Wounded Warrior Careers
Intensive Career Transition Support Model

Presented by
The National Organization on Disability
It’s ability, not disability, that counts
NOD Wounded Warrior Experience

**Program Development**
- 2006 - 2007
- Focus Groups / Interviews with 200+ veterans and families
- Drafted AW2 Careers Manual
- MOU signed with U.S. Army

**Demonstration**
- 2008 – 2011
- 3 Sites
  - Dallas
  - Colorado Springs
  - Fayetteville
- 275 veterans and families
- Privately funded – $5,000,000

**Research**
- 2010 – 2012
- 125 in depth interviews with
  - Veterans and families
  - Service providers
  - Employers
- Funded by Institute for Economic Empowerment /NISH - $2,000,000

600+ Veterans and Families - 4+ Years

*It’s ability, not disability, that counts*
# Demonstrated Expertise in Disability and Disabled Veteran Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congressional</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (2011)</td>
<td>• Veteran seated with First Lady State of the Union 2010</td>
<td>• NOD national convening on supported employment for Veterans with PTS / TBI (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs (2009)</td>
<td>• Only NGO on</td>
<td>• NOD invited to present at National Brain Injury Employment Conference 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• House Committee on Veterans Affairs (2008)</td>
<td>• DoD Wounded Warrior Task Force (2010)</td>
<td>• Joint publication of <strong>America’s Best</strong> series with Give an Hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>• House NDA and NDAA (2010)</td>
<td>• DoD Employment Tiger Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Senator Bennet and over 70 Congressional supporters of legislation to apply lessons learned</td>
<td>• Invited to present at WWEC 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Broad engagement and awareness in DoD, VA, OPM, DoL, White House</td>
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</table>
Wounded Warrior Careers Outcomes

Education
- 53% of caseload has enrolled or participated
- Success in education (attending, successful, or in follow-on program): 93%
- Those not in school who are interested in education / training: 89%
- Participation in Volunteer programs: 21%
- Career assistance provided to 25% of spouses

Employment
- Veterans with moderate to high degree of confidence in ability to achieve employment or career goals: 80-90%
- Satisfaction with
  - Career goals: 93%
  - Job: 76% (21% very / 55% somewhat)
  - Pay: 67% (19% very / 48% somewhat)
- Tenure / employment retention
  - 75% have stayed in their job longer than 12 months
  - 71% have held only one job (vs. multiple)
- Percent of employment that includes benefits: 70-80%
- Average Hourly Wage: $15.58

63 % *
engaged in education, training, work or combination
Wounded Warrior Careers Sites

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### General Observations – Veterans & Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Process</th>
<th>Family Unit</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Transition is rough; both Veterans &amp; their families feel &quot;kicked to the curb&quot; by the system</td>
<td>• Impacts veteran whether or not the family is served</td>
<td>• Higher career expectations than previous generations of veterans</td>
<td>• Veterans don’t see themselves as disabled &amp; are reluctant to disclose disabilities or request accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May avoid the VA because they don't understand it</td>
<td>• PTS / TBI impact the family &amp; family situation impacts the ability of the veteran to pursue a career goal</td>
<td>• Anticipated continuing a career in the army</td>
<td>• Learning to live with a new disability – may not fully understand the effects disability has on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Struggle with complexity of systems &amp; processes</td>
<td>• Early planning around family needs can increase possibility of success</td>
<td>• Have family obligations</td>
<td>• Some veterans accept VA disability rating as a rating of capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need help navigating systems &amp; benefits</td>
<td>• Change in financial situation creates stress during and soon after discharge</td>
<td>• Lack understanding of civilian employment processes</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Veteran Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Service Life</th>
<th>Career / Work Expectations</th>
<th>Expectations of Employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Most haven’t planned a career past the military</td>
<td>• Be meaningful</td>
<td>• Veterans preference means careful consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many didn’t have clear view of other goals when they joined</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities to contribute and lead</td>
<td>• Understanding and patience with the transition process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be compensated fairly for their work</td>
<td>• Be flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide a clear career path and promotion potential</td>
<td>• Provide good supervision and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide training to learn new skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family obligations drive compensation expectations</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

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Veteran Occupational Interests

