

How to Build a Mentoring Program for your Veterans Treatment Court

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Mentor Coordinator**

Buffalo Veterans Treatment court



Mentor Professions

- Police
- School teachers
- Social workers
- Lawyers
- Businessmen
- Labor
- Students
- Religious
- Vet Center
- Reserves and National Guard
- Veteran Service organizations (e.g., Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, Disabled American Vets, etc.)





What is a Veterans Treatment Court?

A Hybrid, Drug and Mental Health Court.

It is a team effort Between the Veterans Court team members, the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, and Veteran Mentors.

Strikes proper balance between treating the justice-involved Veteran and protecting the community.

Approximately 466 VTCs
30,000 Veterans involved



Mentoring Models Vary

- All models share several key concepts :
 - -mentors are not Counselors
 - -Mentors are not Drill Sergeants
 - -maintain confidentiality
 - -most important BE A FRIEND/WAR BUDDY



What is a Veteran Mentor?

- A FRIEND, War Buddy, Advocate
- Acts as a resource to the veteran Defendant
- Helps veteran and their families navigate the VA ,Social Services and other Systems
- Served or is serving in the U.S. Military
- Is not a Counselor



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The Mentor Coordinator

- Essential to maintaining the success of the Veteran Mentor Program
 - DOCUMENT YOUR MENTOR PROGRAM
 - Recruit volunteer Veteran mentors
 - Assist in their retention
 - Organize and conduct their training
 - Supervise your mentors
 - Perform duties as assigned by Project Director and Judge
 - Sustain and evolve the Veteran Mentor Program
 - Run your “Not For- Profit” or other program





Start Small

- Find coordinator
- Get him/her Training
- Document your Mentor program
- Only need or 2 or 3 mentors to start
- Slowly build Resource Book – Use it!
- Be careful on Mental Health cases
- DON'T OVERWHELM MENTORS
-
- MAKE SURE YOUR MENTOR GUIDELINES ARE DOCUMENTED



Recruiting Mentors

WHERE

- VA Hospital Volunteer office
- State and local Veterans Office
- VSO's (VVA,AMVETS,VFW,etc)
- Local Colleges
- Community get the word out!!



TRAINING

- Psycharmor.com
- 8 online courses for mentors 12 -15 minutes each
- Mentor Bootcamps
- Justice for vets sends out team to train mentors
- Georgia has a boot camp scheduled in October
- Bring in VA ,Vets center and other organizaions

Mentor process KEEP IT SIMPLE

- ALL MENTORS ARE VETERAN ADVOCATES
- YOU ARE A RESOURCE FOR THE VET
- HELP VET AND FAMILY NAVIGATE SYSTEMS
- MAKE SURE VA HEALTHCARE AND ANY DISABILITY CLAIMS ARE IN PLACE
- 50% OF TIME YOU ARE JUST A FRIEND
- TRAINING IS IN HOW TO NAVIGATE SYSTEMS NOT IN "COUNSELING"
- SET UP TRAINING SESSIONS

