Utah’s ADRCs Building Community Partnerships with the VA

Providing Options Counseling to Rural Veterans
Presenters

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Outline

• Introductions
• Improving access for rural Veterans
• ADRC Survey and Project Launch
• VA Benefits Training and New Partnerships
• Expectations and Overcoming Obstacles
• Veteran Stories
• Next Steps
One VA-Three Agencies

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
2010: Veteran Benefits Information

• 2010 National Survey of Veterans
• 41.0% had basic understanding of their VA benefits
  – Knowledge of specific benefits lower
• 28% had used VA healthcare
  – 42% of nonusers not aware of VA healthcare benefits
  – 26% did not know how to apply for healthcare
ADRC Survey

Do you regularly assess a caller’s Veteran status?

- Always: 57.9%
- Usually: 36.8%
- Never: 5.3%
PROGRAM EVOLUTION
2012: Nationwide Needs Assessment

- Challenges
  - Rarely connect with VA to address Veteran needs
  - Lack basic information about most VA benefits
  - General awareness of VA information resources—not very helpful
  - Most positive feelings about VA resources with a personal contact at VA
Deborah Crowther – Bear River
Before the Grant
2013: First Contact

- Utah Active Re-Entry contacts VBA specialist about veteran outreach
Active Re-Entry

Population:
Moab Utah 5,093
Grand County: 9,328

“I am the granddaughter, daughter, wife and mother of war time veterans”
Joey Allred
Options Counselor

Christopher Scott – VBA Champion
2013: ORH Funds Pilot (4 ADRC Sites)

- Goals
  - Create access point for rural Veterans
  - Provide options counselors training in VA Benefits
  - Build relationships with the VA and ADRC
  - Expand to all Utah ADRC sites in rural areas
  - Disseminate to ADRC programs nationwide
Utah ADRC’s

Bear River - AAA
Serving: Box Elder, Cache, Rich

Salt Lake Aging and Adult Services - AAA
Serving: Salt Lake County

Mountainland - AAA
Serving: Summit, Utah, Wasatch

Active Re-Entry - CIL
Serving: Grand, San Juan

Five County - AAA
Serving: Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, Washington Counties
2013: VBA and VHA Training

- Same Training – Multiple times
- TRIP
- On the job training with VA Outreach
- Building relationships
2013: TRIP Training and VSO Certification

VBA Endorses ADRC for TRIP Training and VSO accreditation exam – November 2013

➢ Training Response, Involvement, and Preparations of Claims (TRIP)
  19 online modules

➢ Veteran Service Officer (VSO) exam
  2 Options Counselors have passed

Larry Dawson
UDVMA – Outreach Specialist (VSO)
2014: VA Trainings Hours = 1182
February 1 2013 – August 30, 2014

Healthcare
Mental Health
Caregiver Support
Aid & Attendance
Pension
VA Nursing Home
Burial Benefits
Disability Compensation
New Partnerships
2014: Reaching New Partners

- UDVMA (State VA)
- Caregiver Support (VHA)
- Geriatric Social Worker (VHA)
- Outreach Worker and VA Project Champion (VBA)
Finding the Right Access Point
“What were your expectations?”

“Don’t send your client down the rabbit hole”

- Help Veterans find the right access points
- Streamline the application process
- Build **TRUST**
Overcoming Challenges
Overcoming Challenges

• Finding direct VA contacts
• Agency building trust with the veteran
• Agency building trust with the VA
• Learning the VA Language
• Understanding Military Culture
VA Language Alphabet Soup

- VHA
- VSO
- UDVMA
- C-file
- "Fully Developed Claim"
- VISN
- "Golden Ticket"
- NCA
- C&P
- VBA
- DD-214
- PTSD
- 10-10 EZ
- OEF/OIF
- Presumptive Condition
- CBOC
- RO
- TRIP Training
- Branches of Veteran Affairs
- Military Culture
Veterans Served
April 1, 2013 – March 30, 2014
Total: 338

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<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Over Age 60</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>81% over 70 years old</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>War</th>
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<td>World War II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korean Conflict</td>
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<td>.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>War in Afghanistan</td>
<td>.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other or Multiple Wars</td>
<td>9%</td>
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In a Veteran Client Survey of 46 veterans 86% called AAA/ADRC for the Primary purpose to find services
Active Re-Entry – Veteran’s Story

Client:
- Vietnam Veteran, Age 61
- Suffering from full renal failure
- Had Medicare and had been denied SSDI
- Currently receiving Health Care at the Grand Junction VA Medical Center
- Had NO INCOME with medical bills piling up and going to collection

Options Counselor Intervention:
- Applied and receiving Medicaid – back dated 3 months and paid local Hospital Bills (but not the VA)
- Now receiving Disability Compensation for hearing loss and tinnitus
- Now receiving Aid and Attendance
- Set up payment plan for VA Medical Bills
Bear River – Veteran Story

Client
- WW II Veteran, Age 90
- Wife/Caregiver, Age 89
- Veteran suffers from multiple health issues, primary COPD
- Their goal is to keep Sam at home

Intervention:
- Client called Bear River AAA/ADRC to find services
- Veteran had a VA Primary Care Physician but was unaware he may be eligible for VA In-Home Services
- Options Counselor coached the veteran on how to request these services from the PCP
- Veteran is now receiving In-Home Services
- Veteran’s wife/caregiver is participating in the Caregiver Support Program through the AAA
A Veteran Story
How did we make VA Connections?

- Finding Supporters
- Making Introductions
- Requesting Training for ADRC staff
- Additional Training Request for ADRC staff
- Asking for Direct Phone Numbers
- Learning VA Programs and Navigating the System
- Understanding the Gaps: what the VA offers and what it does not
- Tracking clients – DATA
- Commitment to help veterans
Options Counseling for Veterans
Single Point of Entry
Things We Have Learned

• VA Branches do not always coordinate or communicate with each other
• Community Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) are not very familiar with VA Benefits
• Physicians TREAT patients typically do not make referrals to Services and Benefits
• Not all VA Programs have a waitlist
• Many veterans do not know they are eligible for programs
• Many veterans may have been told at one time that they were not eligible for services – BUT THAT MAY HAVE CHANGED
• VA staff are willing to give out their direct lines to our staff
• VA staff are willing to provide training – LOTS of it! Sometimes the same training over and over!!
Trainings, Partnerships take.....
What we did not expect

- Endorsement from VBA for TRIP training
- Support with applications for the Veteran Service Officer (VSO) accreditation
- Invitation to VA trainings
- Potential to self refer to the VD-HCBS program
- Divert veterans from State Program waitlist to VA Programs
2015: Project Next Steps

- Funding to sustain project activities
- Collection of outcome data
- Key Options Counselors pass Veteran Service Officer exam
- Creating a model for other states