N = 81

No clearly defined answer to the question “What do Veterans want to do?”
PTS & TBI present unique challenges to successful transition

• Stigma attached to cognitive and psychological injuries
  – Self perception and self esteem are critical to success
  – Changes in ability post-injury influence career goals
• Transitioning and working effectively require support
  – Planning, decision-making, and staying on track require more attention
  – Decreased ability to pursue employment, network and interview effectively
  – Skill translation models often don’t apply
How PTS and TBI Influence Successful Career Transition

- Memory Problems
- Lack of focus / concentration
- Time management
- Disorganization
- Hyper - Arousal
  - On edge
  - Jumpiness
- Frustration
- Depression

- Anxiety / Panic Attacks
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Excessive Fatigue
- Chronic Pain
- Irritability
- Blurry / Double Vision
- Dizziness
- Light sensitivity
Veterans with serious disabilities require a different model of career transition

- Don’t fit the profile
  - of typical career changers
  - of other individuals with disabilities
- Usually don’t access supported employment services
- Often don’t see themselves as disabled and are reluctant to disclose disabilities or request accommodations
Veterans with serious disabilities typically don’t seek supported employment

- Don’t know what it is or how to find it
- Have negative stereotypes of the services and/or types of jobs available
- Aren’t interested in temporary employment and don’t see the connection to their career
- Don’t want to undergo another assessment
Supported Employment Service Providers find it difficult to serve Wounded Warriors

• Don’t have the expertise to serve the veteran population
• Lack a referral source for veterans
• Are willing to provide services, but need a way for the VA to reimburse them
The primary source for Veteran support is VA VRE, VRP and DoL

• Veterans don’t get the support they need for “invisible” disabilities
  – Change takes time
  – Caseloads are extremely high
  – Just now beginning to work with PTS and TBI
  – Lack outreach programs
  – Veterans often have to create their own development plans
  – Advocates and case workers often don’t refer to VR
Intensive Career Transition Support Model

Career Planning
- Assessment
- Goal Setting
- Barrier Identification
- Resource Planning
- Life Coaching

Career Preparation
- Education / Training
- Resource Navigation
- Referral Services
- Support
- Transitional Employment

Post-Placement Support
- Accommodations
- Job Coaching
- Employer Interface
- Advocacy
- Performance Support

Job Seeking Support
- Capabilities Translation
- Resume Development
- Introductions
- Accommodation Planning
- Job Development

Proven Model
Designed for Wounded Warriors
4 years of research and hands on experience
Evidence-based, builds on proven Individual Placement & Support model
Requires trained and knowledgeable mentors

It’s ability, not disability, that counts
Key Concepts

• Career transition vs. employment
Core Principles

Veteran-centered: based on the needs and goals of the veteran and their family

Proactive: requires outreach to engage the veteran and employers

Prolonged: continues past first employment to ensure success

Holistic: Serves the Veteran and their family

Results Focused: Maintains effective data tracking to ensure that progress is measured and goals are met

Collaborative: Works effectively with other services and resources as a force multiplier
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- Employer Interface
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- Performance Support

Referral

Proven Model
- Designed for Wounded Warriors
- 4 years of research and hands on experience
- Evidence-based, builds on proven Individual Placement & Support model

Trained Mentors
- Veteran-Centered
- Proactive
- Prolonged

It's ability, not disability, that counts
Career Action Plan

- A long-range, 5+ year, plan developed jointly by the Client and Career Specialist to guide the Client’s transition and accomplish their civilian career goals.
- Identifies and integrates resources from multiple agencies and services necessary to achieve goals
- Provides a process to translate goals, barriers, financial situation, health, family, education, training, and resources into a specific measurable plan to achieve the Client’s long term goals
- Establishes accountability and provides a tracking mechanism that can be used by the Career Specialist, Client, and NOD to follow-up and measure progress on a regular basis
- Used throughout the engagement provides structure, clarity, and accountability to the transition process
The Career Action Planning process provides . . .