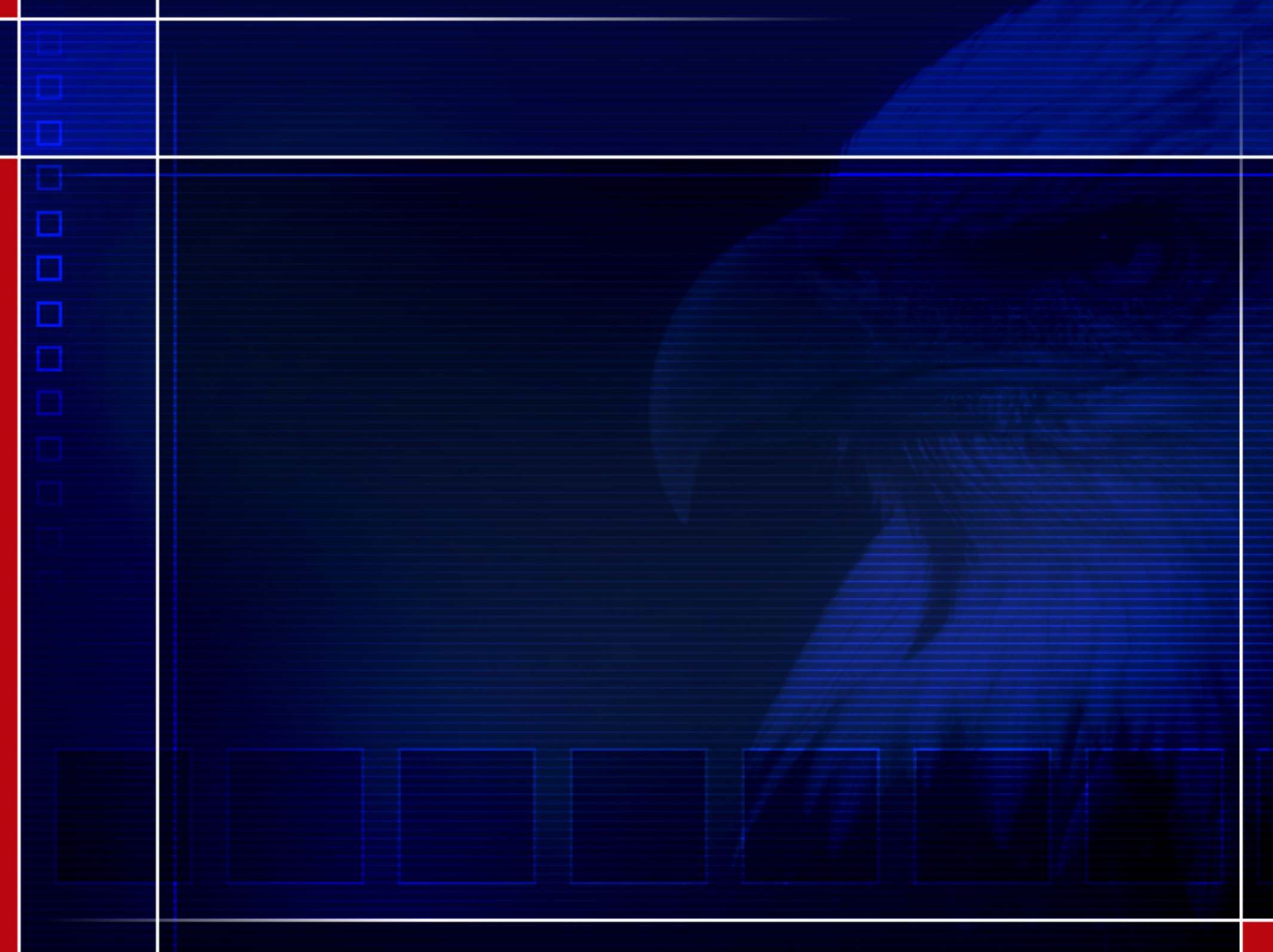
A MENTOR IS NOT

- -A COUNSELOR
- -A DRILL INSTRUCTOR
- -A PRIEST
- -ABANKER
- -A INTIMATE PARTNER
- -A LAWYER

Mentor Dos and Don'ts

Is it appropriate or inappropriate for a Mentor to do?"

- Act as a counselor.
- Escort participant to VA or other appointment.
- Eat lunch with participant.
- Have a beer with mentee



KEY COMPONENTS OF ANY MENTOR PROGRAM

- DOCUMENT YOUR MENTOR PROGRAM
- VETERANS ADVOCATES
- ACCREDITED SERVICE OFFICERS
- VETS CENTER
- COLLEGE VETERAN COORDINATORS
- WOMEN
- VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS
- DEVELOP RESOURCE LIST
- PEER ADVOCATES?
- RESERVE.NATIONAL GUARD,SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS (VVA,VFW,ETC)

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Mentor Program Mission

To ensure that every participating veteran receives the services they require by helping them navigate the system and to act as a mentor, advocate, and ally.

Program Goals

1. Help our fellow veterans receive the services they need to reach their full potential as productive members of society.
2. Help them navigate the court system, treatment system, VA system and other systems
3. Assess their needs and help them adjust back to civilian life.



Collaborating with Veteran Agencies

- US Department of Veteran Affairs
- Veteran Health Care Network
- Local Veterans Service Organizations
- Local Vet Centers
- Work with City/County/State Veterans Offices

Mentors' Duties & Responsibilities

- Attend Court scheduled sessions
- Participate in and lead mentoring sessions when assigned by the judge
- Be supportive and understanding of the difficulties the veteran clients are facing
- Assist the veteran clients as much as possible to resolve any concerns around the court or VA systems



Mentors' Duties & Responsibilities

- Assist the veteran clients on how to access and navigate the Veteran's Affairs System
- Be supportive and helpful to other veteran mentors
- Communicate and stay close to the court coordinator and judge





Matching Policy

- Branch of service
- Occupational specialty
- Combat experience
- Similar age/gender/ethnicity
- Specific skill of a mentor matched to the need of a mentee
- Previous sessions where the mentor and mentee were matched



The Mentoring Interview

- 50% JUST BONDING
- DOCUMENT YOUR INTERVIEW IN MENTOR LOG FOR OTHER MENTORS TO USE IN FUTURE INTERVIEWS
- USE YOUR RESOURCE BOOK OR OTHER MENTORS TO HELP VET IF PROBLEMS ARISE
- PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH COURT OR COUNSELING ARE REFERRED TO COURT/VA PERSONNEL

RESOURCE ENTRIES IMPORTANT

- Develop resource list as you go along
- Names, phone numbers, and specialties of all Mentors
- Community Partner Contacts (Social Services, Veterans Service Organizations, etc.)
- Legal Services Referral List
- Jobs for Vets
- Etc., Etc., Etc.
- Simple 2 pages Develop as you go along

501c3 “Not for Profit” status

- Donations come from many sources
- Donations are used to help Veterans
- Transportation bus passes
- Rent/mortgage payments
- Furniture
- Small appliances
- Travel
- ARE THERE OTHER WAYS TO COLLECT MONEY?



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Thank you for your Service
Good Luck with your Mentor Programs

