

Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals

Module 1: Self-Awareness and Introduction to Military Ethos Transcript

Page 7 – Module Introduction

Dr. Watson: Welcome to “Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals.” Hi, I’m Dr. Patricia Watson with the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dr. Brim: Hi, I’m Dr. William Brim, with the Department of Defense’s Center for Deployment Psychology.

Dr. Watson: This course is jointly sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), who created this course to help you better serve Service members, Veterans, and their families by gaining an understanding of the role that military culture may play in their lives.

Dr. Brim: This course is comprised of four modules:

- Self-Awareness and Introduction to Military Ethos
- Military Organization and Roles
- Stressors and Their Impact, and
- Treatment Resources and Tools

Dr. Watson: We tried to design the course so that you would learn about the many elements of military culture, but more importantly, about the unique impact that military service has on each of your patients’ lives, well-being, and treatment. You’ll be introduced to the concept of military ethos, as well as some of the more tangible elements associated with military service, such as customs, organization, and roles. You’ll review common stressors experienced by Service members and their families, as well as the resources that promote adjustment to these common challenges. Finally, you’ll be given information on how to apply military cultural knowledge to assessment and treatment planning.

Dr. Brim: This web-based course may be like many you have taken before, but we’ve tried to tailor it toward developing cultural competence in a few key ways:

First, you’ll hear directly from Service members, Veterans and their families about how military culture has impacted their lives and views of themselves and the world. These aren’t actors reading a script; they’re real people, expressing their own thoughts, emotions, and opinions. They’re not always perfectly articulate and their experiences may at times be difficult to listen to. We hope that as you listen to these interviews, you’ll gain a more personal understanding of how military culture influences people’s lives.

Second, we’ll be asking you to engage in a self-awareness exercise that focuses on your own knowledge and views about the military and about the underlying values related to military culture, such as selflessness, honor, and patriotism.

Third, you’ll periodically be given “cultural vital signs” and “culturally competent behaviors” as ways for you to begin to operationalize what culturally competent practice with Service members and Veterans looks like.

This is not a short course. While it will provide an introduction to military facts such as branch structures, organizations, and ranks, it will attempt to deliver a more complex understanding of:

- How military service shapes the self- and world-views of military members
- How and why these views are developed, fostered, and reinforced, and
- Why it is important for you to realize how these views compare with your own.

Dr. Watson: Military culture is heterogeneous, and there are as many experiences of military culture as there are military Service members, Veterans, and their families. Our goal is for you to feel inspired to actively engage with the content, think critically about your own views, and consider strategies to increase your knowledge of and empathy for this culture. We hope this course helps you to become a more culturally informed provider who will go on to make military members, Veterans, and their families feel more understood and respected.

Welcome to Module 1 of Military Culture for Healthcare Professionals, “Self-Awareness and Introduction to Military Ethos.”

Page 9 – In Their Own Words: Being in the Military

Bruce Capehart, MD, Veteran, U.S. Army Reserve, Medical Director for the OEF/OIF Program, VA Medical Center, Durham, NC

For me, I view military culture as one of commitment—commitment to a mission and commitment to those people around you to do things properly and to do them well and to always be prepared for what might happen next.

Matias Ferreira, Lance Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps

A lot of Americans will sit down, and we’ll all remember 9/11, and a lot of people will break down in tears; they will sit there and cry. And I don’t know why I just didn’t want to believe it. My feelings were just telling me something completely else. I saw everybody else crying and feeling sorrow for other people, but I just wanted to do something about it. And just as I saw myself being in a uniform and maybe not being able to enjoy my young teenhood life as everybody else was, going and getting drunk and having college parties and everything like that, I felt like I could help make a difference. I believe up to this day I did.

Nicole McBride, Technical Sergeant, U.S. Air Force

I love the fact that we belong to each other, having each other—like the loyalty behind the lines of standing up for your country.

Daniel Hernandez, Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps

Most people would say that the experience of somebody in the military is pride. I would go above and beyond that and say love. Everything that a leader does, everything that a follower does in the military, especially serving in combat—which has been consumed by this greater, little greater than a decade—is because of love. That’s the strongest emotional reaction that somebody has. You will run out and risk your life for somebody because of love.

Debbie Maraia, Military Family Member, U.S. Army

I’d say the biggest difference between someone in the military and someone out of the military is that they give up a lot of the, they give up a lot of the freedoms that they fight to protect. They give up a lot of the ability to speak freely about things that they do care passionately about, but they’re willing to go and fight to make sure that you have that right as a civilian. You know, they just really care about a cause that’s greater than themselves and having that safety and freedoms for their family as well.

Paul Carlin, Chief Petty Officer, U.S. Navy

I think the biggest strength in the military culture is the brotherhood, I mean regardless of what rank it is. You know, we deploy so much, we’re always together so much, and my job, it’s mostly small unit integrity, so

it's, you get a bond with people and it's like no other you know. You just stand by each other, stand behind each other all the time, so that's, that's what I think it is.

