



# **ECHO IDAHO:** **Veteran Care for Substance Use Disorders**

## **VA Services & Veterans Court**

### **7/23/24**

**Sarah Kearney, LCSW, Military 2VA Program Manager**

**Nikole Watkins, LCSW, ACADC, Military 2VA Program Coordinator**

**Boise VA**

None of the planners or presenters for this educational activity have relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose with ineligible companies whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.

# VETERAN CARE FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS



July 23, 2024

**Sarah Kearney, LCSW**  
**Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator**  
**Post 9/11 M2VA Program Manager**

**Nikole Watkins, LCSW, ACADC**  
**Post-9/11 Military 2VA Program Coordinator**



# Learning Objectives

This training provides the following learning opportunities:

- Veterans Justice Outreach Program
- Assisting Justice Involved Veterans and Managing Stigma
- Veterans Treatment Courts
- 3 Pillars of VA
- Services available through VHA/Boise VA Health Care System

# Justice Involved Veterans – Veteran Treatment Courts



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**Sarah Kearney, LCSW**  
**Veterans Justice Outreach**  
**Coordinator**  
**Post 9/11 M2VA Program Manager**



# Overview of Justice Involved Veterans

Approximately 7-8% of the incarcerated population are Veterans

10-12% of OEF/OIF/OND (Iraq and Afghanistan) Veterans have interacted with the justice system since returning from deployment

Although overall percentage of incarcerated population who are veterans is decreasing, proportion who are OEF/OIF/OND has increased

Majority of incarcerated veterans received military discharges that were honorable or under honorable conditions, making them eligible for VA health care.

(Elbogen et al., 2012; Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008; Noonan & Mumola, 2007; Rieckhoff et al., 2012 )

# VA Response – Veterans Justice Programs

To **avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness** and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans have **timely access to VA Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder services** when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate.

## VJP Mission:

To partner with the criminal justice system to identify Veterans who would benefit from treatment as an alternative to incarceration. VJP will ensure access to exceptional care, tailored to individual needs, for justice-involved Veterans by linking each Veteran to VA and community services that will prevent homelessness, improve social and clinical outcomes and facilitate recovery and end Veterans' cyclical contact with the criminal justice system

## Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV; 2006)

Outreach to Veterans in state and federal prisons

## Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO; 2009)

