

Preparing America's Best

Twelve Leaders Offer Suggestions for Educating, Training, and Employing Service Members and Veterans



Author: Micheline Wijtenburg, MS

Project Manager/Editor: Celia Straus, MA

Associate Editor: Pamela Woll, MA, CADP

Project Director: Barbara Van Dahlen, PhD, President, Give an Hour™

Project Sponsor: National Organization on Disability, Carol A. Glazer, President



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Give an Hour™

P.O. Box 5918
Bethesda, MD 20824

National Organization on Disability

5 East 86th Street
New York, NY 10028
1625 K Street NW, Suite 802
Washington, DC 20006

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Introduction to *Preparing America's Best*

Many educators, trainers, and employers are exploring the benefits of enrolling or hiring service members and returning veterans, and looking for ways to attract and retain the best candidates.

We frequently hear from national leaders on veterans' healthcare needs and challenges, but seldom do we hear about the value of service members and veterans as students, employees, and volunteers within the civilian world.

For this booklet, Give an Hour interviewed twelve out of the many leaders who are closely involved in educating, training, employing, encouraging, and mentoring service members and veterans. Their answers are offered in brief interview format, to provide a quick compendium of suggestions—from the concrete and practical to the thought provoking and the inspiring.

The reader is invited to consider the ideas presented, to try out some of these suggestions, and to continue the process by consulting and networking with these and many other local and national leaders who are contributing to the solution in this vital arena. The well being of service members, veterans, families, educational institutions, training organizations, workplaces, and our entire economy will be much the better for all these efforts.

Resources in the "America's Best" Series

Hiring America's Best is part of a series of materials written to address the growing need for information and ideas that can help our nation's schools, training organizations, and workplaces make a welcoming, productive, and satisfying place for returning veterans and transitioning service members.

The series starts with four core booklets:

- *Teaching America's Best: Preparing Your Classrooms to Welcome Returning Veterans and Service Members* offers educators and trainers information and ideas for attracting, retaining, involving, and giving the best education and training to service members and veterans.
- *Hiring America's Best: Preparing Your Workplace to Welcome Returning Veterans and Service Members* offers employers insight into this pool of potential employees, suggestions for lowering stress and enhancing productivity for all employees, and information on effective responses to war-zone stress injuries.
- *Preparing America's Best: Twelve Leaders Offer Suggestions for Educating, Training, and Employing Service Members and Veterans* presents interviews with leaders involved in a variety of aspects of education and employment of service members and veterans.
- *Learning about America's Best: Resources on Educating, Training, and Hiring Returning Veterans and Service Members* provides a quick list of some of the many books, articles, and web sites that offer information for educators, trainers, employers, service members, veterans, and family members.

Also included in the “America’s Best” series are several fact sheets and worksheets. These tools are collected in a document called *Tools for America’s Best*, so they can be duplicated and used for faculty, staff, student, and employee training and education.

Tools for Educators, Trainers, and Employers:

- **“Welcoming Service Members and Veterans Home”** offers suggestions for appropriate responses to service members and veterans.
- **“The United States Armed Forces”** provides information for civilians about the military and its culture, which have shaped much of the thoughts and actions of returning veterans and service members.
- **“Resilience, Stress, and Trauma”** will help people understand the effects of heavy psychological and physical stress and threat and the options for getting help—whether it is a veteran, another staff member, or a friend or family member who is experiencing these effects.
- **“Myths and Realities about Service Members, Veterans, and PTSD”** will help people acknowledge and answer some of the common myths that can sustain stigma and get in the way of clear understanding and communication

Additional Tools for Educators and Trainers:

- Two tools—**“Strategies for Improving Attention”** and **“Strategies for Improving Memory”**—will give counselors and advisors ideas and home practice tasks that they can provide to students who approach them regarding the effects of injuries or disabilities.
- **“Accommodations for Learning Challenges”** will provide a comprehensive list of strategies that counselors and advisors can use in helping students overcome educational challenges commonly associated with many types of injuries and disabilities.

Additional Tools for Employers:

- **“Organizational Assessment: Welcome and Respect for Service Members and Veterans”** will help employers determine where their organizations are in their progress toward more effective responses toward service members and veterans.
- **The “Organizational Stress Survey”** will help employers assess and address any sources of unnecessary stress in the workplace, for the good of all employees, for productivity, and for organizational health and viability.
- The **“Job Accommodation and Productivity Support Checklist”** offers managers, supervisors, and employees a number of suggestions for managing specific effects of PTSD, depression, anxiety, TBI, etc. in the workplace and increasing employee productivity and effectiveness.
- The **“Job Accommodation and Productivity Support Worksheet”** offers a framework in which employees can work with their supervisors to identify the difficulties they are experiencing and their effects on performance, and explore possible accommodations. This can be used together with, or separate from, the “Job Accommodation and Productivity Support Checklist.”

All materials in the “America’s Best” series have been co-published by the National Organization on Disability (NOD) and Give an Hour™ (GAH) and are available for free download from their web sites. For the use of any excerpts from this series, we request that appropriate credit be given to NOD and GAH, and to the authors and contributors.

Dan Arkins

Director of Disability

MetLife

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve

Brief Biography

Dan Arkins is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves. He has served one tour of active duty, in 2003. Mr. Arkins is the Director of Disability for MetLife Insurance, and regarded as the subject matter expert regarding disabilities and service members within the MetLife organization. In addition, he served as co-chair of a 2008 Think Tank regarding best practices in assisting reserve members returning to employment post-deployment. Finally, Mr. Arkins participated in the Bataan Memorial Death March, a 26.2-mile march through the New Mexico desert in support of wounded warriors.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- AWARENESS is key
 - Employers must become aware of:
 - Re-employment rights and laws
 - Necessary physical accommodations
 - The differences between military and civilian cultures and the adjustment time that is required upon return (every individual adjusts on his or her own time, and in his or her own way)
 - They need space
 - Do not force discussion about their experience
 - Be open to listening if they do want to discuss their experience
 - Look for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) red flags (become aware of what they are)
- While employees are deployed, it's important for employers to continue to stay in touch with service members and their families

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Many of these practices are outlined in *Extreme Productivity: Are Your Employees Hitting the Wall?*, a white paper based on the 2008 Think Tank that Mr. Arkin chaired, and published by Disability Management Employer Coalition (DMEC). That Think Tank was organized by DMEC to explore the presence and impact of workplace stress and to advance best practices in promoting employee wellness and productivity. It was co-sponsored by a variety of organizations, including The Hartford, MetLife, Liberty Mutual, Anthem Life, Aetna, OptumHealth, and Crowe Paradis.

