Stephanie Felder, MSW, LCSW
Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
The Catholic University of America
ENDING HOMELESSNESS AMONG FEMALE VETERANS
TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- Defining “Homeless” and “Veterans”
- Real-life stories of female veteran homelessness
- Risk factors of homelessness for female veterans
- The Results
  - Behavioral Health and Medical Implications
- Moving Forward
- Questions and Answers
Historically, there has been a strong sentiment for the nation to care for its returning soldiers. In his 1863 address General Perham stated, “The US must have a home for its national defenders. The poor soldier broken in health …should not return to be the common charity; he should have a nation’s gratitude… a place in the nation’s household, a seat by the nation’s fireside”.
What is your first impression when you think of the HOMELESS?
What is your first impression when you hear the word VETERAN?
Video Clip from Barbara Marshall’s Jubilee House

In Their Own Words
Homeless Female Veterans Share Their Stories
Female veterans increasingly are homeless

Female veterans, many with children, are the fastest growing segment among America's homeless population. NBC's Thanh Duong reports.
WHAT ARE YOUR REACTIONS TO THIS CLIP?
THE NEW FACE OF HOMELESSNESS: THE FEMALE VETERAN

Women veterans identified as homeless by VA increased more than 140 percent, from 1,380 in fiscal year 2006 to 3,328 in fiscal year 2010
WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

- Pre–Military Trauma
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Combat Related Trauma
- Post–military mental health, substance abuse, and medical issues
- Homecoming adjustment
PRE—MILITARY TRAUMA

- Studies indicate that 52%–54% of female veterans have experienced physical or sexual abuse and are more likely to report having traumatic experiences prior to entering into the military.

- Female veterans reported longer durations of childhood abuse, higher incidences of abuse by a parental figure, and reported having greater severity of adult sexual victimization as compared to civilians.
MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

- Despite the United States’ military response to MST, the Department of Defenses (2012) reported an increase by 11% in fiscal year 2009 of sexual harassment across all military services, and 16% increase in Afghanistan and Iraq.

- The Department of Veteran Affairs (2012) reported that in the 2011 fiscal year, 19.4 percent of OEF/OIF/OND female veterans reported a history of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) when screened by the VA compared to 0.9 percent of OEF/OIF/OND male veterans.
COMBAT RELATED TRAUMA

- It is estimated that women comprise 14% of forces deployed in support of OEF/OIF, which accounts for 180,000 troops (Street et al., 2009)
- Since the Iraq and Afghanistan wars at least 150,000 female soldiers have deployed overseas (Benda 2005; Mattocks et al.; Street et al.)
Behavioral Health and Medical Implications

THE RESULTS
The Department of Veteran Affairs reported that 45% of female veterans have both mental health and substance abuse disorders.

It is estimated that 15% of Iraq and 11% of Afghanistan soldiers have met the criteria for PTSD, generalized anxiety, or major depression.
MEDICAL ISSUES

- The most common diagnoses among women Veterans seeking care are PTSD, hypertension, depression, high cholesterol, lower back pain, gynecologic problems, and diabetes.
- Studies show that 31 percent of women Veterans have both medical and mental health conditions compared with 24 percent of male Veterans.
- Among women Veterans with diabetes, 45 percent have a serious mental illness or substance use disorder.
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Moving Forward.......
PREDICTORS OF INCREASED RISK OF

Homeless Population

Homeless Veterans

Homeless Female Veterans

Independent Variables:
- Characterized by severity and duration
- Pre-military Trauma
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Combat Related Trauma
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
REFERENCES


REFERENCES CONTINUED