A. Scott Specht, Captain, U.S. Army, Nurse Anesthetist

For me, military culture is holding yourself to a higher standard and, you know, anything I do in this uniform represents not only me but my service, my country.... So you've got to be cognizant of those facts when you're doing anything that you're doing.

Corcynthia Williams, Military Family Member, Daughter (Father, U.S. Army-retired; Mother, AD U.S. Army; Spouse, U.S. Navy)

It's an honor to be able to dedicate your life or a portion of your life to give back to something that so many people have given their lives for. So I think with the military life, it's the honor, it's the tradition, it's sacrifice. I think it's sacrifice. I think it's beautiful to see all the people that have sacrificed so much, and not even just the service members, but the people that come around them.

Page 10 – Military Culture: The Importance of Competence

When you seek health care, you want your healthcare provider to understand your needs, your lifestyle, and your perspective. Service members, Veterans, and their families want that same understanding, the same kind of cultural competence.

Page 11 – The Importance of Cultural Competence: Meet Cpl Walters

Narrator: In this scenario, a Marine from the Wounded Warrior Battalion presents to a health care professional's office while on duty, wearing his civilian clothes. He has previously been instructed by his primary health care provider to wear his sneakers with his uniform because his boots were exacerbating a stress fracture he had sustained while deployed.

HCP: Good morning, Corporal Walters. Good to see you. Come on in. How are you doing today?

Marine: I'm fine, ma'am.

HCP: Really? 'Cause the last couple times we've seen each other, you don't seem fine. In fact, you seem like you're kind of down. Can we talk about that for a second?

Marine: Sure.

HCP: [Narrated internal thoughts] See! I knew he wasn't doing well. He's not even wearing his uniform. I think he's getting depressed. [Out loud] You know, Marines in the Wounded Warrior Battalion are still required to wear a uniform. So, why aren't you wearing yours?

Marine: Look, I just came to get my meds. All right? And I probably should get going.

HCP: I understand you just want your meds and you want to get going... (dialogue fades out)

Marine: [Narrated internal thoughts while HCP speaks in background] Right. You're going to ask me about my uniform? You don't know the first thing about the uniform!

Marine: [Out in the hallway after exiting therapy session, narrated internal thoughts] First they tell me to desecrate the uniform by wearing sneakers; then they tell me I'm depressed for not wearing a uniform. These people are idiots!

Narrator: The health care professional's assumption is that the Marine is angry with the Marine Corps and regrets his experience and sacrifice.

In truth, the Marine maintains the highest regard for the Marine Corps and has asked to be permitted to wear civilian clothes instead of his Marine uniform, rather than desecrate the sanctity of the uniform " by wearing sneakers.

How do you think the health care professional could have been more culturally aware in the way she asked the Marine about his uniform? One way would have been to say...

[Back to scene]

HCP: Sometimes people don't wear their uniform for various reasons. In my experience, some Marines don't want to wear it because they feel really depressed or angry. But some Marines honor the uniform so much that if they can't wear it correctly they'd prefer not to wear it at all. I'm curious about why you're not wearing it...

Marine: Well ma'am. I just don't feel like a Marine. Ever since I hurt my foot, I just feel beneath the uniform. Like I'm not worthy of it or something.

Narrator: This approach to questioning the Marine opens up a discussion with him about what it means to him NOT to wear the uniform and what feelings exist around that.

Page 14 – In Their Own Words: Culturally Competent Care

Daniel Hernandez, Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps

Yes, I have been to providers that didn't understand military culture. And I quickly changed providers.... One way a military provider could build a better rapport with a Service member is put them in that type of mentoring position by asking them questions about the military, asking them to help them with the terminology, teach them about the sarcasm, teach them about the closeness with that you obtain with sometimes a complete stranger. Teach them about, ask them to teach you about your or their experiences.

Robert Frame, Veteran, U.S. Army, VA OEF/OIF Returning Warrior Liaison

Don't tell me you understand because, quite frankly, you don't. You may empathize with me as a Veteran coming out of combat or hostile areas or even as somebody just retiring from the military after twenty or thirty years. But unless you've been there in my shoes, you don't really totally understand. But I would appreciate your empathy.

Alma Sanchez, Staff Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps

I think in some sort of way I really wish that everybody would get some kind of training as far as understanding more the Marine Corps, the military itself, you know, so they would know why we react or why we do certain things, you know, and why it does matter....They don't understand what we go through or they don't understand that, how important it is you know. There's some Marines that've been wounded one or two times and still have gone out there, back to fight the fight. And it's important. It's important to know that, you know, we're being taken care of just like the way we're taking care of the world you know when it comes to war.

