Vocational adjustment following separation from military service: a qualitative investigation of work integration challenges for Gulf War-Era II veterans with PTSD

Hayes, Paul J.

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Abstract:
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Gulf War-era II veterans has resulted in psychological wounds attributed to military duty in Afghanistan and Iraq warzones. In the U.S., PTSD is now in fifth place trailing in prevalence more common psychological disorders of depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, specific phobia, and social phobia as ranked in previous surveys, with social service and societal costs soaring into the billions of dollars. Many veterans returning from these wars are transitioning to civilian life after military separation without trauma stressor mitigation or jobs. Warzone-related stress disorders among veterans are sometimes responsible for struggles experienced with entering or reentering the workforce often requiring appropriate work adjustment and work integration. The conceptual framework for this study was derived from three sequentially developing interactive specific subsystem components that comprise the model of work adjustment. The model was chosen to examine the work personalities, work competencies, and work goals of homeless and unemployed Gulf War-era veterans with PTSD in relation to successful work adjustment and work integration. The purposes of the present investigation were to address the following questions (1) How do veterans with PTSD view their work competencies?, (2) What significant work integration and work adjustment challenges do veterans with PTSD experience?, and (3) To what extent have veteran work goals changed from pre- to post-military service? Participants were 10 Gulf War-era veterans with PTSD, separated from military service at a minimum of one year preceding the investigation, and living in a southwestern city residential substance addiction treatment facility. The research consisted of 12 open-ended or semi-structured questions asked of the participants. Data revealed five emergent themes of: (a) veterans PTSD experiences; (b) overcoming homelessness; (c) motivation to change; (d) family support and quality of life; and (e) rehabilitation counseling, education, and career preparation strategies, resulting in 19 sub-themes. The sub-themes indicated congruence between each other and the participants' perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs. Also strongly indicated were the participants' employment capabilities after work adjustment, worth as viable assets in the workforce, ability to restore their work identities, re-establish self-sufficiency, and ability to attain an ample quality of life. Study results emphasize the significance of recognizing and treating the effects of PTSD on veterans seeking workforce inclusion. Future research should incorporate more sample population diversity and assess veteran PTSD barriers to employment from a longitudinal perspective.

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Life within many military families is forever changed when a service member deploys to a combat zone. To date, more than 3,240 Americans deployed in support of the GWOT have been killed and over 23,000 have returned from a combat zone with physical wounds and a range of permanent disabilities (e.g., traumatic brain injury). In addition to these physical wounds, as many as one-fourth of all returning service members are struggling with invisible psychological injuries. The work of this Task Force is taking place at a time of growing media and congressional interest in the mental health services being provided to returning service members and military families. Compulsory Military Service or conscription is practiced by numerous countries worldwide wherein able-bodied men and women at a certain age bracket are required to enlist in military service. This has existed way back the time of Hammurabi, which was more than 1700 years B.C. and in modern times, there are still countries like Singapore, Cuba, North Korea and Taiwan among others. Some have both compulsory and voluntary service. The list includes most countries in the region of Europe and Asia. Here are the two sides of this military service. List of Advantages of