

DOCUMENTARY ON VETERAN HOMELESSNESS



DUTY CALLS:

ADDRESSING FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE
TO VETERAN HOMELESSNESS



FACILITATOR GUIDE

DOCUMENTARY ON VETERAN HOMELESSNESS



DUTY CALLS FACILITATOR GUIDE

**Duty Calls:
Addressing Factors that Contribute to Veteran Homelessness**

A Documentary-Based Professional Learning Resource

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Developed in Collaboration With:

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Veteran Homelessness in the United States

- 35,000 veterans experienced homelessness in 2023
- Veteran homelessness increased 7% from 2022-2023
- Persistent barriers include housing access, mental health, substance use, trauma, and transition

While veteran homelessness has declined over the past decade, thousands of veterans remain unhoused on any given night. Continued progress depends on a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to housing instability.

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PURPOSE

This Facilitator Guide accompanies the documentary *Duty Calls: Addressing Factors That Contribute to Veteran Homelessness*. The guide is designed to support professional learning, reflection, and discussion among individuals who serve veterans or work in systems that impact housing stability.

The documentary presents the lived experiences of veterans who have experienced homelessness, as well as perspectives from professionals and community leaders working to address veteran homelessness. Together, these voices provide insight into factors contributing to housing instability and highlight opportunities for greater understanding and engagement among veteran-serving professionals.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This resource is intended for:

- Social workers
- Case managers
- Behavioral health professionals
 - Veteran service providers
- Housing and homelessness professionals
 - Community organizations
- Students in helping professions
- Policymakers and community stakeholders

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After viewing the documentary, participants should be able to:

1. Increase understanding of factors that contribute to veteran homelessness.
2. Recognize barriers veterans may encounter when seeking housing and supportive services.
3. Reflect on the experiences and perspectives shared by veterans with lived experience of homelessness.
4. Assess the relevance of documentary content to professional roles in serving veteran populations.

DOCUMENTARY OVERVIEW

DOCUMENTARY TITLE

Duty Calls: Addressing Factors that Contribute to Veteran Homelessness

DOCUMENTARY DESCRIPTION

Duty Calls: Addressing Factors that Contribute to Veteran Homelessness is a documentary developed as part of a Doctor of Social Work social innovation project at California Baptist University. The documentary was created in collaboration with Reaching New Heights Foundation and incorporates the perspectives of veterans with lived experience of homelessness, veteran-serving professionals, and community stakeholders.

The documentary was designed to increase understanding of factors that contribute to veteran homelessness and to encourage professional reflection regarding the relevance of these factors within veteran-serving practice settings.

Veteran homelessness remains a significant social concern and aligns with the Grand Challenges for Social Work through efforts to reduce homelessness and improve outcomes for vulnerable populations.

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENTARY

The documentary seeks to:

- Increase understanding of factors associated with veteran homelessness.
- Highlight barriers that may interfere with housing stability among veterans.
- Amplify the voices and experiences of veterans with lived experience.
- Promote discussion among veteran-serving professionals regarding effective responses to veteran homelessness.
- Encourage reflection on professional roles, responsibilities, and opportunities to support veterans experiencing housing instability.

DOCUMENTARY PARTICIPANTS

The documentary includes perspectives from:

- Veterans with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability
- Veteran-serving professionals
- Community leaders involved in veteran support services
- Representatives from community-based organizations serving veterans

RECOMMENDED USE

This documentary may be used for:

- Professional staff development
- Agency training events
- Veteran-service organization meetings
- University and social work education settings
- Community awareness and engagement activities
- Professional discussion group

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Prior to presenting the documentary, facilitators are encouraged to:

1. Review the documentary in its entirety.
2. Review the discussion questions provided in this guide.
3. Familiarize themselves with the theoretical and theological concepts discussed in this guide.
4. Encourage participants to reflect on how documentary content relates to their professional roles and responsibilities.

THEORETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The documentary and accompanying facilitator guide were informed by theoretical and theological perspectives that help explain factors contributing to veteran homelessness and support professional reflection regarding effective responses to housing instability among veterans.