Janie Thelin, Veteran, U.S. Navy, Medical Case Management Advisor for Wounded Warrior Battalion West

Don't pretend you do know. And tell them, you don't know, and tell them, "So tell me about your day. How does this work? What's it like to get up and go to muster every morning?" You have to understand that, and you have to ask the questions. You can't just pretend like you understand where they've been because they'll smell that. They know. They can spot someone who hasn't been there.

Corcynthia Williams, Military Family Member, Daughter (Father, U.S. Army-retired; Mother, AD U.S. Army; Spouse, U.S. Navy)

Some of the other experiences that we've had, the very few, where we've had bad—were just there was no understanding of what we were facing. So it was almost as if we were speaking foreign languages.... So trying to overcome, I guess, that communication difference were probably the only time that we had struggled would be because of that difference of understanding. And sometimes depending on the situation, it was just too difficult to try to take the time to teach them when you were going to them for help. There

were a couple times that we changed providers at that course just because it was frustrating because they didn't have an understanding of what we were experiencing or what we had experienced at that time.

Page 16 – In Their Own Words: Ethics of Conflicting Provider Roles

Adrian Evans, Lieutenant (Junior Grade), U.S. Navy, Social Worker

The main conflict there is between professional, even sometimes societal, beliefs and norms that clashes with the military that I can think of is privacy and the idea that what goes on in your life is your business. Because once you're in the military, your ability to do your job can cost somebody their life. And so the military and your chain of command and the people that are around the Service member to support the Service member need to know what's going on.

Anthony Arita, Commander, U.S. Navy, Clinical Neuropsychologist

On one hand, every provider will be as they have been trained, as they are accustomed to, working with the patient's best interest in mind. In addition to that, they're in a role of having to consult to the government, so they're dual hatted in this regard. And sometimes this poses some very awkward and some very difficult or challenging incompatibilities.

Dawn Herring, MSW, Marriage and Family Therapist, Camp Pendleton

Well, I would say it's really important that we are at least aware of our own biases in that and that it's important to be able to encourage them to do that which they feel is important to them. And if it is going back that we, if we are able to do that and support that, then we're a good fit for them. If we are not able to I think it's important to recognize that limitation and either seek consultation for that or to at least check that assumption and understand that that's our own bias. Because if it is our bias, it will come out in the treatment, and I think that can be harmful to them.

Page 18 – In Their Own Words: Importance of Assessment

Brandy Hellman, Captain, U.S. Army, Clinical Psychologist

I think that medical providers need to be aware that every soldier is unique, and even if they deployed, when you've seen three other soldiers walk in the door who's deployed, that each person is different and unique and they have their own story to tell.

Mervin William Bierman, Major (Retired), U.S. Air Force

One of my concerns is that Veterans are lumped as a large group whether that person has had 3 years in the National Guard or 30 years in a combat environment. The experiences are different. The stressors are different. The contributions are no less equal.

Robert Frame, Veteran, U.S. Army, VA OEF/OIF Returning Warrior Liaison

The best attribute that a provider can bring to the table is good listening, paying attention to what the warrior, what the service man or woman is saying, because most of the time our patients or clients will tell us what is going on.

Page 22 – In Their Own Words: Warrior Ethos

Mervin William Bierman, Major (Retired), U.S. Air Force

The term warrior ethos covers a wide range. Yes, I served some time in Vietnam. I served some time in Iraq, Kuwait. But the warrior ethos applies just as much to that person who's serving in Nebraska, that person who's serving on Honolulu, that person who's serving in Australia. It's not a location thing, it's a mindset. I'm here for a job, and my job is to defend the rights and freedoms of the people that I've identified with. That is my job. And if it's uncomfortable, inconvenient, that goes with the job. That's part of your warrior ethos. And this should not be restricted to just the trigger puller. It applies as well to the person on the flight

line loading the aircraft, the fueler fueling the tank, the support person loading the submarine. It applies to all of them.

Guy Haskins, Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps

It's almost, it's like an unspoken word or code within a war fighter. It's something that makes you or the war fighter himself almost have a pledge to things he defends himself, even to the unknown. Loyalty to those appointed above you, to yourself, to your country, and the fighting spirit.

Janie Thelin, Veteran, U.S. Navy, Medical Case Management Advisor for Wounded Warrior Battalion West

I think you have to have some sympathy and some empathy for what they've been through. And so I think you have to understand their culture and understand what they've been asked to do and understand that they have rules that they fight by. But because they're, the enemy doesn't necessarily fight by the same set of rules, then sometimes they have to act outside those rules and how much that affects them. So I think it's very important that you understand the military culture and that even though they're fighting a war, there's an honorable way to do that. And if they believe they have to act outside those rules, then they feel that that honor has been violated.

