

Veterans Justice Outreach

Justice-Involved Veterans and the
VA-CIT Nexus

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The Numbers

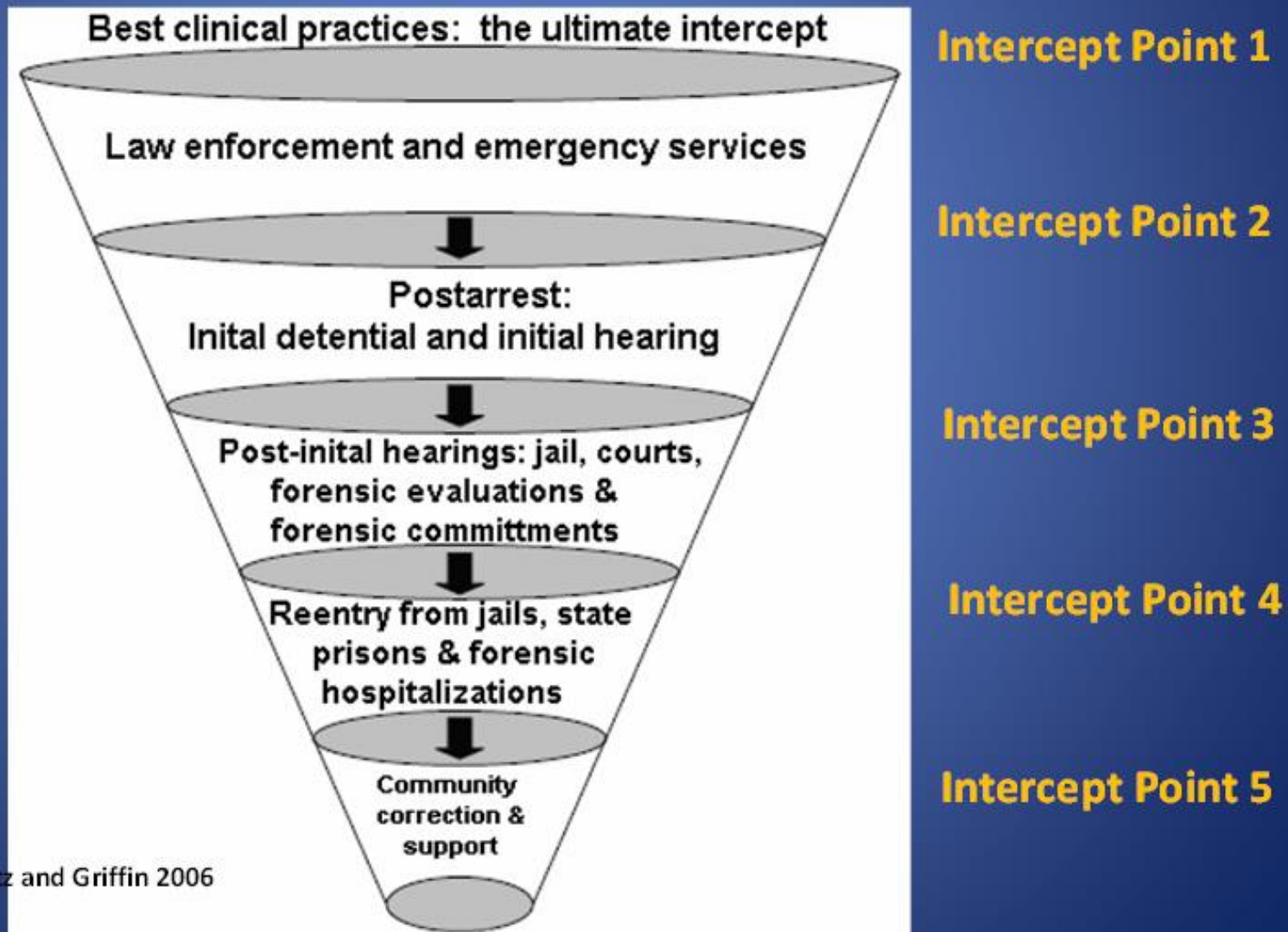
- 21.8 Million Veterans in the U.S.
- 2.77 Million personnel deployed in the GWOT.
 - 5.4 million deployments.
 - Most are Veterans now.
 - Most are still males under 35 years of age.
 - Most have VA health care.
- 9-10% of Americans in jail/prison and supervised by parole/probation are Veterans.