SOCIAL STRAIN THEORY

Social Strain Theory suggests that individuals may experience stress, frustration, or strain when barriers prevent them from achieving important life goals such as stable housing, employment, financial security, or successful community integration.

Within the documentary, Social Strain Theory helps explain how challenges such as financial hardship, unemployment, mental health concerns, substance use, legal difficulties, and challenges transitioning from military to civilian life may contribute to housing instability among veterans.

LABELING THEORY

Labeling Theory emphasizes how societal perceptions, stereotypes, and labels can influence the experiences of individuals and groups. Although the documentary does not explicitly focus on stigma or labeling, this theory provides a useful framework for considering how assumptions related to homelessness, unemployment, substance use, mental health concerns, or legal involvement may influence public perceptions and responses to veterans experiencing housing instability.

EMPOWERMENT THEORY

Empowerment Theory focuses on strengths, resilience, self-determination, and access to resources that support positive change.

Throughout the documentary, veterans demonstrate perseverance, adaptability, and the capacity for growth. The perspectives shared by veterans and service providers emphasize the importance of supportive relationships, access to services, and opportunities that promote stability and recovery.

IMAGO DEI

Imago Dei, meaning “Image of God,” is a theological concept that affirms the inherent dignity, worth, and value of every person.

This perspective encourages professionals to approach veterans experiencing homelessness with compassion, respect, and recognition of their humanity. The documentary reflects the belief that every individual deserves dignity, opportunity, and support regardless of life circumstances.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Which theoretical perspective best helped you understand factors contributing to veteran homelessness?
2. Did the documentary challenge any assumptions you may have had about veterans experiencing homelessness? If so, how?
3. In what ways did the documentary demonstrate resilience and empowerment among veterans?
4. How does the concept of Imago Dei influence professional interactions with vulnerable populations?

DOCUMENTARY CHAPTERS

The documentary is organized into four chapters that highlight common factors contributing to veteran homelessness, barriers to housing stability, and pathways toward recovery and support. The chapter structure was informed by themes identified through the systematic review and reinforced through the lived experiences shared by veterans and service providers featured in the documentary.

CHAPTER 1: TRANSITION CHALLENGES AFTER MILITARY SERVICE

This chapter explores the difficulties veterans may encounter as they transition from military service to civilian life. Participants discuss changes in identity, adjustment challenges, employment concerns, and other experiences that may affect long-term housing stability.

Discussion Questions

1. Which transition challenges discussed in this chapter appeared most significant?
2. How might veteran-serving professionals better support veterans during the transition to civilian life?
3. What resources could help reduce risks associated with difficult transitions?

CHAPTER 2: MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

This chapter examines the role of mental health concerns and substance use in the lives of veterans experiencing housing instability. Participants share personal experiences and discuss how these factors may interact with homelessness and recovery.

Discussion Questions

1. How did mental health concerns and substance use influence the experiences shared in the documentary?
2. What barriers may prevent veterans from accessing treatment and support services?
3. How can professionals promote recovery while maintaining a strengths-based perspective?

CHAPTER 3: BARRIERS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES

This chapter explores challenges veterans may encounter when seeking housing, employment, benefits, and supportive services. Participants discuss obstacles that can complicate efforts to achieve long-term stability.

Discussion Questions

1. What barriers appeared most difficult for veterans to overcome?
2. Which barriers seemed personal, and which barriers appeared connected to housing, employment, healthcare, or service systems?
3. What changes could organizations make to improve access to services for veterans?

CHAPTER 4: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND RECOVERY

This chapter highlights resilience, recovery, and the role of supportive services in promoting housing stability. Veterans and service providers discuss resources, relationships, and opportunities that contribute to positive outcomes.

Discussion Questions

1. What examples of resilience were demonstrated throughout the documentary?
2. Which services appeared most beneficial to veterans?
3. What lessons can professionals apply within their own practice settings?