Page 21- Military Culture Defined, 1 of 3

Above the waterline are aspects of a culture that are explicit, visible, and easily taught. The surface culture is where behaviors, customs and courtesies and traditions are more easily seen. For the Military culture this area includes things such as the uniform and rank, the salute, the playing of the national anthem before commander's calls and movies, the P.O.W. Ceremony, the honoring of heroes, and the Change of Command Ceremony.

At the waterline is a transition zone, where the observer has to be more alert, the area where implicit understanding becomes talked about and where ethos is codified into creed. At this level of military culture are found the Service creeds, the core values, and the oath of office. Some of what identifies Service members and Veterans as belonging to the military culture are not readily apparent and exist below the waterline.

Below the surface is the hidden culture, the more enduring and powerful characteristics of the military culture, the beliefs, habits, values, assumptions, understandings, and judgments that affect the culture's world view. These intangible values and guiding ideals that are mostly acquired while in uniform and are often kept for life are referred to as the Military or Warrior Ethos. These are often things a member knows but cannot easily articulate. The hidden aspects of a culture are not taught directly.

Page 22 - In Their Own Words: Warrior Ethos

Mervin William Bierman, Major (Retired), U.S. Air Force

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Page 23 – Each Service Branch's Unique Ethos

Army

The Army and its training really does set you up for success in the civilian realm, in civilian life.

I had a really great recruiter. He made sure I was ready to go, he got me out running and you know the push-ups and the sit-ups, told me what to expect when I first get into basic, and he was very informative.

It was definitely worth the experience, coming and joining the Military to see what I've seen.

The fact that you're serving is rewarding in and of itself, the fact that you'll be working with people that are selfless in nature, that care about more than themselves is incredible.

I'm part of the force that makes our country safe, that provides us our freedoms, our liberties and everything that we have. So, there is definitely a lot of pride in it. I don't regret my decision for a second.

Navy

I grew up in a Navy family. My grandfather was in the Navy and all my uncles were in the Navy, so it just seemed right that being that I wanted to join the service that I'd join the Navy.

After high school, I decided that I didn't want to just go right to college, I figured I would join the Military and do something for my country and maybe get a little money for college on the side.

Talking with friends who are back home, it is actually pretty exciting because, you know, they've been in Texas the whole time and I've been in two years and I've seen eight different places.

What makes me proudest to serve my country is that not everybody does it; it is something that you have to choose to do.

I honestly have gotten a lot more than what I can measure, like in college courses, or in money, in a bank account. The life experiences I have gotten from the Navy and just the maturity that I think I have gotten from the Navy.

You really see how much you impact the Navy. It is definitely humbling.

Air Force

I would absolutely recommend Military Service to anybody that is graduating high school. It has probably been one of the greatest experiences of my life.

Being a pediatrician in the Air Force is, I think, a really neat experience. For me it is also a great chance to get to go fly as part of my job.

Today was one of our more typical days I would say, everyone is always doing training, everyone is always planning training, trying to stay a step ahead.

You get a lot of responsibility from a very early time and I really enjoy the challenge and I enjoy the chance to have that responsibility.

You can always learn something; you can always advance your career in a different way, so I plan on staying with the Air Force for a while.

Marine Corps

The biggest reason why I was drawn to the Marine Corps was because growing up I always liked a challenge and the Marine Corps was supposed to be the ultimate challenge for a person my age.

I first became interested in serving in the military, especially the Marine Corps, probably when I was five years old, there was no doubt about it.

The Marine Corps is a brotherhood, and that is what it really is, you know. There is a misconception, through movies and other stuff like that that the Marine Corps is this beast where you are going to come in and you are going to get yelled at all the time and it is just not that.

People say it is the most elite, that we are the best of the best, and I believe all that, but I also believe that anybody who wants it bad enough can do it. You need to want to do it.

Coast Guard

The Coast Guard is also a humanitarian agency in the sense that we provide assistance to Americans and others in distress here and abroad. For example, in 2005 we conducted search and rescue operations during hurricane Katrina.

I think my passion for the ocean drove me to join the Coast Guard. Whether it be boating or under the surface scuba diving, but just everything about it, it is pretty much my life.

I chose the Coast Guard for a particular reason and I knew what I was getting myself into and today I am very happy that I made that decision.

What makes me the most proud is seeing my mom's face light up when I tell her about my day, and looking at the pictures of all my experiences and just thinking back. It's like, wow, I was there, I did this, I did that. None of that would have been possible without the Coast Guard.

Page 25 - Warrior Ethos as a Subset of the Military Ethos

Service members and Veterans who present for healthcare may vary in their identification with each of these facets, depending on many factors. The interplay of their experiences in support, protector and combatant roles may be very complicated. Be aware of and ask about these facets, rather than making any assumptions about how an individual is integrating their roles and experiences. It is safer to assess than make an assumption; just because someone was in a support role in their respective Service doesn't mean that they didn't engage the enemy in a combat role and vice versa. There may also be issues related to shifting roles, where the individual doesn't feel their role is as meaningful, valued, or engaged in mission when not deployed. Never be afraid to ask.