- Employers must have a plan of action for the return of service members and veterans
- At present, less than 1% of the American population is in the military, so employers must take steps to understand the military culture and how it differs from civilian culture

Are there any books, links, or resources that you believe may be useful for employers and/or educators?

- *Workplace Warriors: The Corporate Response to Deployment and Reintegration*, a white paper based on a 2007 Think Tank co-sponsored by Disability Management Employer Coalition and MetLife
- *Extreme Productivity: Are Your Employees Hitting the Wall?*, a white paper based on a 2008 Think Tank and published by Disability Management Employer Coalition

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- Do not be afraid of getting involved
 - Either through reaching out or through addressing coping skills and behaviors
- Increase the level of sensitivity to interpersonal problems and challenges coping with adjustment from military to civilian culture

Marcia Carruthers, MBA, ARM, CPDM

Co-founder, President, and CEO
Disability Management Employer Coalition (DMEC)

Brief Biography

Marcia Carruthers, MBA, ARM, CPDM is Co-founder, President, and CEO of the Disability Management Employer Coalition (DMEC). The mission of this national organization is to advance strategies and resources that improve workforce productivity by minimizing the impact of absence and disability. To that end, DMEC provides education, facilitates networking, and develops and disseminates a variety of publications. Ms. Carruthers has worked in disability management in both for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. Her specialties include behavioral risk management, integrated absence and disability management, risk management in general, and small association/not-for-profit management. She is a co-author (with Carol Harnett) of *Workplace Warriors: The Corporate Response to Deployment and Reintegration*.

Tell me briefly about your experience/expertise in working with disabled veterans in the workforce or members of the military who are returning to work.

We have two kinds of members—supplier/vendors as well as employers. We have roughly 3,500 members, and they all have access to this information because it's a member benefit. We did a white paper a couple of years ago on this, because we thought it was a timely subject, even though at first glance some of our members say, "It's not a big issue for us." We did the math and figured out that it wasn't just the workplace warriors; it was all the other lives they touched that were impacted. We try to do think tanks on an every-other-year basis on a subject that is important to our members. We continue to do a lot of work on this, because the war is still going on and the problems are still there. Other ways we've used this information: we did a presentation at our annual conference and a webinar on the topic. These are among the resources that are available in our library.

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

In terms of what employers do, the best practices pretty much mirror best practices in any disability program. You want to make sure you maintain communication with your employees: At the earliest opportunity, talk to them about return-to-work options, provide the resources they need, make sure you're checking in with those with disabling injuries, do some education in terms of supervisors and HR personnel to make sure they understand the best management practices. You should talk to employees about the possibility of making some accommodations for them in the office. Early intervention is key, making them feel welcome in the workplace.

That sounds like it requires a lot of sensitivity and special attention on the part of employers. Do you ever encounter any resistance from employers?

We didn't get any pushback from our employers. The most significant comment we heard from them was, "We only have one or two people this applies to." That's probably true, but this impacts a lot of people. They were part of a team, so there are X number of people in the workplace who had to make up for their job and are impacted by the person coming back. Then you have the families that have a person in the military, so they're affected. It continues on, with no end in sight. Then, of course, there are those people who came back and seem fine and then, a couple of years down the road, start to experience problems, so we try to make supervisors aware of red flags that may show up—changes in performance, outbursts, withdrawal, arriving at work later or leaving early.

What's the next step once you notice these behavioral changes?

Well, 97% of companies have an EAP (Employee Assistance Program), so that resource is out there and available. Depending on your role in the company, you want to make sure that process is set up in order to make that “warm transfer” happen. The EAP tends to be a confidential resource, so that information may not be shared. Another idea—and this came from a gentleman from Booz Allen—is establishing a mentor program, where some of these people coming back have someone who has been through a similar experience, who they feel comfortable talking to about some of the challenges they might have in reintegrating into the workplace. I know Veterans Affairs has some programs like that, too.

The flip-side of all this is that there's a whole wealth of knowledge that these veterans have, and all of their leadership skills that are really important to recognize. That has value above and beyond all the technical skills they might have. It may be that a returning employee who might not have had a leadership position before is now prepared for one.

Are there any books, links, or resources that you believe may be useful for employers and/or educators?

- Based on the 2007 Think Tank, we pulled together a list of resources (called “DMEC Workplace Warrior – Think Tank 2007 Resource List”). It's a little dated, but at least at that point in time it was some of the stuff we thought was most interesting.
- My resource list would also include information about the law and complying with the law, USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act), and it applies to every single employer, whether they have one employee or 600 employees. They need to be aware that they have to comply. There's a book available online.
- The last resource is the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health. They provide resources for employers, from basic brochures on “What Is Depression?” to best practices for mental health programs. They also provide information on mental health parity and those kinds of things.

Dr. Jason Demery

Neuropsychologist

North Florida/South Georgia VA Medical Center

Brief Biography

Jason Demery, PhD is a licensed, practicing neuropsychologist in the state of Florida, working as a neuropsychologist at the North Florida/South Georgia VA Medical Center (N.FL/S.GA VA). In that role, he administers, interprets, and writes reports for veterans regarding learning disabilities, ADHD, Traumatic Brain Injuries, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, to name just a few. These evaluation reports are used to help quantify people's levels of cognitive functioning, in order to help them return to work or school. In addition, these results help determine the levels of services the veterans should receive from the VA. Finally, it is important to note that Dr. Demery is not seeing the "average" veteran/service member, because he is in a VA Medical Center and only evaluating individuals who are actively seeking treatment. Therefore, several of his patients are presenting with moderate-to-severe cognitive impairment, as well as comorbid disorders and/or symptomology (e.g., depression, sleep problems, chronic pain).

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Educating co-workers (with the permission of the service member) regarding symptoms and what to do/not do around individuals with PTSD, TBI, or complex mental health disorders.
- Give opportunities for rest over an eight- or nine-hour shift
- FLEXIBILITY!!
- Allow time to attend VA appointments. Several mental health interventions are most effective when people attend more than one session a week.
- Allow the service member or veteran to feel in control. Typically, when they are given reasonable tasks and are not forced to depend on others, they work more effectively.
- Relax time constraints: Memory deficits are often an obstacle for service members and veterans with PTSD and/or TBI
- Managers must be cautious of irritability. It is not necessarily a characteristic of the individual, but rather the symptom of a TBI or a mental health disorder

What best practices do you suggest in working this population?