• Foundation for managing the transition from military to education, training, and work
• High touch, career direction and planning
• A written plan - clearly stated tasks and accountabilities for Client, Career Specialist
• Interactive process between Client and Career Specialist
• Maintains focus on long term goal when things aren’t going well
• Identifies challenges/barriers and resources
## WWC Career Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Referral / Intake  | • Referral to WWC  
                         • Enrollment in WWC System                                                 |
| 2. Career / Skills Assessment | • Identify existing abilities, interests, & skills  
                         • Review potential career direction                                       |
| 3. Develop Goal Plan | • Long Range: 5-10  
                         • Mid-term: 3-5  
                         • Short-term: 1-2 years                                                   |
| 4. Identify Barriers / Resources | • Barriers are impediments to goal accomplishment  
                         • Resources help to overcome barriers                                      |
| 5. Design Career Road Map | • Guides the process – visual view of the effort  
                         • Team effort – client plus spouse                                          |
| 6. Develop Action Plan | • Immediate Goals / Tasks (≤1 year)                                       
                         • Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound (SMART) Goals (task-based) |
| 7. Execution and Measurement | • Regular review of Immediate Goals  
                         • Adjust as necessary as situation changes                                   |
Step 1. Referral Intake

- Referral from AW2 Advocate
- Initial Readiness Assessment
- Introduction to NOD / WWC Program Requirements
- Complete WWC Intake
- Enroll in WWC via ClientTrack
- Build rapport
Step 2. Career / Skills Assessment

• Assess Capabilities and Resources
• Identify experience overlap
• Jointly research potential careers based on assessment

• Assessments
  – Health
  – Readiness
  – Financial
  – Family Status
  – Education
  – Future Plans
  – Prior Career Experience
Step 3. Develop Goal Plan

• Identify Long-range goals (5-10 years)
• Identify Mid-term goals (3-5 years)
• Identify Short-term goals (1-2 years)
### Step 4. Identify Barriers / Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Resource</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, Skills, Abilities</td>
<td>Education / Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Financial Support / Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional / Motivational</td>
<td>Coaching / Behavioral Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Work Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Technology Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work / School</td>
<td>Disability Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Step 5. Design Career Road Map

#### Career Road Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Q1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not involved</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veteran</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Career Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veteran</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Education / Training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veteran</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Full-time work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veteran</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Nursing Degree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Career</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Career in Auto dealership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Internship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Soccer Coach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advance</td>
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</table>

- **It’s ability, not disability, that counts**
Step 6. Develop Action Plan

- Immediate Goals / Tasks (<=1 year)
- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound (SMART) Goals (task-based)
- Clear achievable steps – establishes accountability for success and independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>Career Action Plan Immediate Goals (This Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Meet with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Complete family budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 7. Execution and Measurement

- Maintains forward progress through regular review of Career Action Plan / Immediate Goals
- Identifies areas that must be readjusted.
- Allows Career Specialist to track progress, shift resources and plan if necessary.
- Adjust as necessary as situation changes
- Periodic review of full goal plan – adjust as necessary
The Career Action Planning process provides . . .

• Foundation for managing the transition from military to education, training, and work
• High touch, career direction and planning
• A written plan - clearly stated tasks and accountabilities for Client, Career Specialist
• Interactive process between Client and Career Specialist
• Maintains focus on long term goal when things aren’t going well
• Identifies challenges/barriers and resources
What’s Different . . .

• Identifies and connects client with skilled resources and tools to succeed with disABILITY
• Career Action Plan is action oriented, detailed, and a working document
• CAP translates long-range goals into concrete, specific tasks (near term SMART objectives)
• Progress is measurement based
• Provides client and career specialist with a common tool to manage the process
Intensive Career Transition Support Model

**Career Planning**
- Assessment
- Goal Setting
- Barrier Identification
- Resource Planning
- Life Coaching

**Career Preparation**
- Education / Training
- Resource Navigation
- Referral Services
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**Job Seeking Support**
- Capabilities Translation
- Resume Development
- Introductions
- Accommodation Planning
- Job Development

**Post-Placement Support**
- Accommodations
- Job Coaching
- Employer Interface
- Advocacy
- Performance Support

**Focus is on Career Path**
- Assistance with GI Bill / VR&E resources
- Connection to disability resources at school
- Transitional employment support to learn new work skills
- Helps break down barriers to career
- Responsive to “crises” keep veteran on track
- Flexible support funds

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Referral
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