Page 26 - Vignette - TSgt Rice

Technical Sergeant Rice had joined the Air Force just prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. She had wanted to serve her country but mainly felt like the military was a quick way to pay for her education and get on with a better life. She is currently a 3S, mission support personnel who works at the Military Personnel Flight on base. She is referred to you by her primary care provider because she has been more irritable at work. She is more easily angry and distracted than she was before her deployment.

TSgt Rice had mostly thought of her job in the military as a "nine-to-five kind of thing" until she volunteered to deploy as an individual augmentee on an assignment to Afghanistan. During her deployment, she worked with Army, Air Force, and Marine units as a convoy driver and was reminded of many of the reasons why she had reenlisted after the end of her first assignment and was shocked by the amazing and selfless things that so many of her peers were doing every day that never made the press back home. While she was deployed,

she felt an "overwhelming sense of camaraderie" and believed she had found her calling. She was recognized as NCO of the quarter and was awarded a Joint Service Achievement medal while deployed.

When TSgt Rice returned from deployment, she found herself becoming frustrated with her coworkers "who are like kids" and who "lack integrity." She didn't feel the same sense of camaraderie or mission focus that she had while deployed. Her supervisor, a master sergeant, has been giving her menial tasks to, as he says, "knock the chip off her shoulder." She is thinking of cross-training to another career field or maybe not reenlisting in a few months.

What questions do you think might be important to ask TSgt Rice to best understand her experience and situation?

Page 28 - In Their Own Words: On Different Roles

Matthew Steiner, Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps

And so I think that's what, and it's really important for healthcare providers to know that. There's a complete 180 from a young infantry Marine enlisted than an officer in the Air Force. That's a complete 180. Not to discredit anybody's service, but that it's just widely, you know, China to Canada. You know, even within the different branches of the military, there are different jobs you know. Some Marines might deploy and that, you know, never see combat. Not to discredit their service. Some Marines could be two tours of Fallujah or Afghanistan. My brother just got back from Afghanistan and, God bless him, he was a forward observer attached to the British Royal Marines so his first week in he was, he was hot. But there is a huge difference though, I can't stress that enough, among the different branches of service though. And what their jobs were while they were in.

Matthew Johnson, Construction Mechanic Chief (CMC), U.S. Navy

When I was in NM CV 5, which was my first command, the biggest thing we did is that we, I don't know if you remember when Castro unloaded his prisons in the ___, I worked that one, Gitmo Bay, and we took in all the refugees. And then there was a lot of atrocities going on in Haiti at that time—and I believe that the Clinton administration was ready to attack at that point and it didn't happen—and I went in as, actually they called it a DFT, but it was funny because it was live and hot and you were locked and loaded. But we went over there and we did humanitarian efforts. Haiti was probably the saddest place I've ever been in my life. We did, we seen a lot of things, we tried to build schools, we tried to build roads. I was actually part of a water well team. We built a couple wells, which actually caused a miniature civil war over the fresh water. But that was the humanitarian missions.

Bruce Capehart, MD, Veteran, U.S. Army, Medical Director for the OEF/OIF Program, VA Medical Center, Durham, NC

Well, I think some of the important military subcultures to be aware of are the distinction between, say, the combat arms branches, which would be the people in the military who are more likely to engage in direct armed combat with the enemy, and then those in kind of a combat support role. And within the Army and the Marine Corps people who participate in, say, the infantry or the armor or the special operations forces, I think are far more likely to have been in direct contact with the enemy. And understanding some of those subcultures can be very important to providing VA healthcare.

Anthony Arita, Commander, U.S. Navy, Clinical Psychologist

It's not a single entity that really can be described with any specific detail perhaps without really appreciating the individual cultures that exist in each service. I'm talking about to Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. So, even within each of the services, there can be subcultures. So, just to address, for example, the Navy culture, they are referred to as the surface fleet with all of the ships in the water. There's also an underseas force that involves all of our submarines. There's an aviation community, and there are a number of other communities each with their distinct subcultures. So, military culture is a very broad term, but it really doesn't capture the same meaning and content from individual to individual across the broad military.

