

Project Abstract/VALOR Mental Health Grant

Decades of research has shown that veterans can have a difficult time of readjusting to civilian life and have been shown to have higher than normal prevalence of mental health and substance abuse issues, which frequently result in illegal, violent, and/or risky behaviors resulting in increased contact with the criminal justice system and incarceration. Veterans need to be provided with educational and therapeutic services as alternatives to spiraling deeper into the criminal justice system.

Unfortunately, many jails and prisons are unable to offer adequate mental health and substance abuse treatment to the incarcerated.

The Veterans Accessing Lifelong Opportunities for Rehabilitation (VALOR) program operates as an intermediate sanctions facility (ISF) for veteran offenders who are facing probation revocations or incarceration across the state of Texas. The program is a collaborative effort between the North Texas Regional Veterans Court, Collin County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD), and the Sheriff's Office to provide veteran-specific services and programming for offenders across the state who need a supervised, intensive, and structured treatment program to successfully reintegrate into civilian society.

In the VALOR program, detained veterans are housed together, mimicking the unit structure familiar to veterans. Veterans are surrounded by others who are suffering from similar mental illnesses, substance abuse issues, and unhealthy coping mechanisms and who understand the sacrifice of military service. Putting them together allows them to begin to heal through unit bonding, allowing them to be open and vulnerable and to assist one another. Veteran-specific programming is offered by qualified treatment providers, who have experience working with veterans or are veterans themselves, providing an integrative and holistic approach for re-entry based on treatment plans developed to comprehensively address their individual needs.

Utilizing grant funding, veterans will attend group and individual sessions, develop new work and coping skills, learn to establish safety and control in their lives, and create re-entry plans. Daily programming begins with reveille at 0430-0500 and may include alcohol / drug treatment, PTSD / trauma counseling, peer mentoring, agricultural and vocational rehabilitation, anger management, emotional regulation, among other treatment modalities, as well as life skills training and enrichment activities, such as art / music therapy, yoga and mindful meditation, and access to the veterans' book library. The extensive treatment regimen is supervised by a Licensed Master Social Worker - Supervisor.

To be eligible, veterans must not have been dishonorably discharged or convicted of violent or sexual offenses and should have a mental health diagnosis such as (but not limited to) anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), or substance abuse/addiction, determined by assessment to be caused or exacerbated by their military service. VALOR participation is up to 60 days in our Restorative Program, or up to 6 months in our Intensive Program.