

Recognizing Re-Entry Issues and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Financial aid administrators wear many hats their profession, but we need to add one more: champion of our veteran students.

Many returning veterans experience some type of re-entry challenges to civilian life, and consequently life on campus or in higher education. The challenges of re-entry could be as simple as those challenges most students face getting adjusted to college life, or could be as severe as a condition known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

Administration of Title IV funding and other financial aid requires that financial aid offices delve into issues that impact a family or individual's financial status. At some schools, over 90% of students come through the financial aid office at some point. It is important therefore, that financial aid offices have some preparation in recognizing the possible re-entry issues our veterans face. Moreover, it is important that they have some type of plan to make sure that the veteran student is aware of campus resources or departments that harness expertise on veteran's issues.

Although the symptoms of re-entry issues can be vague, the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder are more specific and include, but are not limited to the following symptom:

- 1) Loss of interest in activities or life in general
- 2) Emotional numbness, /detached
- 3) Irritability/outbursts of anger
- 4) Feelings of mistrust
- 5) Feelings of alienation
- 6) Easily startled
- 7) Spacey stare

In short, coordinate with your student services office or veterans affairs office as to a systemic approach to handling veteran students who might need additional resources.

Success in dealing with PTSD is more likely when it has been managed at earlier stages. Veteran students may) face many challenges as they enter higher education. As stewards of access, lets make sure our financial aid offices are prepared to assist our diverse demographic.

Resources:

*VA Health Benefits Service Center 1-877-222-VETS

*<http://www.vba.gov/VBA/>

*North Carolina Department of Administration-Veteran Affairs (919) 807-4250
Ncdva.aso@doa.nc.gov

North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs
1315 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1315