Page 35 – In Their Own Words: Responsibility

Janie Thelin, Veteran, U.S. Navy, Medical Case Management Advisor for Wounded Warrior Battalion West

I believe in the military we have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and an overdeveloped sense of loyalty. And an overdeveloped sense of what's right and wrong. And we live by the core values of honor, courage, and commitment. And when something happens and you're not able to bring home your fellow Marine that you are committed to bringing home in one piece, then there's going to be survivor guilt. And I believe there's a time in your life where you finally get to the developmental stage as an adult, as an older adult where you finally realize there are some things out of your control. But I don't believe at 18, 19, 20 years old you believe that yet. I believe that when you go to war as an 18, 19, 20, 21-year-old young man, you still believe you're invincible. And as the American public, we want you to believe you're invincible. We want you to believe that you're going to go in there and fight the fight and come out on the other end. Because if you didn't believe that, you couldn't go do it in the first place. And so they have, there is this overwhelming sense of responsibility and loyalty to your fellow Marine that starts the minute you put your foot, your footprints on those yellow feet print.

Anthony Arita, Commander, U.S. Navy, Clinical Psychologist

Military members, they shoulder a level of responsibility that typically far exceeds that of their civilian peers. So just imagine, you know, a lot of your young twenty-something-year-olds who are having to make often times life-and-death decisions in the context of serving in a battle zone. Think of the war fighter at my rank may be a Commanding Officer on a nuclear submarine making some very important decisions—things I couldn't possibly fathom as a healthcare provider. So, there's often times a level of responsibility that is quite enormous, and from that stems quite a bit of pride and a sense of accomplishment. And I think that is shared, again, among the various members of the DoD. It's something that they can all feel that they share as far as the military culture.

Matias Ferreira, Lance Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps

It was hard just in the beginning because I was a football player. I felt like I always had leadership traits. Although you do have leadership traits outside of the military, it's completely different from having a championship ring or championship game on the line. Now you have other human beings lives in your hands. And if you don't learn how to take responsibility and take care of those people behind you that you're taking care of and you raise your right hand to do so, then that's going to be on your shoulders and that's not a good feeling to have.

Matthew Baine, Sergeant, U.S. Army

People in the military, we're very disciplined. Civilians are disciplined as well when it comes to, I would say, I see the difference that civilians are disciplined when it comes to things they want to do. But what the military stresses is that regardless if you want to do it or not, it has to be done. So, you have to have that discipline to do it even when you don't want to do something. So, I think that's one of the few things that separates myself from civilian friends is just overall discipline and responsibility. I'm only twenty three and there a lot of my friends that are the same age that they just don't do the same things I do.

Page 38 – In Their Own Words: Living up to a Creed

Robert Frame, Veteran, U.S. Army, VA OEF/OIF Returning Warrior Liaison

When any of us come into the military, we're given a Soldier's creed or an Air Force creed or a Coast Guard creed—any of the branches have their specific creed—and the wording is very similar. We're given a card—in fact I wear it around my dog tags still today—with the Army values or with the Navy values, whatever branch of service. For a young person, this is very foundational and in today's society where many times the family units may not have the opportunity to provide people with those structured, very solid value systems.

Mario Carreno, Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps

It's the beliefs, the values—honor, courage, commitment, justice, judgment.—all the things that, you know, you, the Marine Corps has put into you saying that these are what it is to be a good Marine. So, those equate to also being a good person, you know, quote unquote, from what a lot of [what] the drill instructors told me. You just follow them, and you're probably not gonna go wrong in life if you follow a certain path here; you'll probably be okay.

Page 42 – Section 4 Summary: The Functions of Military Ethos

Technical Sergeant Rice had joined the Air Force just prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. She had wanted to serve her country but mainly felt like the military was a quick way to pay for her education and get on with a better life. She is currently a 3S, mission support personnel who works at the Military Personnel Flight on base. She is referred to you by her primary care provider because she has been more irritable at work. She is more easily angry and distracted than she was before her deployment.

TSgt Rice had mostly thought of her job in the military as a "nine-to-five kind of thing" until she volunteered to deploy as an individual augmentee on an assignment to Afghanistan. During her deployment, she worked with Army, Air Force, and Marine units as a convoy driver and was reminded of many of the reasons why she had reenlisted after the end of her first assignment and was shocked by the amazing and selfless things that so many of her peers were doing every day that never made the press back home. While she was deployed, she felt an "overwhelming sense of camaraderie" and believed she had found her calling. She was recognized as NCO of the quarter and was awarded a Joint Service Achievement medal while deployed.

When TSgt Rice returned from deployment, she found herself becoming frustrated with her coworkers "who are like kids" and who "lack integrity." She didn't feel the same sense of camaraderie or mission focus that she had while deployed. Her supervisor, a master sergeant, has been giving her menial tasks to, as he says, "knock the chip off her shoulder." She is thinking of cross-training to another career field or maybe not reenlisting in a few months.

What questions do you think might be important to ask TSgt Rice to best understand her experience and situation?

Page 44 – Meet RP1 Jones and Mr. Gunderson

RP1 Jones: Since I was told that force reductions some of us may be involuntarily separated, I was angry, yes. I want to be there for my fellow Sailors and Marines. We all went through this together, and I have to be there when we deploy again. But that doesn't mean I have PTSD. And I don't want any mental health stuff in my record, I don't have PTSD.

