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Veterans Resources at Counseling Centers

CCAPS Newsletter
June 2010

Following up on Terry Keane's presentation on PTSD, CCAPS featured speaker in Boston, the newsletter team would like to hear what counseling centers around the country are doing to work with veterans. We received these two good submissions from CCAPS members. If you have questions about their programs please contact them for more information. Thank you Jane and Mark!

From Jane Bost at University of Texas Austin

Here are several things that we're doing here at UT Austin:

The university has created a Veteran Services Committee, coordinated by the Registrar's Office. Key stakeholders such as the Counseling and Mental Health Center, Dean of Students Office, Student Financial Aid Services, and others. The purpose of the committee is to share information and ideas about how to meet the needs of student veterans and to increase collaboration among these university departments.

The counseling center has developed specific web content for student veterans <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/veterans.html> This includes information on making the transition from soldier to student as well as helpful information for faculty and staff in working with student veterans.

The most recent development has been the creation of a research-practice team consisting of the Austin VA, the Counseling Psychology Department (a professor who has been doing research on veterans), the Counseling and Mental Health Center, the Dean of Students and the Student Affairs Assessment Coordinator. While early in the process, this group plans to collaborate on an upcoming needs assessment of student veterans as well as possible training of key university faculty and staff around student veteran issues.

Jane Morgan Bost, Ph.D.
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From Mark Matuszewski at Northern Illinois University

I'm writing to share what we are doing to work with veterans at NIU. Last year, we identified counseling center staff with an interest and/or experience in working with veterans or trauma. We then partnered with our peers in Health Enhancement, Health Services, and Recreational Services to develop a script and conduct focus groups to both listen to and obtain information from veterans, including a "women only" veteran focus group. We are currently summarizing this data. We also met with our very active, NIU Veterans' Club several times, introducing ourselves, asking questions, and providing information about our services. At the same time, we have been contacting and learning about various local/community resources, such as the Vet Center, Vet. Service Commission, vet support groups, and private therapists who can provide long term treatment for trauma. 2009-2010 has been a year of

What is this?

gathering information and assessing needs.

Toward the middle of this last semester, a mandate through the governor of Illinois has been met, the hiring of a Veteran Services Coordinator for all NIU students. We are having this individual come to a staff meeting in two weeks to see how we can partner and work together. In the meantime, we have increased the number of veterans seen in our walk-in clinic, and we have either provided them services directly or referred them to providers locally who can better meet their needs. Based in communication and placing ourselves in the public eye, we have increased our accessibility for veterans. It is one of our counseling center priorities for the next year to offer a group treatment experience for veterans, and we will continue to look at our research and talk with our peers and associates on campus to figure out what this should look like. According to several Amvets Members, NIU has more veteran students, 600-800, than any other school in Illinois. We have lots of work to do, but it is exciting! 2010-2011 is the year of developing programming.

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