



# Understanding Military Culture in Treating Veterans and Their Families

Presented by

**Jenny D 'Olympia, Psy.D., LMHC, LP, HSP & Christi Garner, LMFT, CYT**

**Overview** This course is designed as an introduction training, designed to equip psychotherapists with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively serve veterans and their families. Over a series of modules, participants will delve into understanding military culture, suicide in a military context, available resources, cultural competency, suicide prevention strategies specific for veterans and families, trauma-informed care, and coping with vicarious trauma. Upon completion, participants will be better equipped to understand the complexities of military life and its after-effects, provide effective mental health support to veterans and their families, and utilize appropriate resources. They will also be prepared to address their own needs as caregivers, ensuring sustainable and compassionate practice. Throughout the program, various teaching methods will be employed, including lectures, interactive workshops, case studies, role-playing, and group discussions. The course not only aims to enhance the clinical skills and knowledge of the participants but also to foster empathy, patience, and resilience, which are crucial in working with this unique and deserving population.

## Objectives: Participants will be able to:

- Describe at least three unique aspects that shape the experiences of military or veteran culture.
- Describe at least two techniques for suicide prevention among military veterans and their families.
- Identify key information needed to have a discussion related to lethal means counseling specific to firearms
- Identify at least 3 cultural factors unique to military and veteran communities that impact mental health and wellbeing.
- Identify and describe at least five key resources (local and national) available for military, veterans and their families.
- Identify at least 3 three specific evidence based therapeutic practices tailored for military, veterans and their families.

### Suicide in a Military Context (1:26)

- Understanding unique aspects of military and veteran culture
- Fostering trusting therapeutic relationships
- The state of suicide in the military and veteran communities
- Risk and protective factors related to death by suicide
- Moral Injury
- Resources for Military, Veterans, and their Families

### Cultural Competency & Treatment Efficacy (1:27)

- Understanding intersectionality in the context of military and veterans as it relates to gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation
- Treatment and Assessment efficacy and strategies to address potential bias

### Suicide Prevention Techniques (1:28)

- Suicide screening, assessment and crisis interviewing
- Relationship between military, veterans, and firearms
- Suicide prevention specific to access to lethal means
- Upstream suicide prevention techniques

### Trauma-Informed Care & Vicarious Trauma (1:24)

- Trauma-informed care
- Creating a safe and supportive therapeutic environment
- The nature of traumatic stress
- Best practices for treating trauma-related symptoms.
- Vicarious trauma
- Recognizing burnout and vicarious trauma
- Effective self-care strategies

**Jenny D 'Olympia, PsyD, LP, HSP, LMHC**, is the Director of the Military and Veteran Psychology and Train Vets to Treat Vets Programs, Assistant Professor, and Associate Chair of the Counseling and Behavioral Health Department. Her research interests are related to women veterans, veteran readjustment, unstable housing, and suicide prevention. She is a member of the Governor's Advisory Council to prevent Suicide in Military Veterans and Their Family Members, the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services, and the Board Secretary for the Service Women's Action Network. She has been involved in the mental health field for over 22 years. Dr. D 'Olympia served in the United States Air Force and Air Force Reserves for a total of 9 years during which she deployed three times. She is also a spouse of a retired service member. Her extensive experience with military, veterans, and their families has given her deep insight into the specific mental health needs of this important population.

**Christi Garner, LMFT, RYT**, is a Licensed Therapist and Certified Clinical Trauma Professional. She has worked with Military Community and Family Policy on the Military and Family Life Counseling program for almost a decade. Providing strategic leadership, leveraging trauma informed care principles to enhance the effectiveness of over 1,400 counselors around the globe in ensuring the resilience and readiness of military families through multiple training programs and initiatives. She has over two decades of experience with military families, survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and training organizations focusing on advocacy, peer support and trauma informed care.

**6 Diversity CE Hours for Psychologists Counselors Social Workers MFT**

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Practice Level—Intermediate

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