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

The documentary and accompanying facilitator guide are intended to support professional learning, discussion, and reflection among individuals who serve veterans. Facilitators may adapt the documentary and discussion activities to meet the needs of their organization, staff, students, or community stakeholders.

SUGGESTED SESSION FORMAT

Step 1: Introduce the Documentary

Provide a brief overview of the documentary and explain its purpose. Review the learning objectives and encourage participants to consider how the content relates to their professional roles and experiences.

Step 2: View the Documentary

View the documentary in its entirety.

Step 3: Facilitate Discussion

Use the discussion questions provided in this guide to encourage dialogue regarding veteran homelessness, housing stability, barriers to services, and professional practice.

Step 4: Encourage Reflection

Invite participants to reflect on key lessons learned and consider how the documentary relates to their own work with veterans.

Step 5: Identify Opportunities for Action

Encourage participants to discuss ways individuals, organizations, and communities can better support veterans experiencing housing instability.

FACILITATOR CONSIDERATIONS

- Encourage respectful discussion and active participation.
- Recognize that participants may have different experiences and perspectives regarding veteran homelessness.
- Focus discussion on learning, understanding, and professional growth.
- Allow participants to share insights and observations without pressure to disclose personal experiences.
- Emphasize strengths, resilience, and opportunities for support alongside discussion of challenges and barriers.

REFLECTION AND ACTION PLANNING

The documentary is intended to promote reflection, discussion, and increased understanding of factors contributing to veteran homelessness. The following questions may be used individually or within a group setting to encourage continued learning and professional growth.

Reflection Questions

1. What was your most important takeaway from the documentary?
2. What information presented in the documentary was most relevant to your professional role?
3. Did the documentary challenge any assumptions you may have had regarding veteran homelessness? If so, how?
4. What factor contributing to veteran homelessness stood out to you most and why?

Action Planning Questions

1. What actions can you take to better support veterans experiencing housing instability?
2. What actions could your organization take to improve support for veterans experiencing homelessness?
3. What additional resources, partnerships, or training opportunities could strengthen services for veterans?
4. How might the information presented in the documentary influence your future professional practice?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources may provide valuable information and support related to veteran homelessness, housing stability, and veteran well-being.

Reaching New Heights Foundation (RNHF)

A community-based organization dedicated to supporting veterans and their families through advocacy, mentorship, resource navigation, and community engagement.

Website: <https://reachingnewheightsfoundation.com/>

Veterans Affairs (VA) Homeless Programs

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers programs and services designed to prevent and end veteran homelessness, including housing assistance, healthcare, employment support, and case management services.

Website: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/>

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides free, confidential assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Phone: 877-424-3838

Website: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp>

HUD-VASH Program

A collaborative program between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that combines housing vouchers with supportive services to assist veterans experiencing homelessness.

Website: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp>

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION (DUTY CALLS DOCUMENTARY PARTICIPANTS)

- Sgt. Major Gregory Coker, CEO, Reaching New Heights Foundation
- Terrence Banks, Case Manager, U.S. Vets
- Aundel Cobbs
- Frank Hamel III
- Sean Kruckenberg
- Kendell Batiste (Cinematography and Editing)

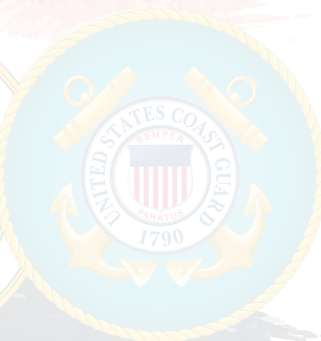
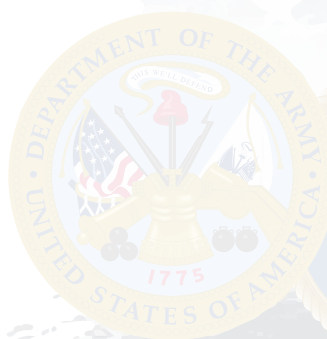
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