Justice Involvement

A “Justice-Involved Veteran” is anyone who served in the military and is engaged by:

- Law enforcement (may not involve charges).
- Criminal courts at municipal, county, state, or federal levels.
- Jail or prisons at municipal, county, state, or federal levels.
- Parole or Probation.

Sequential Intercept Model



VJO Mission Statement

“The purpose of the VJO initiative is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans in contact with the criminal justice system have access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) mental health and substance services.”

VJO Specialist Functions

- Liaison to Veterans Treatment Courts and other courts.
- Liaison to Probation and Parole departments.
- Outreach to Veterans in jails.
- Facilitation/Consultation for Legal Clinics.
- Train law enforcement in Veterans' needs/issues.
- Outreach to police-involved Veterans in the community.

Veterans Treatment Courts

Purpose: *Reduce recidivism and substance among non-violent offenders, where substance use and/or mental illness is a factor.*

Problem Solving Courts

- Adult Drug Court
- DWI Court
- Family Drug Court
- Federal Reentry Court
- Reentry Court
- Juvenile Drug Court
- Back to TRAC: Treatment, Responsibility, Accountability on Campus
- Veterans Treatment Court
- Mental Health Court
- Domestic Violence Court
- Truancy Courts
- Tribal to Wellness Court

Treatment Court Concept

Mechanisms:

- Early, continuous, and intense judicial supervision.
- Treatment.
- Mandatory drug testing.
- Community supervision (probation).
- Incentives and sanctions (behavioral mod).

VTC Characteristics

- Participation is voluntary: vets may withdraw at any time and return to criminal court.
- Participation may be terminated by judge.
- Participants must authorize the VA to disclose treatment info to the court.
- VJO assesses and links Veterans to treatment, and reports compliance and progress to the court.
- Graduation: Charges are either dropped or sent back to originating court for consideration.

What VTCs Accomplish

- Reduce drug use.
- Improve mental health outcomes.
- Reduce crime and increase public safety.
- Save money.
- Restore lives and families.

LEOs Can Make a Difference!

LEOs can advocate to:

- Encourage a treatment court to accept a participant.
- Encourage a circuit to establish a treatment court.

You might be surprised at how much influence you actually have with courts!

Probation and Parole

- Similar liaison work as is done with courts.
- Education to P&P about Veterans' needs/issues.
- Referrals from P&P for Veterans in need of treatment and benefits.

Jail Outreach

- Many VJOs conduct outreach to Veterans in jail.
 - Often these Veterans are awaiting trial.
 - Separate Reentry program for prison outreach.
- Purposes:
 - Link eligible Veterans to VA services upon release.
 - Continuity of health care while confined.
 - Identify Veterans who may benefit from VTC participation.

Veterans Legal Assistance

- Legal Assistance Clinics at some VA facilities.
 - In cooperation with Regional Counsel, Bar Associations, or other legal assistance agencies.
 - Attorneys provide free legal guidance, but usually **not** representation.
- Outreach and referrals to legal assistance in the community.

CIT and VJO Programs

Shared goals:

- Improve crisis outcomes.
- Link people in crisis to treatment and resources (access to care).
- Reduce/Eliminate the criminalization of behavior health disorders.
- Community collaboration.

Police Training

- Helping law enforcement personnel understand unique Veteran challenges and needs.
- Using that knowledge to intervene more safely and effectively with Veterans in crisis.
- Improving outcomes for Veterans and their communities.
- Avoiding unnecessary criminalization of behavioral health disorders.

