Supporting the Health of Military-Affiliated Students at ODU

This form aims to provide useful information to ODU faculty and staff about how to support Military-Affiliated students. The sections below provide useful definitions and facts about these individuals and actionable items to support them on campus.

What does Military-Affiliated mean?

Military-Affiliated is an abbreviated way to refer to individuals that have some type of connection to military service. Personal service (current or prior Active Duty Service, current or prior service in the Reserves, and current or prior service in the National Guard), and family member service (a spouse, parent, or guardian that has personally served) are included. Individuals with any prior service, regardless of length of time, branch, or type, are commonly referred to as Veterans. Those who are in the immediate family of a current or prior service member are typically referred to as Dependents or, in the case of a spouse, a Military Spouse. At ODU, ROTC cadets are considered Military-Affiliated due to their impending service and status as a Reservist student. Click here for more information on the types of service and the various branches of the military.

What do I need to know about Military-Affiliated Students’ mental health and safety?

In 2018, the average number of Veteran suicide deaths per day was 17.6 (VA, 2020). In comparison to non-Veteran adults in the U.S. in 2018, the age- and sex- adjusted suicides rates were 18.2 per 100,000 for non-Veteran adults and 27.5 per 100,000 for Veterans (VA, 2020). These numbers account for Veterans under the care of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and those that were not. Looking at only Veterans under VHA care between 2017 and 2018, the percentage of age-and sex- adjusted suicide rates decreased by 2.4% while Veterans not under care increased by 2.5% (VA, 2020). Although these numbers only represent the Veteran population specifically, all Military-Affiliated students are at higher risk for suicide due to the stressful and often traumatic aspects of their lives. Some of the mental health concerns that can factor into these rates include PSTD, depression, anxiety, and substance use. These factors tend to be higher in some populations of the Veteran community than others, such as those that are homeless, unemployed, or identify as LGBTQIA+.

See below for tips on how to create a more inclusive environment for Military-Affiliated students at ODU!

How can I create a more inclusive environment for Military-Affiliated students?

1. **Respect students’ identities and experiences:**
   - Let students identify themselves. Not all Military-Affiliated students choose to identify that way. Give them an opportunity to self-identify privately by filling out a class info card or answering a new student questionnaire. Some Veterans may not want to draw attention to their status as a prior service member, so make sure not to do it for them.
   - Watch helpful videos. [Video: 15 Things Veterans Want You to Know](#)

2. **Listen without judgement and encourage others to do the same:**
   - Military-Affiliated students come from all backgrounds and have a wealth of experiences, don’t minimize or dismiss their experiences/opinions just because you may not understand them or agree with them
   - Consider allowing students to establish their own rules for class conduct and write them down where everyone can see them
     - Large poster-sized sticky notes or a posterboard that you can keep in the classroom
     - Having a shared document of some form can be useful as well

3. **Become Green Zone certified:**
   - Become an ally of the Military-Affiliated community through ODU’s Green Zone training. To learn more about Green Zone training, contact Kristal Kinloch-Taylor at [kkinloch@odu.edu](mailto:kkinloch@odu.edu)
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- If you are already Green Zone certified, mention it during class during the first day. Explain what your role is as a faculty member who’s a Military-Affiliated ally (consider an “elevator speech” of under 1 minute). Include Green Zone certification in your signature.

4. **Add an Inclusive statement to your course syllabi:**
   - Example of an inclusive welcome statement in syllabus:
     
     "In this course, each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute. Please take care to respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by students and staff involved in this course. We support ODU's commitment to diversity and welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, abilities, sexes, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, family statuses, geographical locations, education levels, languages, military experiences, political views, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences.”

- **Click here to learn more about ODU’s commitment to equity, respect, and inclusiveness for all**

What are resources for Military-Affiliated students at ODU and in the community?

- **ODU organizations and program links:**
  - Military Connection Center
  - VA Services (VA Certifying Officials)
  - Office of Educational Accessibility
  - Career Development Services
  - Center for Major Exploration and Mane Connect Success Coaching
  - Student Outreach and Support Office
  - Veterans Business Outreach Centers

- **Mental Health @ ODU:**
  - ODU Counseling Services are available! Call 757-683-4401, press option #1 to schedule an appointment, press option #2 to speak with a counselor right away.

- **Mental Health Local/National:**
  - Military Family Clinic
  - Virginia Department of Veteran Services (DVS)
  - Veterans Crisis Line
    - For immediate assistance call 1-800-273-8255, press option #1
    - Or text 838255
  - Military OneSource
  - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

- **Local/National Resources:**
  - DVS Benefits
  - VA Benefits
  - Fleet and Family Support Center, Norfolk
  - USO

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