

## **Veteran and Family Support**

*It is well-documented that, compared to their non-disabled peers, veterans with disabilities have a higher incidence of mental health issues which includes depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), isolation, social withdrawal, and are less likely to participate in treatment in the community. Additionally, most veterans struggle with family reunification and community integration after transitioning to civilian life. Providing support to the family's infrastructure yields positive outcomes for both the veteran and their family.*

**Personnel:** One (1) Full-Time Clinician (LCSW, LPC)

**Caseload:** As of June 30, 2024, Veteran and Family Support had a caseload of 29 cases. During FY2024, referrals for Veteran and Family Support were made from self-referral, Morris County Prosecutor's Office, and from the Morris County website.

**Demographics:** The program accepts service veterans and their family members who are 18 years of age or older regardless of their discharge status.

**Performance Outcomes:** Performance outcomes were measured and monitored through MHAEM's Quality Assurance Committee (QA). Mental health counseling hours, case management units, educational groups for family members, and support groups were monitored. The threshold indicates that 400 hours of mental health counseling, 72 units of case management, 12 educational groups, and 35 support groups were monitored monthly. During FY2024, 301.5 hours of mental health counseling were provided, 47 units of case management provided, 9 education groups were facilitated, and 37 support groups were also facilitated.

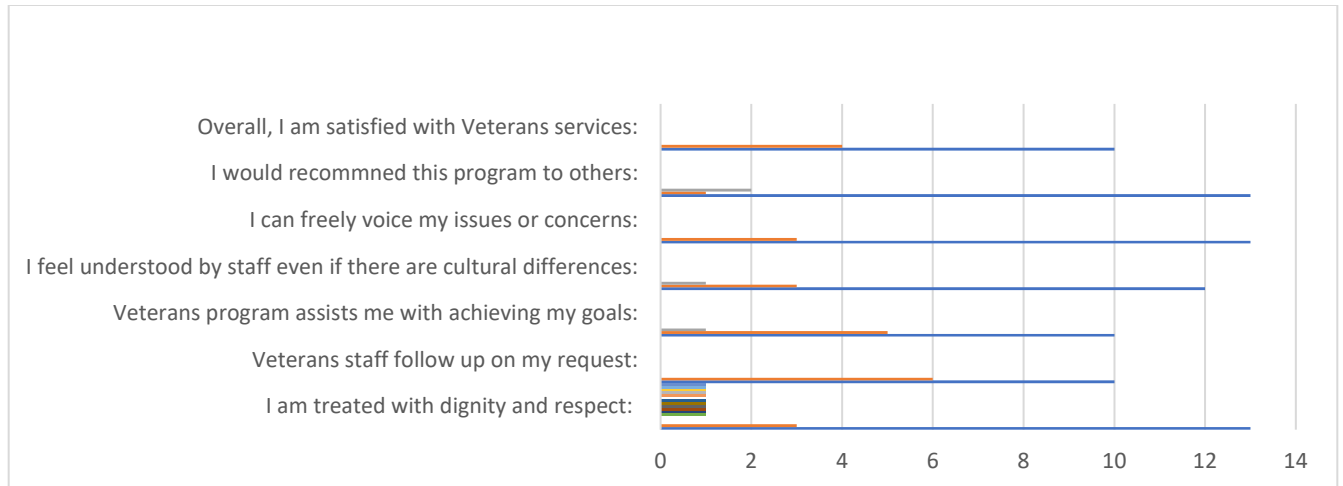
**Consumer Satisfaction Survey:** Within the program, surveys were distributed and tallied to measure satisfaction. All consumers were informed that their answers would remain confidential. Consumers were provided with a sealed envelope to protect anonymity and informed of several ways to return the surveys:

Approximately 17 surveys were delivered to consumers (hand delivered, mailed and/or left at residence). Out of the 17 surveys delivered, 16 individuals responded, resulting in a 94% percent response rate.

**Gender:** Of the 16 consumers that responded to the survey; 15 were male (100%) and one (1) preferred not to say.

**Ethnicity:** Of these 16 consumers, 12 consumers identified as Caucasian (80%), two (2) identified as African America (13%), one (1) specified as other (7%), and one (1) preferred not to say.

**Age:** The exact age of the consumers was collected. Of the 16 consumers, one (1) identified as being between 18-24 years old (6%), one (1) identified as being between 25-34 years old (6%), two (2) identified as being between 35-44 years old (13%), two (2) identified as being between 55-64 years old (13%), and ten (10) as 65 years old and older (62%).



**Highlights:**

In November 2023, staff hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual “Coffee with a Veteran” event at the Morris Campus.

During FY2024, the Veteran and Family Support program hosted “Guitar for Vets”, a program designed to help veterans cope with PTSD through music.

In October 2023, Veteran and Family Support staff participated in the annual Stand Down event.

Foothold Technology AWARDS system continues to assist staff with maintaining accurate and organized record-keeping as well as assist the Program Director generate reports and monitor Veteran and Family Support service delivery and outcomes.

In 2023, Program Director became a registered Star Behavioral Health Provider (SBHP). The mission of SBHP is to address the behavioral health needs of service members, veterans and their families. As a member of the registry, service members, their families, and referring professionals can access trained providers.

In October 2023, staff participated in the Picatinny Resilience Fair, where services were offered to Picatinny Arsenal staff members.

In November 2023, staff participated in a Veterans Resource Day at County College of Morris,

In February 2024, staff facilitated a Trauma-Informed Veteran Care Training to the Morris County Office of Veterans Services.

During FY2024, Program Director provided education regarding veterans’ services during the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to approximately 131 law enforcement officers.

**Trainings:** Veteran and Family Support staff have attended several trainings throughout the year through Relias Learning and the DOL Grant. Training topics included, but were not limited to: HIPAA for Healthcare Professionals, Corporate Compliance and Ethics, Cultural Diversity, Crisis Management, Defensive Driving, Safety in the Community, and Suicide Prevention.

Additional trainings attended by staff included: Military Culture and Deployment Ethics and Overview of Military Service-Related Behavioral Health Challenges.

**Advocacy:** Veteran and Family Support staff participate on the Stand Down Committee to assist in the annual Stand Down event that provides food, clothing, and health screenings to homeless and at-risk Veterans. Additionally, Veterans also receive referrals for healthcare, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling, and other essential services.

Veteran and Family Support staff work closely with consumers to help them develop self-advocacy skills by keeping an open dialogue on various ways they can become involved in different levels of advocacy (i.e., Self-help centers, NAMI-NJ).

### **Upcoming Year Recommendations**

- Veteran and Family Support staff will work on increasing the total number of contacts with consumers, their families, and service providers.
- Veteran and Family Support staff will continue to collect data and will closely monitor all performance indicators.
- Veteran and Family Support staff will continue to work with consumers to empower them to reach their goals.
- Veteran and Family Support staff will attend relevant trainings to increase their knowledge in best practice measures.
- Veteran and Family Support staff will continue to conduct trainings and presentations as needed to those interested in learning about program's role.