Mr. Gunderson: Yeah, I've been having nightmares, and when I'm tired I can't think clearly. I have headaches, I'm not patient. I can't drive or think well and I can't really stand to be around anyone. I miss my guys and the work we did and the people I work with now, I can't really relate to. As far as I'm concerned, the military let me down, I let myself and the military down, and the VA is letting me down because the docs, they want to fix me, they want me to remember things that I'm not interested in remembering. I've got better things to do with my time.

Page 50 – In Their Own Words: Stigma

Patrick T. Riley, Staff Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps

You're afraid. You're afraid to get seen. Cause you don't want nothing to come back on you. I mean, it took me 13, 12 years in the Marine Corps for me to make aware, for me to understand that. I don't care no more what people think of me if I get seen. Marines are scared to get seen because they don't want to get labeled as a medical commando. They get hurt. I run out, my finger was fractured and it healed up like this because I didn't want to go to medical because I didn't want nobody to look at me like I was a medical commando. And that's just wrong. I don't know why.

Dawn Herring, MSW, Marriage and Family Therapist, Camp Pendleton

They are often very candid, which is one of the strengths, I think, in this population, about their lack of trust, and they can walk in the door and say, "Look I'm here, but I don't believe any of this is gonna work. I'm here because my command sent me. I'm here because I don't know what else to do. And I think the best gift we can give them is our candor and certainly our expertise. But if we cannot meet them where they are, we're not going to get very far. And they are very clear that their trust is tenuous at best often, and that they're more often than not concerned that their career will be negatively impacted by seeking help and that there is still a sense that help is weak. I had a Marine recently say to me, "You know, when we get counseled at work, it's usually a negative counseling; it's not a positive thing." So even the understanding of what it means to receive a counseling is negative. And then they say, "You know, therapy's for the crazy people. So what am I supposed to do? Do I go get counseling or therapy? I don't want either of those."

Daniel Hill, Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps

Actually it's kind of weird 'cause I never really got help until the past few months because I just, when I first got out, none of this stuff that's available now was available to me. You know, they didn't have all these, you know, different clinics and, you know, most, every time I'd say I have, I'm having anger issues or something like that, a sergeant or something would be like "suck it up" or "back to work." And then I got out for about a year and a half and came back in, and I pretty much learned how to deal with it on my own. But being here and, you know, the stress level being higher being a section leader and dealing with the Marines and seeing what they've gone through and then kind of dealing with Marine Corps stress, you know, it's kind of brought some issues back out. And so I've been kind of getting a little bit of help for that.

Page 53 – Video Scenario: Influence of Military Ethos

Commitment to Excellence

As a Marine, we kind of have this pride. And it's like a normal man's pride, but amplified because we consider ourselves the best, and we consider going into battle and defending our country, we consider that an honor. I wouldn't want to do anything else, I wouldn't want to just sit back while I watch other people go in and do the stuff that makes heroes. I want to be the hero.

Courage to Defend the Social Order

Looking back on all the things that I have done, my family members call me a hero. My chain of command, the Marines I was with, they call me a hero. They look up to me. But honestly, I just don't think this is the way a hero is portrayed.

A hero is the guy that, the guys that go into combat. They take care of the enemy. They come back in one piece. And for a Marine and for me, it just makes it seem like the enemy got me. I didn't complete the task that I went to do. Instead, the enemy outsmarted me, and the enemy took from me what I was there to do.

Loss/Guilt

It bothers me a lot. I really don't know how to explain. It's just an emotional battle with me constantly because I went to war to do something, and I just never thought that this would happen to me. But it did.

Guilt/Loss/Depression

People have told me, psychiatrists have told me, my wife has told me that it will get better. That this feeling inside of me will go away, but with all that I have gone through, I don't see it going away. It will probably get better. I might be able to emotionally come to terms with what's happened to me eventually, but I don't think that that feeling of guilt for letting my men down, I don't think that feeling of depression, I don't think it will ever permanently go away. I think it will be with me for the rest of my life.

Loyalty/Courage

Well, as an engineer, I was in the front of the patrol. I pretty much was clearing the lane for them to safely go through, and being hit, being wounded, that's one less engineer they have to protect them. So in a way, I feel like it's my fault if something would happen to them because I wasn't there to protect them.

Loyalty/Courage/Selflessness/Guilt

I think the best way to understand it is just consider the way your parents felt when you were a little kid and you fell and you cut yourself. How they would feel. They would feel scared that you're injured. They'd try to help you and protect you and do whatever they could for you. That's the way that I feel about every Marine that I'm serving with. I'd do anything to protect them. I'd do anything to make them feel safe about what we're doing. And to not be there to do that, it's like having a child and you're not allowed to protect it, you're not allowed to do anything to it. You can't even touch it. It just, it's painful.

