**RESEARCH SUMMARY**

# A Roadmap for Rehabilitation Counseling to Serve Military Veterans with Disabilities

## A Quick Look

Providing rehabilitation services to military veterans with disabilities presents unique and rewarding challenges for rehabilitation professionals. The rehabilitation field needs a roadmap for understanding how its strengths can uniquely serve military veterans most appropriately. This paper outlines a five-pronged approach that will benefit outcomes for veterans with disabilities.

## Key Findings

* The rehabilitation counseling profession originated in response to the rehabilitation and employment needs of World War I military veterans.
* The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have created a new wave of individuals with disabilities.
* The current theater of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are resulting in a new generation of veterans with complex physical injuries and psychological and emotional trauma.
* Through the progression of these wars, the rehabilitation needs of veterans are growing.
* To effectively respond to these changes the field of rehabilitation must update to accommodate this growing population.
* Rehabilitation professionals are in an ideal position to provide appropriate services to disabled military veterans who wish to return to gainful employment and a rewarding quality of life.

## Putting It Into Practice

* Researchers estimate that approximately 300,000 individuals currently experience PTSD or major depression and 320,000 individuals have experienced a probable TBI during deployment (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008).
* Issues such as training employers about monitoring for mental illness may become an important role for CRCs.
* Gulf war veterans in the 18- to 24-year-old age range have unemployment rates almost double the general population, in part due to the high rate of mental and physical disabilities resulting from deployment (BLS, 2006).
* Rehabilitation counselors should be exposed to an overview of the veteran’s service systems, laws that effect military veterans, disability compensation, eligibility for services, the concept of disability ratings, and employment laws concerning veterans.

## Learn More

* Regardless of the duration of the current conflicts, there are likely to emerge new rehabilitation issues specific to veterans, with which rehabilitation counselors may be very effective, but that may require additional training or education beyond what is currently provided.
* This paper provides an overview of the current and prospective rehabilitation counseling issues faced by veterans with disabilities, and to present a five-pronged approach to meeting these veterans’ emerging rehabilitation needs.
* Frain, M. P., Bishop, M., & Tschopp, M. (2008). Increasing adherence to medical treatment advice: Rehabilitation counselor’s role in adherence among their clients with chronic illness and long-term disability. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin.
* Litz, B. (2008). The unique circumstances and mental health impact of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Retrieved February 25, 2008 from [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - [PTSD: National Center for PTSD](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/)](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/).

## Source

Frain M. P., & Bishop M. Bethel M. (2010). [A roadmap for rehabilitation counseling to serve military veterans with disabilities. Journal of Rehabilitation](https://www.thefreelibrary.com/A%2Broadmap%2Bfor%2Brehabilitation%2Bcounseling%2Bto%2Bserve%2Bmilitary%2Bveterans...-a0219141362), 76: (1), 13–21.

Contact a Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment expert at: **contact@tacqe.com**

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