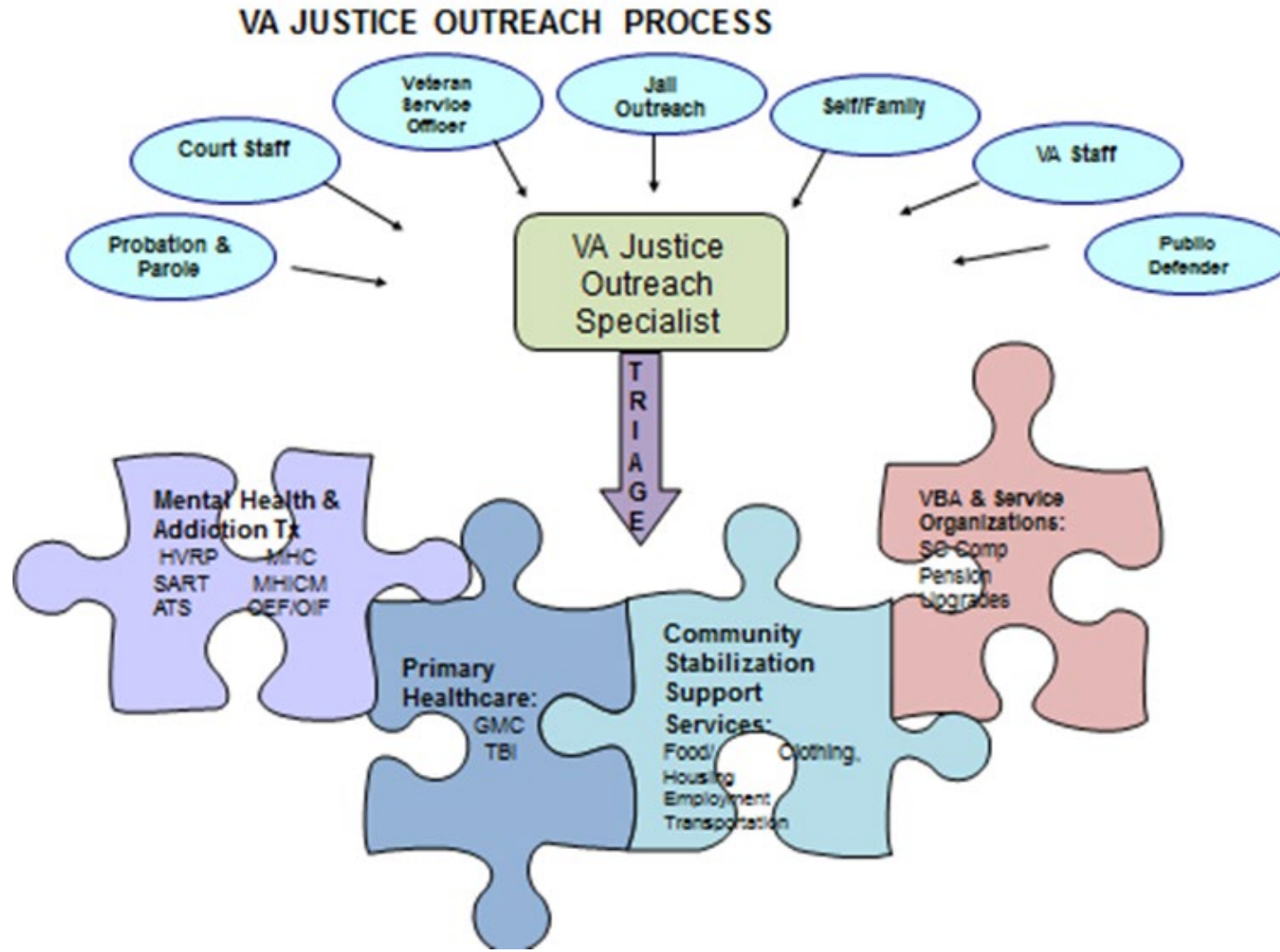
Outreach to Veterans in county jails

Liaison to Veterans Treatment Courts

Training of law enforcement and community legal partners



# VJO Outreach Process



# Justice Involved Veterans

**Over 50% have mental health and/or substance use problems**

## **Influential Factors:**

Trauma experienced in the military

Difficulty adjusting to civilian life

Relationship stress

## **Difficulty Adjusting to Civilian Life:**

Inability to find meaningful work

Miss structure and accountability of military life

## **Economic Disadvantages:**

Unable to adjust to economic reality

Illegal supplemental income sources.

Canada, E.K., & Peters, C. (2017). "They teach you how to weather the storm but they don't teach you dance in the rain:" Veterans' perspectives on the pathways to criminal justice involvement. *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology* 5 (3), 23-47



# Stigmatization of Justice Involved Individuals

- Anticipated stigma: Worry, distress or avoidance cause by anticipating that one is going to be stigmatized in certain places or situations. When avoidance becomes overly generalized or rigid it can block people from doing things they want or need to do, against their own self interests.
- Internalized stigma: People can absorb society's stigmatizing messages into their own self-concept and come to believe the messages are true of themselves. This can drain a person's hope, persistence, motivation and belief in oneself unless actively resisted.

