

# **EMBRY-RIDDLE** Aeronautical University



# **Support for Military Students with a Disability**

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**Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University**  
***Prescott AZ & Worldwide***



# Part 1: Statistical Data & Diagnosis

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*Worldwide & Online*









# Various Disabilities



## POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

### **mTBI**

#### **Cognitive Thinking-Front of Brain**

- Feeling "in a Fog", Attention issue, Can't find words

#### **Physical-Top of Brain**

- Headache, Blurred Vision, Tinnitus

#### **Sleep- Back of the Brain**

- Excessive Sleep and Altered Sleep Patterns

#### **Behavioral/Emotional-Bottom of the Brain**

- Depression, Anxiety, Irritability, Impulsivity

## **MORAL INJURY**





# Suicidal Ideation

- The 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention annual Report provided by the U.S. Department for Veterans (2019) outlines Veterans represent 18% of all suicide deaths in the United States, even though they only make-up 8.5% of the population.
- 20 Veterans everyday take their own lives

# Veterans Administration



- a. Defines disability compensation**
- b. Medical examination**
- c. Rating is determined**
  - correlates injury/illness to a % rating that estimates the reduction in average earnings capacity caused by the disability**
  
- d. Assigned VA Chapter Codes**
  - Montgomery GI Bill - Chapter 30**
  - Vocational Rehabilitation - Chapter 31**
  - Post 9-11 or Forever GI Bill - Chapter 33**
  - Survivors' & Dependents Educational Assistance – Chapter 35 (not a veteran)**



# ERAU-Worldwide Accommodations

## Modules in nine weeks

- Course breakdown is posted three days before the course begins.
- Assignments due dates are posted, and students have 1 week to complete each module.
- Student can go at own pace and each module assignments must be handed in on due date.

More time exams/quizzes: Double time

More time assignments: One-Three days

Disability related class absence: Not to exceed two days

# Best Practices Summary



## **New Student meeting:**

Listen/Empathy (Keep in mind it is rare to have one disability-all may not be explained)

Review Self-Report, and Policy/Procedures with student

Ask what will help (How much more time tests? How many more day's assignments? Other?)

## **Understand VA Coding**

## **Know Resources:**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, access and manage VA benefits and healthcare

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, tutor assistance

Military One Source, non-medical counseling and free trainings/support

Psych Armor, clinical support center and free trainings/support Veterans and families



# Part 2 : Literature Review

**Jane Ellingwood**

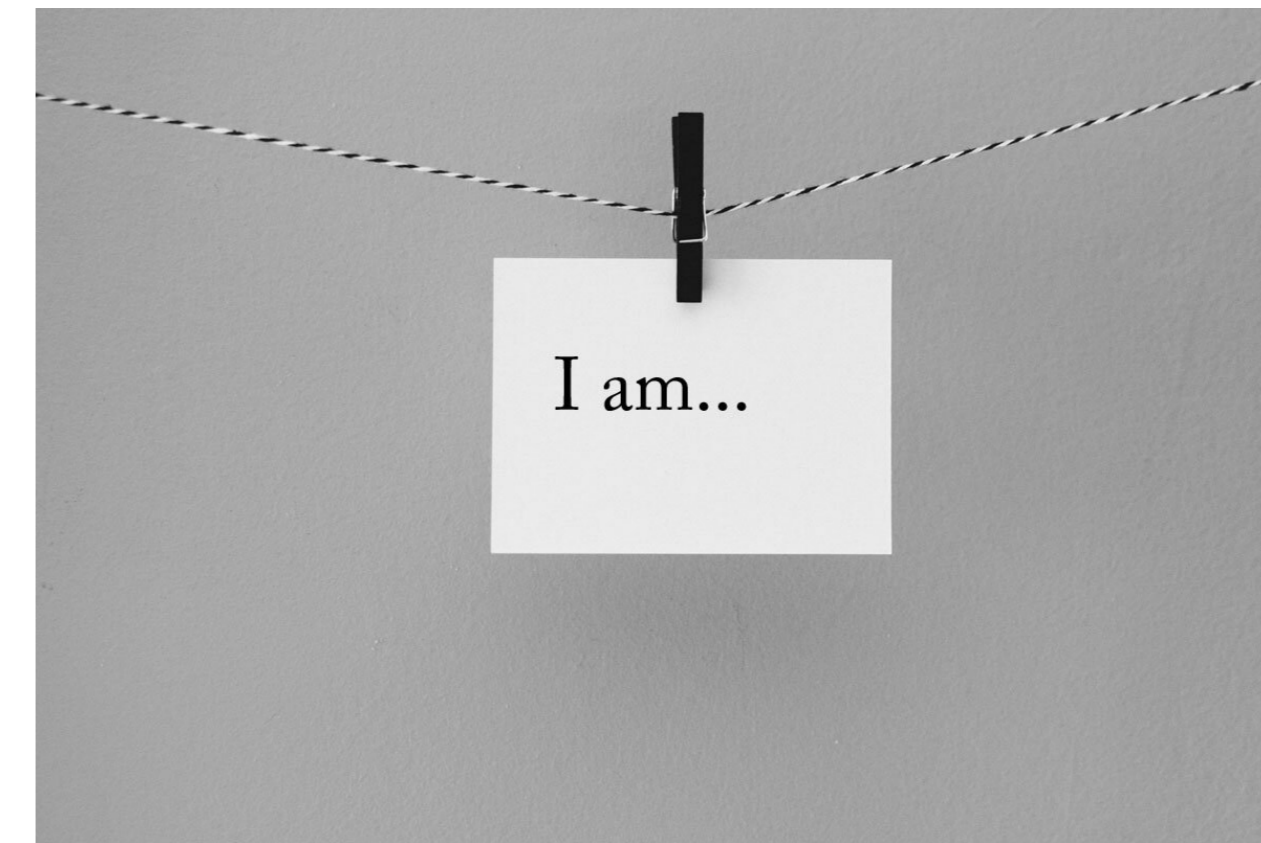
**Disability Support Services Director**

**Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University**

*Prescott Campus*



# Literature Review: Personal Identity



- College students have multiple facets to their identities
- Disabled students arriving at college: 1 of 2 identities
  1. Disability identity integrated from birth
  2. Personal identity developed prior to acquiring disability
- Military students with a service-acquired disability experience the second type



# Literature Review: Military Service

- The military has high minimum standards for determining a disability acquired during service
- May inadvertently stigmatize disability culture
- Disabled students go through stages of understanding and acceptance of their disability
- Military students
  - Struggle adapting to a disability identity as an adult
  - May receive very little documentation or support from the VA regarding their disability



# Literature Review: Rights & Responsibilities

- To be successful, student veterans need to understand
  - how their disability can alter their classroom engagement,
  - what their rights and responsibilities are under the ADA, and
  - how to obtain accommodations on campus
- They may also hesitate to seek services until they face barriers in the classroom





# Recommendations: Addressing Stigmatization

- Be aware that when a veteran or military student comes to you, they may be in your office reluctantly
- They may need extra time to discuss their concerns about receiving accommodations
- They may be watching you for cues about how they should view disability



# Recommendations: Ensuring Equal Access

- Recognize and support their efforts to accept their disability
- Understand that acceptance may be difficult
- Teach them about the role of the ADA in their lives



# Recommendations: Campus Veterans' Services

- Find out who your campus veterans' services specialist is
- Make sure their staff knows what your office does and when they should refer military students
- Consult with them and seek guidance on engaging with military students
- Ask military students you meet with if they have connected with veterans' services on campus



# Part 3 : Review of Veteran Services

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**Veteran Services Coordinator and ERAU Alumni**

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# Service-Connected Disability Ratings

- 180 to 90 Days - A Pre-Discharge Claim
- Less than 90 days - No claims allowed until fully discharged
- From 90 days pre-discharge until 1 year post- discharged any new claims are still considered service connected.
- This starts a lengthy process of many medical evaluation's



# Unrated Veterans

- If Veteran has not filed – Contact a Veterans Benefits Advisor
- Certified Veterans Service Officer (VSO), (American Legion, Dept. Of Vet. Services)
- They understand and can navigate the VA system.
- DD-214 = Discharge Papers and Copy of Medical Record
- Claim process on average takes 9 months for results



# Documentation Provided by the VA

*Please follow the handout "VA Disability Ratings Letter" while I discuss key points.*



# How to Access Documentation

- <https://www.va.gov/>
- Options on signing into “My HealtheVet”
- Download or print your rating
- Options on navigating and requesting other information





# Personal Pride

- Vets are extremely proud of their service to this country
- Pride may stop them from requesting services
- Reluctant to come forward and ask for help
- My own experience as a student at Embry-Riddle



# Summary & Conclusion

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# Key Points

- Military and veteran students often have complex, overlapping disabilities.
- They need to be supported through their journey of acceptance
  - of their disability
  - of coming to you for services
- Documentation from the VA can be sparse, so accept what you can get.
- The VA clinician is not going to recommend accommodations.



# Questions & Comments

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