- Flexibility—ability to take into account the previous experience these individuals have endured
- Do not stress out or frustrate the service member—typically people with PTSD, TBI, and other such injuries do not have enough coping skills to deal with these stressful/frustrating situations
- Become aware and conscious of startle responses
- Discourage multi-tasking

Are there any books, links, or resources that you believe may be useful for employers and/or educators?

- *Life After Brain Injury*
- *Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Workbook*

Dr. Demery noted that only fairly recently have TBI and PTSD been recognized as possible comorbidities. As a result, several useful materials, links, and other resources are available regarding either PTSD or TBI, but few address the effects of comorbidity.

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- High-stress environments
- Not allowing people the flexibility to attend VA appointments
- Difficulty getting along with others—based on co-workers/students/educators/managers not understanding the symptoms and behaviors related to TBI, PTSD, and severe mental health disorders.

Dr. Demery noted that service member/veteran-friendly working/school environments appear to have greater success in attracting these populations and provide a better fit for their educational needs.

L. Tammy Duckworth

Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Brief Biography

Assistant Secretary Duckworth has served as Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) since April, 2009. In this role she represents veterans and advises the VA in matters regarding media and public affairs. In addition, she served as Director of the Illinois VA from 2006 to 2008. During this time, she initiated several programs regarding health and mental health care, housing, and employment, and she worked substantially with disability and PTSD in veterans. In addition to her experience with the VA, she is an Iraq War veteran who served as a Black Hawk helicopter pilot and continues to serve as a Major in the Illinois Army National Guard. On a mission in 2004, her helicopter was shot by a rocket-propelled grenade. As a result of the attack, she lost both her legs and partial use of one arm and received the Purple Heart, Air Medal, and Combat Action Badge. She focuses much of her professional attention on the advancement of disabled individuals' rights.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Employers must be able to recognize that hiring a disabled veteran is advantageous to them.
 - Educate the employers about the benefits:
 - Loyalty—people with disabilities are much more likely to stay with a company longer than those who are not disabled (this saves on training, and they are willing to train new employees based on their long-term experience)
 - Resilience—incredible ability to overcome obstacles
 - An office using “universal design” is beneficial for everyone:
 - Uncluttered office
 - Ramp and automatic doors are useful for everyone (e.g., during deliveries)

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Actually hire them!
- Don't treat them any differently than you would any other employees; however, remain realistic about their limits:
 - They are just like any other person, and many skills are not out of reach
 - Recognize that they know it is their responsibility to tell you if you're asking them to do something their disabilities prevent. “If I can't do it, I'll speak up”

Are there any books, links, or resources that you believe may be useful for employers and/or educators?

- One good resource is Access Living (Chicago, Illinois), a leading independent living center for people with disabilities. The Executive Director, Marcia Bristo, is also an excellent source of information.

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- Many veterans are not aware that they have experienced mild-to-moderate brain injuries:
 - Effects—long- and/or short-term memory loss
 - There are several useful coping skills
- Employers, family members, therapists, etc. are often first to see the symptoms of TBI:
 - It is important for these individuals to understand TBI as a combat wound
 - Be supportive
 - Encourage care
 - Encourage the veteran to get properly diagnosed—tease out TBI and PTSD
 - Be aware

Carol Harnett, MS, GBDS

Clinical Physiologist

Assistant Vice President and National Disability and Life Practice Leader

Group Benefits Division

The Hartford

Brief Biography

Ms. Harnett is a clinical physiologist and an Assistant Vice President and the National Disability and Life Practice Leader for The Hartford's Group Benefits Division. She is responsible for disability research; analytic and consultative services; and information dissemination regarding employers' health, absence, and workplace productivity trends. She is a co-author (with Marcia Carruthers) of *Workplace Warriors: The Corporate Response to Deployment and Reintegration*. In addition, Ms. Harnett leads the Center for Ability, an information resource center for consultants, employers, and Hartford staff. Ms. Harnett also serves on the Board of Disabled Sports USA, which helps encourage and support individuals with disabilities, particularly wounded warriors, back into active duty or employment and education through active participation in sports. In addition, she served as co-chair of a think tank regarding best practices in assisting reserve members returning to employment after deployment. Ms. Harnett also participated in the Bataan Memorial Death March, a 26.2-mile march through the New Mexico in support of wounded warriors.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Specifically for Reserve and Guardsmen:
 - Help them prepare for deployment before they are deployed.
 - Employer:
 - Will you be holding their job?
 - Is there a policy for deployed employees?
 - Do you follow the policy?
 - Will you be supplementing military pay while the employee is deployed?
 - Educator:
 - Advise the student to speak with an advisor.
 - What will happen with status in school?
 - How long will credits remain active?
 - Should the student move to inactive status for the deployment period?
- Returning service members and veterans:
 - Acknowledge that they have returned, but remember to *ask what THEY need in the re-acclimation process*.
 - Ask them about the best way to meet their needs.
 - Do they need a “refresher” course(s)? Tutorial? Orientation?

- Employers—many veterans return with decreased tolerance and patience for petty details. Attempt to minimize minor interpersonal “drama.”
 - When interacting with returning veterans, let them take the lead!
 - Do NOT ask for personal or graphic details (e.g., “Were you shot?” “Did you kill anyone?” “How many people did you kill?”).
 - Do NOT ask questions just to satisfy your own curiosity—be supportive of the service member.
 - Attempt to update veterans on current U.S. events and culture. Many have been deployed for several months, if not years. Catch them up on political, economic, and social issues.
- Above all, be supportive!!

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Through the appropriate channels, service members and veterans should be screened for PTSD, TBI, and other mental health concerns upon return—and *followed up 6 months after initial screening*.
- Do not make assumptions:
 - Although you may react a certain way, you know someone else who reacts a certain way, or a service member who reacts a certain way... Do NOT assume that everyone reacts in a similar fashion.
 - Recognize that everyone, especially service members, will respond differently, and make an effort to understand the individual.
 - Do not judge based on what you assume their experience has been. Some serve members have had a significant impact working with villages and spent very little time actually in combat.
- Increase your knowledge of military culture and its impact on a veteran’s daily living.
- Respect the enduring recovery process.
- Show respect and appreciation, stating, “Thank you for your service” when you greet a service member.

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- TBI is an invisible disability:
 - Not always a mental health issue
 - Do not assume the service member does or does not have a TBI based on presentation, behavior, and thought processes.