# Why is Stigma Used?

- To maintain distance
- To express disapproval
- To feel safe
- To promote agendas
- To express fear

# Stigma Reduction Strategies

- Person first language
- Avoiding stigmatizing language (“dirty” UA vs. UA positive for substances)
- Avoiding documentation of criminal charges in medical record
- Continuing education
- Seek understanding, withhold judgment
- Treat others with dignity
- Refrain from making generalizations about circumstances, diagnoses, populations
- Do not personalize patient responses

# Trauma Informed and Effective Interventions

- Lower sounds, lighting if possible
- Active listening skills
- Softer / Slower voice / Care of tone / Avoid sarcasm
- Ask open ended questions? What – how –when, avoiding why
- Effective pauses
- Re-state – Recap what has been said
- Grounding – getting person into the present
- Do not overcrowd, give some space. Notice spatial differences such as standing and looking down to patient
- Keeping person informed of steps along the way

# Veteran Treatment Court Programs

- Ada County Veterans Court
  - 45 participants
- Canyon County Veterans Court
  - 35 participants
- Twin Falls County Veterans Court
  - 15 participants

# Veterans Justice Outreach Program – Boise VAMC

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

— President John F. Kennedy

**Sarah Kearney, LCSW**  
[sarah.kearney@va.gov](mailto:sarah.kearney@va.gov)  
(208) 971-7292

# VA Services



**July 23, 2024**  
**Services through VA**

**Nikole Watkins, LCSW, ACADC**  
**Post-9/11 Military 2VA Program Coordinator**



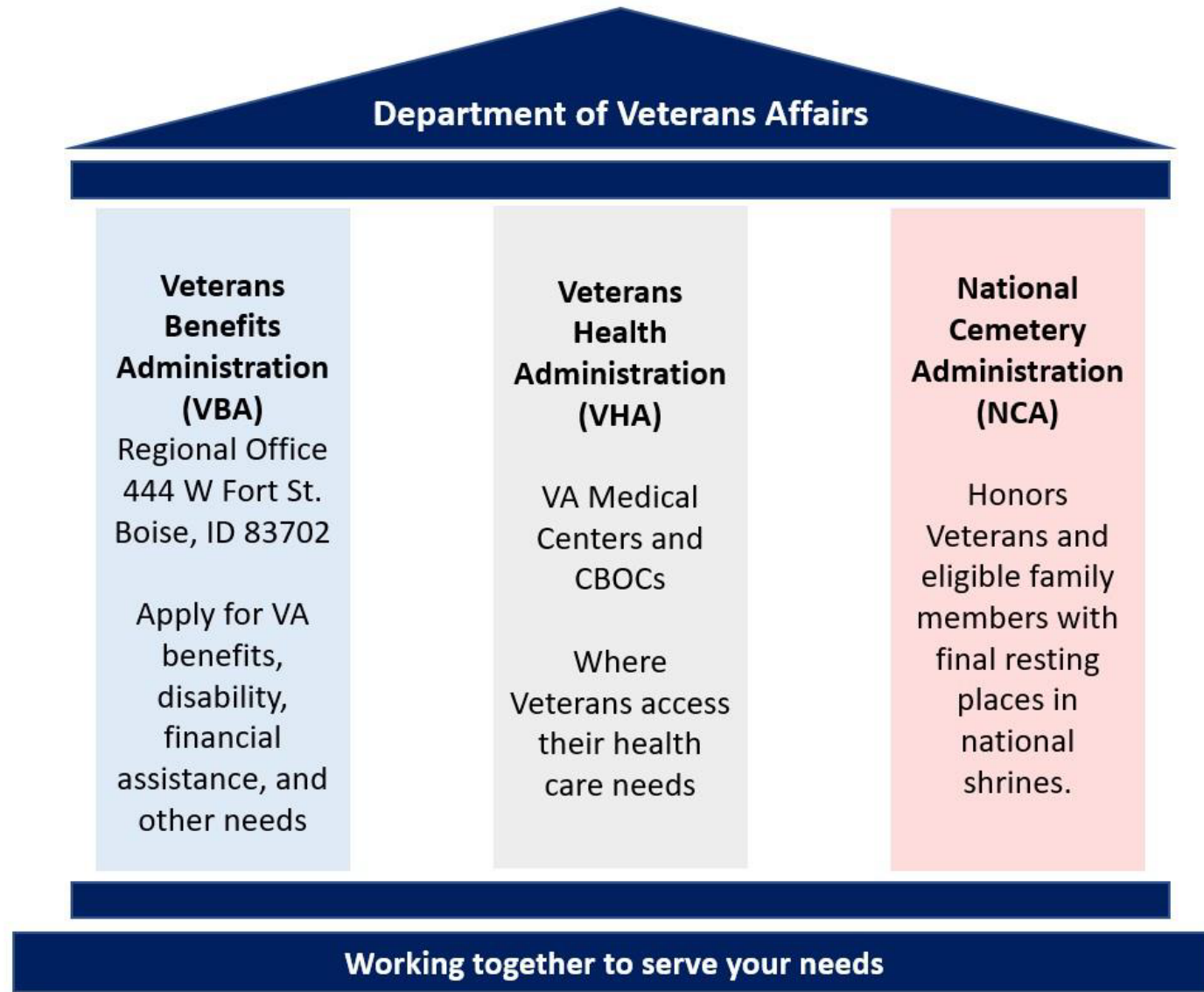
**Choose VA**

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# 3 Pillars of Department of Veterans Affairs





# VBA: Submitting a Service-Connected Disability Claim

## What is a Service-Connected Disability?

VA may award disability *compensation* for any injury, illness, or disease that occurred or was worsened by military service.

## Recommendations for submitting a disability claim:

**Veteran Service Officers** advocate for and assist Veterans with disability claims. There are several VSO options:

- Idaho Division of Veteran's Services at (208) 780-1380 ~ APPOINTMENT ONLY
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV) at (208) 429-2140 ~ WALK IN ONLY

\*\*Both are located at- 444 W. Fort St, Boise, ID 83702

# VHA: Who is a good referral?

- Ask the question “Have you ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces?”
  - Not all will consider themselves “Veterans”.
  - Are not required to have service-connected disability.
- Any branch of service:
  - Army
  - Navy
  - Air Force
  - Marines
