

The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white dots. Overlaid on this are several circular elements: a large scale on the left with markings from 140 to 260, and several smaller circles with dashed lines and arrows, suggesting a process or cycle. The text is centered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

VETERAN FAMILY FOCUS

VETERAN FAMILY

- Generally defined as a family with a parent, child, or sibling who served as an active duty service member or in the Guard or Reserves (NCTSN.org)
- Extended family may include caregivers, friends, community members, and other service members
- Command sponsored family members are referred to as “military dependents”

VETERAN FAMILY

- Service members may be reunited with waiting family and/or reorganized families involving extended relatives
- Families extended or reorganized due to divorce and service member remarries
- Caregivers can be considered extended family if member has experienced a disabling injury

VETERAN FAMILY

- The new family may have no familiarity with family life and will be experiencing the aftermaths of service for the first time
- The veteran family may have lost a parent/spouse to combat or suicide
- Veteran families who lack adequate support during transition may find themselves in unfavorable situations as they try to readjust and cope with challenges

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE: FAMILY

- A process that begins well before a service member and family leaves the military and lasts long after becoming a civilian
- After service member is discharged/retires the veteran and family adjust anew to civilian and occupational life
- Military life teaches families to be adaptive and resilient – attributes that persist during adjustment to civilian life

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE: FAMILY

- Physical/Cognitive Wounds of War
 - TBI or behavioral changes associated with PTSD can overwhelm families despite their strength and resiliency
 - Can lead to impaired parenting and extra caretaking for family members
- Veteran may also be coping with substance (Rx, Alcohol, Nicotine)
- Substance coping, PTSD, and depression are all linked to elevated risk for suicide

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE: FAMILY

- Recent data suggests military-connected youth may be at heightened risk for substance abuse, and risk of harassment (physical and non-physical) at school
- Spouses of disabled veterans may feel more isolated and helpless and be at risk of depression and anxiety
- Parents of disabled veterans may struggle to find needed help, sometimes having to take charge of rearing their grandchildren

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE: FAMILY

- Obstacles During Transition (NCTSN.org; Pedlar et al, 2019)
 - Feeling under appreciated by the broader community
 - A shift in identity
 - Unemployment or underemployment
 - Relationship and family problems
 - Physical or mental health problems, or suicide
 - Loss of vital connections in the military community (healthcare, childcare, educational programs, recreation, safety of community, etc.)

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE: FAMILY

- **Obstacles: Healthcare**
 - Veteran may have access to VA services, but families will probably seek healthcare, mental healthcare from community or private providers who may have little knowledge or experience addressing the needs of the veteran family
 - Working with the family should involve a more holistic, complete framework to providing care; understanding what every member of the family experiences during transition (Keeling et al, 2019)
 - Resources for Exceptional Family Member (EFM)

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE: FAMILY

- In general, most families are able to cope with challenges using community support
- Families who experience greater stress levels and additional challenges will require added support through services established to assist families
- The VA offers resources and connections that support behavioral health providers who are working with veterans and families
 - Community Provider Toolkit– Serving Veterans Through Partnership

ASSESSING VETERAN AND FAMILIES

- The Department of Veteran Affairs emphasizes that “military service can be a significant, if not central, piece of one’s background”
- As a provider, it is imperative to include questions about military service in the behavioral health screening, not only for the veteran, but the family as well

ASSESSING VETERAN AND FAMILY: KEY QUESTIONS

- Questions that can shed light on veteran's and family members current life: (NCTSN.org; MVFQ)
 - Do you have a family member who has served in the military?
 - Have you ever served in the military?
 - What dates did you serve and when did you separate from the military?
 - What branch and rank were you?
 - What job did you have when you were serving?

KEY QUESTIONS CONT.

- Were you ever deployed?
- Did you ever serve in a combat theater?
- Are there other things you would like to say about your military service?

KEY QUESTIONS CONT.

- Follow up questions concerning spouse and children helps the provider gain a deeper understanding of the veteran's family context:
 - To what degree did the parents deployment distress the children in question?
 - To what degree has the child demonstrated changes or difficulties in behavior, emotional responses, or academic performance?

KEY QUESTIONS CONT.

- Follow up questions:
 - If a parent was injured during combat, to what degree has the injury or treatment made the parent less available to the child or interfered with the parent's ability to care for the child?
 - To what degree has the parent's PTSD, if present, caused distress for the child?

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS

- It is important veteran families and providers are aware that there is help and there are solutions to the difficulties of transition
- Desired programs for families in transition include information on practical skills, support, and parenting programs
- Evidenced-based Treatments and tools are available for families struggling with PTSD, TBI, and substance use through the VA and community agencies
- Community interventions that can build resilience in the veteran family to reduce the risks of negative outcomes in transition

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- The most significant transition challenges identified by veterans, active duty service members, Guard and Reserve members, and military dependents (Zoli et al, 2015)
 - Navigating Veterans Affairs (VA) programs, benefits, and services (60%)
 - Finding a job (55%)
 - Addressing financial challenges (40%)
 - Applying military-learned skills to civilian life (39%)

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Many programs and organizations provide resources for transitioning service members and their families
- Available assistance begins before the service member and family leave the military and other programs carry on into the civilian sector
- There are over 40 thousand Veteran Service Organizations working to empower veterans and their families across the country

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Here are a few comprehensive and well-organized programs and resources that may be helpful as the veteran and their families navigate the military to civilian transition:
 - Transition GPS (Goals, Plans, Success) is designed to build skills that allow service member (and spouse) “depart career ready”
 - Veterans Affairs (VA) offers a comprehensive list of benefits available to service members and their families. The VA also offers Native specific programs
 - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) connects veterans with meaningful employment and resources for families to assist in successful transition

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Programs and Resources:
 - Military One Source offers an inclusive list of transition assistance resources for services members and spouses
 - Military-Transition.org helps veterans, spouses, and employers better understand and prepare for the military to civilian transition process and civilian employment
 - Tribal specific VA programs may be available in your communities

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Employment and Education:
 - MySECO is a DoD Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program that provides education and career guidance for all stages of career progression
 - MySTep (Military Spouse Transition Program) helps military spouses to plan, prepare and be ready for the life after transition to the civilian sector
 - G.I.Bill Transfers allows the veteran to transfer education funds to the spouse or child, however the request must be made before leaving active service

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Military Child (learningliftoff.com): Being a military child comes with challenges, but there are also many advantages. They may be more mature than their counterparts, and the opportunity to see the world often gives them heightened appreciation for diversity
- Frequent moves are an inevitable part of being a military child and with this come adventures, and a unique sense of identity
- With the advent of the internet and online classes, education is one sacrifice military children do not need to make

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Here are a few of the many benefits that come with being a military kid:
 - Language Proficiency
 - Unparalleled Adventure
 - Flexibility
 - Maturity and Resilience
 - Social Skills
 - Unique Community
 - Inclination Towards Service
 - Educational Stability and Scholarship

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Military Child:
 - Military One Source
 - Scouts BSA
 - JROTC
 - Arts programs
 - Youth sports
 - Boys and Girls Clubs
 - Church groups
 - Drug Education for Youth
 - YMCA
 - Navy Marine Corp Relief Society
 - Air Force Aid
 - Camp Counselors
 - Youth mentor
 - Tribal specific youth programs