

## How YOU can help

There are various types of support that students veterans need to be successful.

*Here's how you can help:*

### Peer Support

- Visit the Veterans Resource Center (AC 116)
- Encourage participation in the Student Veterans Club on campus.

### Transitional Support

- Encourage student veterans to visit the Veterans Resource Center to interact with fellow veterans.
- Refer students to Andrea Anaya in admissions and records for G.I. Bill® benefit questions
- Create leadership and volunteer opportunities.
- Refer students to admissions and records if they have a military transcript for transfer credit questions.
- When students show signs of physical or mental stress, refer to the VRC (AC 116)

### Provide Academic Support

- Recognize that financial aid and veteran benefits are different. Refer students to veterans counselor for academic advice.
- Consider adding a veteran friendly comment on syllabus.
- Allow flexibility for military obligations or VA appointments.
- Become familiar with veterans services located on campus.

## Contact Information

### Veterans Resource Center

Room AC 116

**Rachel Vallejo**, Program Technician

Phone: 559-791-2222

Email: [pcvetcenter@portervillecollege.edu](mailto:pcvetcenter@portervillecollege.edu)

### Veterans Academic Counseling

Room AC 116

**Maria Roman**, VA Counselor

Phone: 559-791-2222

Email: [mroman@portervillecollege.edu](mailto:mroman@portervillecollege.edu)

### Veteran Education Benefits

Room AC 112 (Admissions & Records)

**Andrea Anaya**, VA Certifying Official

Phone: 559-791-2402

Email: [aanaya@portervillecollege.edu](mailto:aanaya@portervillecollege.edu)

### Enrollment Services

**Erin Cruz**, Director of Enrollment

Phone: 559-791-2332

Email: [ecruz@portervillecollege.edu](mailto:ecruz@portervillecollege.edu)



## Supporting Student Veterans



## A Guide for Staff and Faculty



## What you Need to Know About Student Veterans

*The number of student veterans and military dependents on college campuses has been increasing due to the high numbers of troops returning from deployment, high unemployment rates among young veterans and down-sizing of the military.*

- There have been over 2 million American service members deployed to a war zone in the past 10+ years.
- 1/3 have served multiple tours in a war zone
- 20,000 have been deployed into war more than FIVE times.
- The suicide rate among college-aged veterans is estimated to be 4 times higher than civilian peers.
- Student veterans tend to be older than their classmates; most are in the 24-29 age bracket.
- Student veterans' strengths include being highly motivated, prepared, attentive, respectful, organized and disciplined.
- Student veterans may be less tolerant of their classmates in regards to a lack of respect toward the instructor, class interruptions, or perceived lack of focus in class.
- The shift from military life to school can be a culture shock. This can be frustrating for most student veterans, even more so for veterans struggling with physical or mental health issues.

## Barriers to Academic Success

*Student veterans may be experiencing issues related to military services that may impact performance in school. **Below are possible barriers to academic success.***

- Hearing may be impaired. There are high rates of tinnitus (*ringing in the ears*) and hearing loss among veterans.
- Eyes may be sensitive to light, become easily tired making it hard to focus on lectures and writing on the board.
- Chronic pain, including frequent headaches, difficulty sitting for long periods, and campus mobility issues.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (*PTSD*) symptoms include re-experiencing, avoidance, hyper-arousal, anxiety.
- Traumatic Brain Injury (*TBI*) can cause a variety of cognitive difficulties depending on the extent of the injury.
- VA medical appointments are not flexible, often short notice and far away and this may effect attendance.

*Student veterans may not choose to seek help for physical/mental concerns or identify themselves as veterans. Some possible barriers to care include:*

- Psychological-seeking help is not consistent with warrior values. Specific issues, like PTSD could cause avoidance.
- Stigma attached with seeking help.
- Too many obligations and limited time.

## Getting to Know a Student Veteran

*Student veterans appreciate a friendly dialogue with staff and faculty.*

***Here are some appropriate ways to start a friendly dialogue to get to know a student veteran:***

### ASK:

- What attracted you to Porterville?
- What branch of the service were you in?
- What was your MOS (*military occupation specialty*); or job in the military?
- Are you still serving in the guard or reserves?
- What did you like best about your service?
- What do you like best about being in school?
- What do you find most challenging?

### DON'T ASK:

- Did you ever kill someone?
- Was it hot over there?
- Were you scared?
- Openly in a class-who's a veteran?
- What was it like over there?
- Did you see dead people?
- What was the worst thing that happened to you over there?
- Do you have PTSD?