Ilona Meagher

Editor

PTSD Combat: Winning the War Within

Author

Moving a Nation to Care: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and America's Returning Troops

Brief Biography

Ilona Meagher is an independent Illinois-based online writer, public speaker, new media developer and author of *Moving a Nation to Care: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and America's Returning Troops*. She is also the editor of the online journal *PTSD Combat: Winning the War Within*. Her work has attracted national attention and respect. The daughter of a veteran, Ms. Meagher first became involved in the evolution of the Veterans Club at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb (one of the longest-standing on-campus veterans' clubs in the nation) when she was a student there. She has worked with student veterans on campus for several years, learning from their experiences and providing mentorship support for their efforts.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- A good first step for educators is simply to be aware of who the service members and veterans are on campus, and in the community. Even if you think you're not living in a "military town," there are members of the reserve components (National Guard and Reserve) in every town.
- Training for faculty and staff—including training on the military culture and issues relevant to service members and veterans—is an important part of the process.
- Understand that many of these students are very mature and very specific about their educational goals. Many enjoy history, information about the military, psychology, PTSD, etc.
- Know that your school or training center may be the best opportunity for assistance in reintegration that many service members or veterans can find. In a conference on community reintegration sponsored by Survivor Corps in 2009, the many stakeholders concurred that educational institutions are often the first resource veterans will come in contact with, if they don't want to go to the Vet Center or the VA.

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- A "one-stop shopping model" that allows service members and veterans to get information, assistance, and support in all areas, including veterans' activities, GI Bill issues, mental health issues, and career services. If you can't afford a student veterans' center, you can set up an office that handles VA and GI Bill benefits.
- A peer-to-peer model is the most effective. A veteran should head student veterans' services.

- The veteran in charge of student veterans' services, along with veterans in the student body, should be active in educating and training faculty and staff on the needs and assets of student service members and veterans.
- In training faculty on the issues and challenges they might encounter in working with this subject, it's essential to be careful not to stigmatize and sensationalize the subject. For example, one school made a video outlining the issues that might arise in classrooms, and an actor portraying a student veteran acted out an incident in which the veteran "went berserk" in class, followed by advice on how to handle these situations. Although everyone's intentions were good, the video was highly stigmatizing and turned out to be a significant embarrassment to its producers.
- Train faculty in safe and effective facilitation of discussions on military- or combat-related topics between military/veteran and civilian students, to avoid situations in which civilian students say insensitive things that may alienate service members and veterans and hamper the process of communication and reintegration.
- There are many opportunities to promote well facilitated discussions of military and reintegration issues in classroom formats. For example, courses might present films on war- or reintegration-related topics, with the instructors leading discussion designed to promote mutual understanding. It's important to understand that it's not always easy for educational institutions to approach discussion of these kinds of topics, so using the student veterans on campus to help design these programs will make it easier and more effective.

Patrick O'Rourke

Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel
Director of Veteran Affairs
California State University, Long Beach

Brief Biography

Patrick O'Rourke is Director of Veterans University at California State University, Long Beach. In this role, Mr. O'Rourke heads a department that helps service members and veterans connect to resources, either before or after deployment. In addition, Mr. O'Rourke assists in the initiative to create awareness regarding off-campus support for healthcare, employment, and transition. He is a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army, who served twenty years in the active component and two years in the National Guard. Mr. O'Rourke received a bachelor's degree in International Relations, followed by a master's degree in National Security Affairs.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Educators:
 - Recognize that service members are different and experience different problems from those that civilians experience.
 - Reach out to ethnic minorities—there are many first-generation bachelor's degree seekers, and they are unaware of the process and the elements of support that they will need.
 - There are many adult learners—25 years old and older—enrolling in college, much more mature than their fellow students.
 - Work toward a better understanding of the demographics and programs available.
 - Become aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each individual.
 - Learn to work with both the school and the VA:
 - Both have excellent resources for each individual, but educators need to be flexible to allow the veterans to take advantage of those resources.
 - Discover and acknowledge each individual's greatest accomplishments and responsibilities:
 - Some of these individuals have been leaders in much greater capacities than people can imagine (e.g., having several individuals' lives in their hands and under their direction).

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Facilitate the formation of peer-to-peer student groups.
- Have veteran staff work with veteran students.
- Keep your opinions to yourself.

- Show sensitivity to issues and differences.
- Focus on interpersonal adjustment.
- Maintain a high level of respect for each individual.

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- Not enough knowledge and use of resources available to veterans in the employment and educational sectors
- Not enough use of referrals on campus
- Not enough engagement of students or employees to utilize the VA and Vet Centers
- Student groups (peer support structure) not being implemented
 - Peer-to-peer student groups are imperative!

Gary Profit

Senior Director, Military Programs
Walmart

Brief Biography

Mr. Profit is a former Brigadier General, retired from the Army in February, 2006. Following his retirement from the Army, he worked for 30 months with General Dynamics Information Technology. In October of 2008, he accepted a position with Walmart as the Senior Director of Military Programs. In this role, Mr. Profit formulates strategy and builds sustainable programs to attract, recruit, hire, grow, develop, and retain the best of the men and women returning from military service.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Work should have a culture similar to the military culture:
 - A place that has values similar to their service values
- Maintain a work environment that values military experience, the service, and the sacrifice (e.g., a place that employs several military service members or retirees).
- Veterans and service members prefer to be part of something that is larger than themselves (similar to the military):
 - They want to be able to be in a position where they can make a difference
- Create a work environment that is committed to growing and developing people.

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Provide a work environment that maintains social responsibility and commitment to its culture and takes responsibilities seriously.
- Be sure that the combination of employer and employee is a good fit for both.
- Don't ask the individual to make a fundamental transformation.

Are there any books, links, or resources that you believe may be useful for employers and/or educators?

- *Combat Leader to Corporate Leader* by Chad Storlie

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- It is far easier to fix obvious wounds you can see:
 - Need to offer support and make appropriate referrals
 - Help make them feel comfortable
 - Develop a mentorship program

Michael Reardon

Senior Policy Advisor
Office of Disability Employment Policy
U.S. Department of Labor
Manager
America's Heroes at Work

Brief Biography

Mr. Reardon is the Senior Policy Advisor in the United States Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. In this role, he is responsible for staying abreast of all developments regarding disability employment policies throughout the United States. In addition, Mr. Reardon manages America's Heroes at Work, a high-profile organization geared toward employers and what they need to know about veterans in the workplace. Their web site (<http://www.americasheroesatwork.gov/>) provides training tools and resources for employers working with veterans.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Connect veterans and service men/women with veterans already working in the organization:
 - Less likely to quit
 - Bind the leadership:
 - Make sure that everyone is onboard
 - Often it must start from the top (e.g., CEO should take the initiative so that all employees recognize the importance and follow suit)

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Focus on employment and mental health:
 - There is an increased need for both.
 - Without employment, recovery is difficult; however, without mental health awareness and treatment (if necessary), recovery is difficult as well.

