

# NORTH CAROLINA FOCUS ON SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

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A PROJECT OF THE NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

## Results of the Survey about the North Carolina Focus on Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families Wei Li Fang, Ph.D. September 18, 2013

In July 2013, the North Carolina Focus on Servicemembers, Veterans, and their Families administered an online survey to individuals who registered their email addresses on the Focus website ([www.veteransfocus.org](http://www.veteransfocus.org)). The purpose of the survey was to obtain input that will assist in the strategic planning of future activities. Specific items addressed the meetings, website, and biweekly newsletter. A total of 44 individuals completed the survey.

Respondents favorably viewed Focus and its work—networking; improved coordination; learning about each other's services and resources for referral purposes; partnering; and education on current issues facing servicemembers, veterans, and their families (SMVFs). The majority thought the following:

- Meeting location is convenient (30 respondents).
- Monthly schedule is appropriate (34)
- Content of meetings is helpful (36).
- Respondents suggested the following topics for future speakers: mental health (29), homelessness/housing (27), Veterans as peer support specialists (28), community reintegration (23), military families (23), Traumatic Brain Injury (23), suicide prevention (22), jail diversion and the criminal justice system (21), women veterans (20), hazardous drinking, misuse of prescription drugs, and addiction (20), development of resources for providers and civilians (18), effect of military deployment on family members and friends (18), implications of military service on education and employment (18), outreach to minority populations (16), faith-based initiatives (15), criminal justice (15), military culture (15), development of online courses for specific audiences (e.g., school teachers and counselors, faculty and staff in higher education, first responders) (12), and Student Veterans in higher education (11).

Of the 30 respondents who said that they have visited the Focus website, the majority go to it on a monthly basis. Respondents retrieve meeting agendas and minutes, events, trainings, and research findings. Thirty-three respondents said that they had no changes to the website.

Twenty-seven respondents have read the biweekly newsletter. While some stated that they read every issue, others state that they read only the issues that have topics of interest to them. Thirty-three had no suggestions of changes. Thirty-four indicated that they preferred to receive time-sensitive information as soon as it was received while nine preferred to receive it in the biweekly newsletter.

In terms of future activities, the following were listed by respondents:

- Fostering collaboration and building a statewide network of programs, resources, and materials, with the website as the central connection point for information and resources for Veterans in the state.
- Conducting outreach activities including a marketing plan to increase visibility of services and supports provided by different agencies and organizations
- Developing decision trees with portal of entry points of contact to best help populations interested in accessing information on different topics such as substance abuse, mental health, traumatic brain injury, education, employment, housing, domestic violence, criminal justice, and caregiver issues).
- Promoting knowledge and acceptance of military culture.