care Services to AI/AN Veterans in 77 I.H.S. facilities to 2022
- Reimbursement of \$75.5 million for 9,400 VHA enrolled AI/AN veterans.
- 2017 – VA reimbursed I.H.S. and the THPs (Tribal Health Programs) \$17 million
- In 2016, the project met with key leadership at the Navajo I.H.S. mental health program to develop better access for Navajo Veterans
- “Military” culturally appropriate care is needed
- Self care (App for PTSD)
- Training – “Peer support” use of hogans, etc.



▶ RESILIENCE AND THE FUTURE

Goal is to address the Women's Veterans issues in Indian Country

- PTSD
- Access for female directed care and information
- More peer support esp re Sexual Assault and sexual harassment
- Culturally appropriate healing – sweat lodges and “gourd dancing” ceremonies for women (not just the men)



▶ RECOMMENDATIONS

Contact on and off reservation courts and offer your services to develop military culturally appropriate care. Connect with your local VA Veterans Justice Outreach coordinator and wellness court coordinator

Contact your local I.H.S. and 638 health programs to develop relationships for mental health prevention, volunteer to do a summit, get involved with your Female Veteran groups

Contact VA Office of Tribal Government Relations and have a benefits fair even if its virtual

Need Legal teams to help these Native veterans access their benefits- Federal and state Bars

Find your local veteran organization (tribal, non profit). Offer to help them by listening and listening. They are great advocates.





Contact Information

Regina Begay-Roanhorse

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EVALUATIONS

Please remember to fill out the workshop evaluation.

Workshop Information:
Tuesday, September 29, 2020
11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

B4: Navajo Veterans Justice Outreach Program-Wellness
Court





THANK YOU!

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