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- Military résumé:
 - Does not translate into the civilian world
 - Veterans' and service members' military work does not often translate easily into civilian careers. Important for employment coaching, to understand how to translate their skills into the civilian work place.
- Stigma:
 - Many employers do not have an accurate understanding of what veterans have experienced.

- Usually their only exposure is the sensationalism they see on television, which is not the whole experience of a veteran.
- Many veterans are hired because it looks good for their company.
 - It is important for employers to hire veterans for their skills (e.g., leadership, reliability, “stick-to-it-ness”) and the positive attributes they bring to the organization.

Ed Veiga

Vice President, Strategic Communication and Development
Military Child Education Coalition

Brief Biography

Mr. Veiga grew up in a military family. He continued to pursue a military career and retired as an officer in the U.S. Army in 2001. Mr. Veiga served as a member of the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) and became a Board Member in May, 2009. The mission of the MCEC is “To ensure inclusive, quality educational experiences for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition.” To that end, Mr. Veiga focuses his attention on outreach through the media, educators, and corporate sponsors/supporters. In addition, he actively explores programs for military families, especially parents.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Assist in the transition from military life to civilian life:
 - Help connect the veteran or service member to resources in the community.
 - The VA does not have many, if any, resources for families.
 - Address the needs of the family as well as the individual.
 - Many mental health/adjustment issues involve the family as well.
 - Keep it local: it is important to have community support, involvement, and resources.

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Find advocates to help connect veterans and service members to available resources:
 - It is often difficult for people to make choices when they are under stress.
 - It is important for the advocate to be aware of the needs or potential needs of the individual and the variety of resources available in the community.

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- It is important to have networks of support established, in order to gain collateral information regarding a veteran’s or a service member’s behavior and/or experiences, and changes in these areas of life.
- It is equally important to provide the appropriate interventions and to refer service members and veterans to professionals in the community who are better trained and prepared to treat/address the mental health disorders at hand.

Garland Williams, PhD

Associate Regional Vice President, Military Division
University of Phoenix

Brief Biography

Garland Williams is Associate Regional Vice President, Military Division, for the University of Phoenix, the largest private university in North America, with 18,000 faculty, more than 200 campus locations (many near military installations and some overseas), and online programs available in most countries around the world. After 28 years' service, Dr. Williams retired from the United States Army with the rank of Colonel in Autumn, 2009. In the Army, his command duties took him to Germany, Italy, Japan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania, Croatia, Kuwait, and Egypt. Dr. Williams is also the author of *Engineering Peace: The Military Role in Postconflict Reconstruction*. In his new civilian position, Dr. Williams is responsible for a multifaceted approach toward making education accessible, affordable, and effective for service members and veterans—wherever they may be. At any given time the University averages about 40,000 military students (currently 51% are veterans and 27% are military spouses), roughly 10% of its total student population, and has tailored its academic counseling services to the needs of this population.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- It's important to help military students understand that a higher education is a goal they want to attain, and to work with them to make that possible. Many students are the first within their families to go to college or to graduate.
- The University takes several steps to help employers and military students understand how valuable the military skills are and how well they can translate to the civilian workplace, and to educate employers on the many other benefits of hiring service members and veterans.

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- The University of Phoenix has a separate Military Division, staffed with 1,000 counselors (enrollment, academic, financial, etc.), all of whom are former students. Most of these counselors have served in the military, and the rest are military spouses or civilians who have worked with the military in past positions.
- As of this writing, several campuses are being designated "Military Approved Providers," based on a number of criteria, including proximity to military installations. Counselors with prior service and special understanding of the GI bill will be available to serve students face to face. Counselors on other campuses have been trained to "speak military," in case of military walk-ins.
- Each student is assigned a team of counselors who follow him or her from enrollment through graduation, providing customized guidance, with the help of Sharepoint software that allows the counselors to communicate and share appropriate records.

- The University accommodates “rolling start-dates,” so students don’t have to wait for the semester or quarter to start, but can fit their studies around their deployment schedules. Many service members continue their online studies during deployment, and they can also accelerate their progress between deployments.
- The University has lowered its per-credit tuition rate to the military tuition assistance level, so that service members won’t have to touch their GI Bill benefits during active service.
- Counselors are trained to explore all possible financial resources, so that out-of-pocket expenses are as low as possible and loans are the option of last resort.
- The University also currently has two collaborative scholarship programs: In partnership with the Armed Forces Foundation, they have the Severely Injured Veterans Scholarship Program (targeting Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC), offering four full-tuition scholarships to severely injured veterans or service members, and one to a spouse or primary caregiver. There is also the University of Phoenix AMVETS Scholarship Program, offering 50 \$7,000 scholarships to service members, veterans, spouses, and children (within the age guidelines).
- Students have access to a growing digital library, which cuts down on the cost of materials.

Are there any books, links, or resources that you believe may be useful for employers and/or educators?

- www.army.com provides some good insight into the day-to-day experiences of a Soldier, and through a tool called Basic Training 101, civilians can see what Basic is like.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs has a high volume of information on veterans and tips for navigating the GI Bill.
- Books about the modern generals can give more information about military leadership.
- It’s a good idea to go to the Military section of a bookstore and look for information on the conflicts in which students or employees have fought.

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- There is a lot of stigma to be overcome, much of it rooted in the sensationalized portrayal of challenges faced by earlier generations of veterans. It’s important that this stigma not be passed on to the current generation. These are smart students with much to offer.
- Last year the Army’s suicide rate equaled that of the civilian population—far too high, given the strong support structure in the Army. Something is failing these Soldiers.
- Within the military culture, there have been significant efforts to de-stigmatize these issues, though there is still much to be done.
- It’s difficult for deployed service members to get the time and energy to participate in academic studies, given the exhausting nature of their work. Between deployments, service members have a hard time “ramping down” for studies when they will soon have to “ramp up” for redeployment and they need some time with their families.