Police Training *(continued)*

- Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) are the most common points of training.
 - Also can train non-CIT law enforcement.
 - Also train EMS/Fire and other first responders.
- VJOs may present segments of CIT basic training sessions, or...
- VJOs may organize advanced police trainings specifically on Veterans' issues.

Typical Training Topics

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- Traumatic Brain Injury.
- Readjustment after returning from deployment.
- Substance Use Disorders.
- Suicide prevention
- Veteran homelessness.
- Family stressors.

Outreach to Police-Involved Vets

Veterans in Behavioral Health Crisis:

- Police can contact VJOs to help individual Veterans in crisis.
- VJOs will assess for social and treatment needs and link Veterans to those services within the VA.
- If inpatient admission is indicated, police may take Veterans directly to VA Emergency Rooms.

Outreach (continued)

Homeless Veterans:

- Police can help identify Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- VJOs can link those Veterans to help:
 - Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) programs.
 - Community partners for homeless resources.
- In some locations, police may refer directly to HCHV.

Outreach (continued)

- Veterans may ask for help advocating or communicating with police and/or courts.
 - Especially where verification of treatment access or compliance would be helpful.
 - While “staying in our lane.”
- VJOs may participate on CIT Coordinating Councils
 - continuous process improvement between law enforcement and treatment providers.

HIPAA and CFR 42

- Limits information VA can disclose to LEOs about Veterans.
- Law enforcement might not learn the outcome of the outreach.
- We will encourage Veterans to authorize important disclosures.
- If a Veteran is a fugitive, HIPAA does allow disclosure of location only (*45 CFR 164.512(f)(2)*).
- Other limited exceptions exist.

Referrals

Veterans are referred to VJOs by:

- VJO visits to local and county jails.
- Veteran self-referrals.
- Veteran family referrals.
- Referrals from VA providers and other community outreach and service programs.
- And from now on...**Referrals from YOU!**

Pester Your VJO!



Reporting/Referring

Referring every Veteran who needs help:

- Does your department screen for military service history on every call?
 - Can a screening item be added to your reports?
 - “Have you served in the military?”
- Standardized, formal reporting procedures.
- CIT Report database allows:
 - VJOs to access all reports for Veterans, or
 - Agency can run a periodic report and send to VJOs.

Things a VJO Specialist Can't Do

- Represent Veterans in court as legal counsel.
- Perform forensic psychiatric/psychological evaluations for the court.
- Accept custody of Veterans or their property.
- Guarantee program acceptance.
- Write lengthy court report or complete Diversion paperwork.
- Advocate for legislation.
- Work extensively with VHA-ineligible Veterans.
- Decide criminal justice criteria for Veteran court participation or decide who gains admission to specialty courts.

Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HRCV)

HCRV Program Vision

Veterans released from prison will have a successful reentry into their neighborhoods, strengthen their families and communities, and achieve an optimal level of psychosocial functioning.

HCRV Program Goals

- Promote successful community integration of reentry Veterans.
- Conduct outreach to incarcerated Veterans.
- Engage Veterans in treatment and rehabilitation to:
 - Prevent homelessness
 - Readjust to community life
 - Desist from commission of new crimes or parole or probation violations

Eligibility for VA Services

Basic Eligibility Criteria

- 2 years of active duty (90 days before 1980).
- Character of Service: “Honorable” or “General Under Honorable.”
- Means Test.

OR

- Service Connected condition.

There are many others, but these are the biggies.

Unenrolled Veterans

- Veterans who have not enrolled for VA care may be eligible.
- VJOs can:
 - Explain VA services and benefits.
 - Assess for basic needs.
 - Help them enroll for VA care.

Ineligible Veterans

- VJOs can do some work with ineligible Veterans:
 - Initial assessment.
 - I & R to non-VA services and treatment courts.
- Ineligible Veterans may still receive transitional housing (Grant and Per Diem) from the VA.
- Some ineligible Veterans in crisis may be eligible for 90 days of mental health care.

Links and Contacts

VA's VJO page:

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp>

VJO Contacts:

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp#contacts>

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Questions?