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From Idea to Institute: Making Mental Health Initiatives a Reality!

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Abstract

When Veterans return to civilian life, many struggle to adjust. Not only physical, but hidden disabilities like anxiety and post-traumatic stress can impact their day-to-day lives. Things like traffic, loud noises, crowds, enclosed spaces, certain scents, etc. can be challenging. The Veteran student population does not fall under a traditional student. In fact, only 15% of student Veterans are the traditional age of college students. Most are aged 24–40, 47% of student Veterans have children and 47.3% of them are married. Sixty-two percent are first-generation college students and 75% of them attend school full time. Over the past 20 years, higher education institutions have increased funding for Veteran programs. With this diverse population, it is imperative for higher education institutions to meet the needs of these students. This workshop looks at the impact of Veteran programs in higher education institutions as well as new practices that are making an impact for this population. It looks at not only the need for academic success, but also mental health support. It will look at the most effective qualitative and quantitative practices for helping Veterans while providing data for discussion as to proposed program needs and adjustments.