Mary Yonkman

Chief Strategy Officer

The Mission Continues

Co-author of *All Volunteer Force: From Military to Civilian Service*

Brief Biography

Mary Yonkman is Chief Strategy Officer for “The Mission Continues” (www.missioncontinues.org), an organization that empowers severely wounded veterans to continue their service. She is also the former Chief of Staff of Civic Enterprises, a public policy firm in Washington, DC that helps private, not-for-profit, and governmental bodies work to formulate and champion policies on a number of topics, with the common thread being promotion of engagement in civic service. She is co-author (with John Marshall Bridgeland) of *All Volunteer Force: From Military to Civilian Service*. Published by Civic Enterprises, *All Volunteer Force* is the first-ever report on civic engagement among OIF/OEF veterans, based on a national survey that they conducted. Ms. Yonkman also has a number of family connections to the military. Her husband is a Navy pilot, and she has several friends who have served in the current conflicts.

What steps do you find most useful for higher education, training organizations, or corporations to use to support veterans, active component, Guardsmen, or Reserve members?

- Many people are focused on ways in which military skills can translate to for-profit concerns, but very few thus far have looked at how those skills translate to not-for-profit endeavors—a large sector with very important work that might engage the powerful sense of purpose that men and women bring back from military service.
- Some of the skills that might be explored and put to work in civic engagement are skills in civic engineering, leadership, organization, operations, and team building, to name a few. When employers or academic advisors learn of the positions that service members and veterans have held in military service, they should spend the five minutes or so it would take to hear from their students or applicants the kinds of skills and duties those positions entailed. For many young men and women the military has been their only employer.
- It’s essential for employers (both for- and not-for-profit) and educators to learn about and harness the powerful sense of purpose that men and women are bringing back with them. For example, many employers struggle with formulating their mission statements. In the military, people are constantly reinventing their personal missions as the mission of the unit becomes further clarified and shifts with the situations at hand. These employees can be a great asset in the mission-development process.
- The family is very important in the lives of most veterans. Asking about family, how they’re doing, is a great gesture. The family can also be a great way to reach veterans, and many family members want to volunteer in civic roles alongside their veteran loved ones.

What best practices do you suggest in working with this population?

- Listening may be the most important, particularly for this generation of veterans. Perhaps the most alarming finding from the national survey was that, while 89% of those surveyed believed that Americans could learn from their (the veterans’) experiences, only 40% reported that they felt like leaders in their communities. They know what they’ve accomplished, but they don’t feel as if anyone around them knows.
- It is essential to listen sensitively and ask respectful questions, focused on learning about the strengths they bring back. Examples of good questions include “Of the things you accomplished over there, what are you most proud of?” “Who were you most honored to serve beside?” or “What were your biggest sources of support when you were deployed?”
- Even if a particular job might not carry with it an immediate sense of purpose, employers and educators can help veterans link to volunteer opportunities for service, like a chance to mentor a child, or work in or contribute to a corporate giving program.
- The Mission Continues has had amazing success in facilitating successful reintegration.
- Some of these veterans have never done resumes and may need some help navigating these and other tasks that civilians may take for granted.
- To learn more about this generation of veterans, you can use resources like Give an Hour, the VA, and even social networking sites like Facebook or networks like MTV, which has done a notable job of trying to connect with veterans. Probably about 80% are on social media.

Are there any books, links, or resources that you believe may be useful for employers and/or educators?

- *All Volunteer Force: From Military to Civilian Service*
- Many books written by men and women coming back from deployment can give a real sense of what that experience was. One example is *Joker One* (Donovan Campbell, Random House, 2009). Eric Greitens, Chairman and CEO of The Mission Continues, is also about to publish a book

What obstacles or difficulties have you seen regarding mental health and employment/education in these populations?

- Service members and veterans are stereotyped in some very misleading and unfair ways, given that one in 8 Americans has some sort of mental health issue.
- Many not-for-profit organizations have very good screening procedures for mental health issues. If they apply them fairly without being influenced by the stereotypes, that will help.
- This population simply needs to be treated fairly, as would any other employees, students, or volunteers.
- It takes 5-10 years for the average veteran to connect to veterans’ groups. This contributes to the isolation. Many in this generation of veterans are not going to be drawn to the traditional VSOs, though those organizations need to make all efforts to make sure they acknowledge and welcome veterans of these conflicts. “Community of Veterans” and other more contemporary web-based formats are appealing to many of the younger veterans.

The “America’s Best” Series

The “America’s Best” series was originally conceived by Basil Whiting, a senior fellow at the National Organization on Disability and former program director for the NOD Army Wounded Warrior Career Demonstration Project (Wounded Warriors Careers).

Early in the 2008 start-up phase of Wounded Warriors Careers, the NOD Career Specialists informed Basil that they had no useful materials or guidance that they could provide to those in educational institutions or training organizations (teachers, trainers, classmates) or in workplaces (employers, supervisors, co-workers) about the nature of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). More important, there seemed to be little if any practical information about ways in which those in classrooms and workplaces could help veterans with these afflictions succeed in their education, training, or work. In the absence of clear, positive, practical information and guidance, many educators/employers, etc. were reacting to sensationalized press accounts about sometimes-problematic behaviors on the part of veterans with PTSD and/or TBI. These conditions did not bode well for veterans seeking jobs or educational/training opportunities.

Since it was the mission of NOD’s Wounded Warriors Careers project to help wounded veterans and their family members succeed in education, training, and work, Basil quickly surveyed the available materials. That effort revealed that the resources that existed at the time were fragmented, limited, sometimes too technical, and generally inadequate for these purposes. Although excellent resources were available, they tended to focus on limited aspects of the topic, requiring that educators/employers/trainers gather and synthesize information from a number of sources—something that most would not have the time or the motivation to do.

NOD needed to mount a project to develop the kind of practical, laymen’s materials needed by NOD and others working with injured veterans. Basil wrote a paper outlining what was needed and why; allocated modest NOD consulting funds for it; recruited Pam Woll (author) and Celia Straus (project manager, editor, and contributor) to develop these products; and contracted with Barbara Van Dahlen of Give an Hour™ to direct the project, oversee the work of the consultants and volunteers involved, and ensure the technical accuracy of product contents. Throughout the life of this project, Mr. Whiting continued to work as an active colleague, guide, and mentor.

The “America’s Best” series took more than two years from conception to completion, and during that time others have produced valuable information in response to the same perceived need. We believe that these NOD/GAH products hold an important place in that limited array of practical resources and would welcome the comments and reaction of the readers and users of these products.

Acknowledgments

Under the leadership of Carol A. Glazer, President, The National Organization on Disability has sponsored and provided funding for this project. Under the leadership of Barbara Van Dahlen, PhD, Founder and President, Give an Hour™ has directed and carried out the development of these materials.

