



ASK THE QUESTIONS

1. Have you or a family member served in the military?
2. Do you have any children?

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS SERVICES

Support those who serve by:

- Building critical rapport with a reluctant military-veteran client.
- Understanding the impact of military stressors on mental health and substance use.
- Helping a family understand the emotional effects of deployment on the whole family.

WHY ASK THE QUESTIONS?

Mental health and substance use disorder services providers encounter veterans, service members and military family members, but they don't always know it. Veterans do not always identify themselves. They can be proud and stoic, and tend to be more comfortable helping others than asking for help themselves – even when they need it.

Military experience can impact an individual's mental health, habits, and relationships. Appropriate diagnosis and treatment depends on understanding a client's history – and can even make a life-or-death difference. The best way to ensure service members and veterans get the best possible care is to ASK!

Providers, as part of your client intake/ initial assessment, ask, “Have you or a family member ever served in the military? Do you have children?”

WHEN THE ANSWER IS “YES”

YOU MAY CONSIDER THANKING THEM FOR THEIR SERVICE.

You may also then be able to increase your understanding of their challenges and facilitate accurate diagnosis, treatment planning, and referrals by asking further questions.

This will also help you to:

- Build rapport and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Link to any needed military and veteran resources and referrals, including both VA and non-VA programs.
- Identify any mental health concerns that will eventually need further diagnostic work and will impact treatment planning and goals
- Assess for any past and present service-related stressors
- Explore deployment and reintegration challenges
- Identify individual and family strengths, supports, and resources
- Address perceived barriers to seeking support and services

#AskTheQuestionsOC is a campaign of the OC Veterans and Military Family Collaborative



ASK THE QUESTIONS

1. Have you or a family member served in the military?
2. Do you have any children?

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS SERVICES

Here are some questions that could be asked in the context of gathering information for more effective referrals and services.

Pay attention to non-verbal cues, and show respect, curiosity and empathy.



Be aware that responsiveness and effective follow-up are critical to building trust and rapport.

When did you/your family member serve? What service era? Which Branch?

- Build rapport with the client and demonstrate interest and cultural competency
- Identify family supports & resources as well as needs for support not yet met

In what ways may your need for services here be connected to your/your family member's military service?

- Identify any stressors on the child and family as well as any related behavioral, emotional, social & academic implications for the child
- Explore deployment and reintegration challenges

Are you/your family member enrolled at or connected to the VA or other veteran resources or organizations for support and services?

- Link to any needed military and veteran resources and benefits, including both VA and non-VA programs
- Identify family supports and resources as well as needs for support not yet met

What types of support are needed but not yet met?

- Link to any needed military and veteran resources and benefits, including both VA and non-VA programs
- Identify family supports & resources as well as needs for support not yet met

What reservations did you/your child have about coming in to seek support and assistance? Is there anything that might be a barrier to further seeking assistance?

- Address perceived barriers to the child or parent(s) in seeking support