  - Space Force
  - Coast Guard
  - Some National Guard and Reservists

# Access to Veterans Health Administration Health Care

Previous service members can enroll for healthcare:

- **In person** at Boise VAMC: 500 W. Fort St., Boise, ID 83702
- **Online** at [www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](http://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)
- **Call** 877-222-VETS (8387)
- **Mail** a signed VA Form 10-10EZ to:  
Health Eligibility Center  
2957 Clairmont Rd., Suite 200  
Atlanta, GA 30329

# Services Available through VHA



Primary Medical Care



Mental Health Care



Women's Healthcare



Specialty Care Services



Emergency Care Medicine



Veteran Centric Care (Culture Informed)



Trauma Informed Care



Exposure Informed Care



Whole Health Approach



Choose **VA**

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Specialty Programs

- **Who is at risk for experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?**

Everyone. Females between the ages of 18-35 and female veterans are at higher risk. (Veterans Health Administration, 2013).

- **What is VA doing about it?**

VA has an Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program with IPV Coordinators who link Veterans experiencing IPV to community resources, treatment providers, shelters.

- **What is Military Sexual Trauma (MST)?**

MST is any sexual assault or threatening sexual harassment that occurred during military service.

- **What is VA doing about it?**

VA has an MST Coordinator who assists Veterans who report experiencing MST to access care and ensure needs are met.

# Additional Services

- **Employment Resources Available:**

- Compensated Work Therapy: Recovery-Oriented (Voc-Rehab model)
- Transitional Work Experience: Additional CWT resource provides work restoration
- Job Club
- Veterans Readiness and Employment- Formerly Voc-Rehab, for Veterans 20% SC or higher

- **Post-9/11 Military 2VA**

For Veterans who have served after 9/11 this service provides direct connection to behavioral health, assistance accessing the above resources and case management.

- **LGBTQ+**
- **Mental Health Intensive Care Management (MHICM)**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Toxic Exposure Screening and the PACT Act**

# Key Points

- Veterans Justice Outreach Program assist Justice Involved Veterans get connected with services including Veterans Treatment Courts when appropriate
- Veterans Treatment Courts Overview
- Reducing stigma with Justice Involved Veterans
- Role of the 3 Administrations within Department of Veterans Affairs
- Services available and how to access these
- QUESTIONS?