As mentioned in the previous section, Basil Whiting of NOD conceived and funded the project and continued to serve as advisor and mentor, providing everything from enthusiastic encouragement to meticulous subject matter and editorial support. In the development process, Dr. Van Dahlen served in the role of Project Director, providing thoughtful editing of all drafts and invaluable knowledge and technical expertise from many perspectives, including that of the clinician working with PTSD, TBI, and other combat stress effects. As Project Manager and Editor, Celia Straus, MA provided tireless and insightful mentorship, encouragement, and editorial expertise.

The writing and compilation of these materials was the work of many hands, including the following:

- Consultant Pamela Woll, MA, CADP researched and wrote two of the booklets in this series (*Teaching America's Best* and *Hiring America's Best*), developed or compiled many of the additional Tools, and compiled the resource booklet, *Learning about America's Best*.
- Project Manager and Editor Celia Straus, MA also wrote the boxed-in stories and examples of veterans' experiences in *Teaching America's Best* and *Hiring America's Best*. She originated development of the project with Basil Whiting and contributed content and editorial guidance based on her research and writing of her book, *Hidden Battles on Unseen Fronts: Stories of American Soldiers With Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD* (Casemate, 2009).
- Give an Hour™ student volunteer Micheline Wijtenburg, MS made a significant contribution to this effort by interviewing a variety of subject matter experts and writing the booklet entitled *Preparing America's Best*. Volunteer Ellen Gibson also contributed one of the interviews to this effort.
- A number of the resources listed in *Learning about America's Best* were contributed through the "DMEC Workplace Warrior – Think Tank 2007 Resource List" developed by the Disability Management Employer Coalition.
- Two of the Tools for educators and trainers ("Strategies for Improving Attention" and "Strategies for Improving Memory") were compiled by Jason Demery, PhD, neuropsychologist at the North Florida/South Georgia VA Medical Center
- The Tool entitled "Accommodations for Learning Challenges" was developed by Duane E. Dede, PhD, Valerie Pitzer, PhD, and Susan Swiderski at the University of Florida.

One additional reviewer, Mary E. Dolan-Hogrefe, MA, Director of Public Policy for the National Organization on Disability, also contributed her expertise to the effort.

For the gathering of resources to build these materials—particularly for the overview of resources presented in *Learning about America's Best*—Give an Hour™ drew from its large pool of dedicated volunteers. Seventeen volunteers were assigned to help on this project, in most cases with the literature search process. The volunteers who contributed to these efforts were Jill Anderson, Mark Brayer, Hillary Bilford, Susan Buckmaster, Staci Bullard, Katherine De Launay, Gabriel Feldmar, PhD, Geri Hart, Kate Hurley, Sarah McCumiskey, Lisa Prudenti, Leonora Rianda, Daniella Saunders, Sarah Smith, Christina Trefcer, Micheline Wijtenburg, MS, and Paul Weaver. In her role as Project Manager and Editor, Celia Straus organized, oriented, and managed this volunteer pool.

The twelve subject-matter experts interviewed for *Preparing America's Best* gave graciously of their time and expertise. Their ideas and insights not only made *Preparing America's Best* possible, but also informed the development of the other booklets and Tools in the series. These leaders included:

- Marcia Carruthers, MBA, ARM, CPDM, Co-founder, President, and CEO, Disability Management Employer Coalition (DMEC)
- Dr. Jason Demery, Neuropsychologist, North Florida/South Georgia VA Medical Center
- L. Tammy Duckworth, MA, Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Carol Harnett, MS, Clinical Physiologist, Assistant Vice President and National Disability and Life Practice Leader, Group Benefits Division, The Hartford
- Ilona Meagher, Editor, *PTSD Combat: Winning the War Within* and Author, *Moving a Nation to Care: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and America's Returning Troops*
- Patrick O'Rourke, Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, Director of Veteran Affairs, California State University, Long Beach
- Gary Profit, Senior Director, Military Programs, Walmart
- Michael Reardon, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor and Manager, America's Heroes at Work
- Ed Veiga, Vice President, Strategic Communication and Development, Military Child Education Coalition
- Garland Williams, Associate Regional Vice President, Military Division, University of Phoenix
- Mary Yonkman, Chief Strategy Officer, The Mission Continues and Co-author, *All Volunteer Force: From Military to Civilian Service*

Of course, this selection represents only a few of the many leaders who are contributing to these vital efforts. Thanks are due to all of the dedicated and creative souls who have made this mission their own.

Thanks are also due to the Veterans Club members at Northern Illinois University who met with Ilona Meagher and Pam Woll to talk about their group's excellent work and their ideas for effective approaches, and to former club president JD Kammes for his generous and insightful interview.

The most significant acknowledgment goes to the service members and veterans who have offered their experiences and insights to this process, and to all the brave men and women who have served our country in the theater of war. They have persevered through hardship, injury, challenges in reintegration, and often-formidable obstacles to education and employment. From the veterans of past wars whose reintegration struggles have taught us a sobering lesson to the current generation of service members and veterans whose story is still being written, all have inspired and informed this project. Words are not sufficient to express our gratitude for their service and for their continuing courage and dedication.

Sponsorship, Direction, and Authorship

Although the “America’s Best” series was inspired by and focused on a single mission—helping service members and veterans succeed in the civilian world—it was created with the help of many hands. This section provides more information on the organizations and individuals who have played central roles in this process.

Organizational Sponsorship and Direction

The National Organization on Disability (Project Sponsorship)

The National Organization on Disability (NOD) is a private, non-profit organization that promotes the full participation of America’s 54 million people with disabilities in all aspects of life. In 2006 NOD narrowed its focus to increasing employment opportunities for the 67 percent of working-age Americans with disabilities who are unemployed.

With programs on the ground, the National Organization on Disability is demonstrating new employment practices and models of service delivery, evaluating results, and sharing successful approaches for widespread replication. NOD is conducting research on disability employment issues, including the field’s most widely used polls on employment trends and the quality of life for people with disabilities. And the organization’s subject matter experts in disability and employment provide consulting services to public agencies and employers seeking to harness the unique talents that people with disabilities can bring to the workforce.

To achieve its goals, NOD works in partnership with employers, schools, the military, service providers, researchers, and disability advocates. Current employment programs are benefiting high school students with disabilities transitioning into the workforce, seriously injured service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, employers seeking to become more disability friendly, and state governments engaged in policy reform.

Founded in 1982, NOD is the oldest cross-disability organization in the country. To this day, the National Organization on Disability remains one of few organizations committed to representing all Americans with disabilities, regardless of their particular conditions or circumstances.

Give an Hour™ (Project Direction)

Give an Hour™ (GAH) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, founded in September, 2005 by Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, a psychologist in the Washington, DC area. The organization’s mission is to develop national networks of volunteers capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society.