Protecting America

That's something that we think about on a daily basis. In a way it's kind of like more weight on our shoulders. And a lot of us realize why we're there. I know a lot of people have kind of forgotten. But we know that we're there not only to protect our own but to protect our country as well. We get it. We get the idea.

Trouble Forgiving Self

I think right now it's a roadblock. I don't think I'll be able to do that for a while. Like I said earlier, I talked to three shrinks so far, and none of them have been able to tell me what to do, to give me a tool, to give me anything to make me feel better about myself or to help me forgive myself. It's just something that each person individually has to deal with on their own. I don't think there's any golden tool or anything that can make a person feel better about what happened to them. It's solely something they have to deal with by themselves. That's just my opinion though.

Page 54 – Video Clip Scenario Activity: Influence of Military Ethos: Audio 3

Audio 1

As a Marine we kind of have this pride. And it's like a normal man's pride, but amplified because we consider ourselves the best.

Audio 2

As a Marine we kind of have this pride. And it's like a normal man's pride, but amplified because we consider ourselves the best.

Audio 3

...that's one less engineer that they have to protect them. So in a way, I feel like maybe it's my fault if something would happen to them because I wasn't there to protect them.

Page 59 – Cultural Awareness Pitfalls

- (To a Marine) Hey, Soldier. I mean, Marine.
- (To a soldier) It's not as hard as how the Marines have to train, right?
- Oh Dark Thirty? What's that?
- Um, Bravo Zulu to you too.
- No, I've never been in the military, but I have seen a lot of movies about war.
- I know, I'm not a Veteran, but fundamentally, aren't we all just the same people on the inside anyway?
- That sounds just like that movie Saving Private Ryan.

- I've heard it's a lot easier to be over there now than it was 5 years ago.
- No, no, you don't have to tell me, I've heard all about it.
- No, I didn't have time to look in your medical record. Just tell me why you're here.
- No, I've never seen a training exercise, but I can imagine what it's like.
- I know you're in the Army, but I think I understand—my dad was in the Navy.
- So does that mean you're enlisted?
- But wouldn't you RATHER be discharged than have to go back over there?
- You've been deployed? That must have sucked.
- You've been deployed? That must have been great.
- You've been deployed? You're a hero.
- I understand completely.
- I completely understand what you're talking about.
- I understand completely.
- I'm not sure why you feel so guilty. It doesn't make sense.
- I think I know PTSD. I've worked with a lot of car accident victims before I came here.
- It must be the PTSD that caused it.
- Most people who go over there come back with PTSD.
- The military broke you.
- I know this is only our first session, but you're going to open up or I can't help you.
- Did you do your homework?
- How can it work if you don't practice mindfulness?
- I can't help you if you don't take medications.
- You'll have to see a neurologist for that. Then I'll see you back in 6 months....

Page 62 – Module 1 Closing Thoughts

Dr. Brim: Congratulations, you've completed Module 1 of the *Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals* course. In this module, we hope you were able to reflect on your own beliefs and potential biases, and realize how they may impact your work with Service members, Veterans, and family members. We also introduced the cultural iceberg, and the below-the-waterline concept of military ethos.

Dr. Watson: We hope that you can remember that:

1. Military Ethos is a code of behavior that's based on an idealized image of the warrior. It can make high levels of teamwork and mission focus possible, and can serve as an organizing way of life and source of life-long pride. But it also sets standards that can be difficult to meet, can sometimes result in conflicting values related to different military roles, and be a reason for some individuals to rebel against its high standards and values;
2. In regards to psychological health, military ethos can serve as both as a protective factor and a vulnerability, and;
3. No matter how much or how little your patient identifies with military ethos, for the period of time that they served in the military, remember that they were immersed in a culture that is governed by the ideals of military ethos. Therefore, it may have an effect on their behavior in numerous ways,

such as Service members and Veterans not being forthcoming with certain information, reacting negatively to any comment that is counter to the values of military culture or ethos, or being respectful to your face, but not showing up for a second session if you didn't make a culturally-competent connection with them.

Dr. Brim: Now to preview the upcoming modules:

In Module 2: Organizations and Roles, you'll continue to develop knowledge about the military culture, with a focus on the more visible aspects of the military culture. You'll examine military organizations, roles, and relationships from the point of view of individual Service members, and explore how military structures define each Service member's and Veteran's identity and personal response to illness or injury.

In Module 3: Stressors and Resources, you'll learn about the spectrum of stressors and psychological health hazards associated with military service. You'll also be introduced to the unique support resources that help Service members, Veterans, and their families cope and recover.

Finally, in Module 4: Treatment Resources and Tools, you'll be provided tools for assessing the impact of military culture on health, and guidance for culturally-competent treatment planning.