Currently, GAH is dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of the troops and families affected by the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Give an Hour’s™ volunteers provide counseling to individuals, couples and families, and children and adolescents. GAH offers treatment for anxiety, depression,

substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, sexual health and intimacy concerns, and loss and grieving.

In addition to direct counseling services, Give an Hour's™ providers are working to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues by participating in and leading education, training, and outreach efforts in schools and communities and around military bases.

With increasing frequency, GAH has been featured and Dr. Van Dahlen has been interviewed in countless articles, television segments, and radio casts, as the mental health needs of the troops have become strikingly apparent.

Individual Contributions

Carol Glazer (Project Sponsor)

Carol Glazer joined the National Organization on Disability (NOD) in July, 2006 as the Executive Director of its National EmployAbility Partnership. She became NOD's President in October, 2008. Under her leadership, NOD has doubled its revenues and increased net assets by more than 300 percent; increased its focus on employment by a factor of ten; and developed important new relationships with the US Army, leading employers, national and local foundations, scores of new corporate donors to its programs, and the CEO Council. She put in place NOD's signature employment demonstrations, Wounded Warrior Careers and Bridges to Business.

For seven years prior to joining NOD, Ms. Glazer was a program development and management consultant to foundations, universities, and nonprofit organizations working to improve conditions in inner-city communities. Before that, she held positions as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and Senior Vice President for National Programs for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), where she served on a five-member senior management team that grew the organization from a staff of forty with \$10 million in assets to a \$3-billion, 500-staff bank with 36 field offices.

Ms. Glazer holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She has two children, one of whom was born with hydrocephalus and has physical and cognitive disabilities.

Barbara Van Dahlen (Project Director)

Barbara Van Dahlen, president of Give an Hour™, is a licensed clinical psychologist practicing in the Washington, DC area for 20 years. A specialist in children's issues, she served as an adjunct faculty member at George Washington University. She received her PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Maryland in 1991.

Concerned about the mental health implications of the Iraq War, Dr. Van Dahlen founded Give an Hour™ in 2005 to provide free mental health services to U.S. troops, veterans, and their loved ones. Currently, the organization has 5,000 providers nationwide.

Dr. Van Dahlen frequently participates in panels, conferences, and hearings on issues facing veterans. Recently, she was named among “50 Women Changing the World” by *Woman’s Day* magazine and was named a 2010 recipient of the Maryland Governor’s Volunteer Service Award. She also writes a monthly column for *Veterans Advantage* and has contributed to a book on post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injuries. She has become an expert on the psychological impact of war on troops and families.

Basil Whiting (Project Originator and Advisor)

Basil Whiting has more than 45 years of line and staff leadership in the public and private sectors, for both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Mr. Whiting served for five years in U.S. Army Counter-Intelligence and attained the rank of Captain. Upon returning to civilian life, he earned his master’s degree in 1967 from Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He then spent nine years as Senior Program Officer at The Ford Foundation, in charge of workforce and community development programs, among other responsibilities.

Mr. Whiting served for four years as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA throughout the Carter Administration, after which he spent six years consulting to management and labor on joint teamwork efforts to improve work life, productivity, quality, and organizational performance. From 1987 to 1991 he implemented such concepts in his role as Vice President, Human Resources for the Long Island Rail Road, the nation’s largest commuter railroad.

In 1991, Mr. Whiting returned to consulting, working with foundations, non-profits, and business groups. For more than a decade, he worked with the nonprofit arm of the National Association of Manufacturers, helping the peer structure of employer organizations engage more effectively in workforce development. Mr. Whiting joined NOD in 2006.

Celia Straus (Project Manager and Editor)

Celia Straus is a writer/producer for print, video, and new media, with special expertise in the fields of adolescents, mental health, military issues, and disaster response and crisis training. She is the author of *Hidden Battles on Unseen Fronts, Stories of American Soldiers with PTSD and TBI* (Casemate Publishing, April, 2009).

Celia is also a nationally known author and workshop facilitator on adolescent girls and spiritual parenting. She has authored three books: The national bestseller, *Prayers on My Pillow, Inspiration for Girls on The Threshold of Change* (Ballantine 1998); *More Prayers On My Pillow, Words of Comfort and Hope for Girls On The Journey To Self* (Ballantine 2000); and *The Mother Daughter Circle, Making Lifelong Connections With Your Teenager* (Ballantine, 2003) www.motherdaughtercircle.com.

Celia is a graduate of Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia and holds a master’s in Literature from Georgetown University. She lives in Washington, DC.

Pamela Woll (Author)

Pamela Woll is a Chicago-based consultant in writing, training, and instructional development. Pam has been writing books and manuals in addiction treatment, prevention, mental health, and other human

service fields since 1989, on topics including stigma reduction, strength-based treatment, resilience, trauma, depression, cultural competence, addicted families, violence, and disaster human services. She received her bachelor's degree from Bradley University in 1975 and her master's from DePaul University in 1995.

Since 2007, Pam's primary focus has been on trauma, resilience, neurobiology, and the needs of service members and veterans. Her most recent works include *Resilience 101: Understanding and Optimizing Your Stress System*, a workbook for service members and veterans; and *The Power and Price of Survival: Understanding Resilience, Stress, and Trauma*, a workbook for general audiences, both published by her own organization, Human Priorities. Other recent works include the *Finding Balance After the War Zone* manual for civilian clinicians, co-published by Human Priorities and the Great Lakes Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC); and *Healing the Stigma of Addiction: A Guide for Helping Professionals*, published by the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center and the Great Lakes ATTC.

At the other end of the spectrum, Pam is also the author of the *How to Get the Piranhas Out of Your Head* booklet and workbook. You can find many of Pam's materials at <http://xrl.us/humanpriorities>, and most are available for free download.

Micheline Wijtenburg (Author, *Preparing America's Best*)

Micheline Wijtenburg received a bachelor's degree from Florida State University and non-terminal master's degree in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University. Currently she is a doctoral clinical psychology trainee and is on internship at the Oklahoma Health Consortium, University of Oklahoma.

Micheline has clinical experience with both inpatient and outpatient populations. She has gained experience working with adolescents, adults, and older adults. Micheline formerly worked as a practicum therapist at the Healthy Lifestyles/Guided Self-Change Clinic, The Renfrew Center, and the Psychological Assessment Center. Her areas of interest include compulsive and addictive behaviors, co-occurring disorders, trauma, and psychological and neuropsychological assessment.