



# NOBLE SELF SUSTAINER

TOP PRIORITY: SAFETY & SECURITY

MILITARY CIVILIAN TRANSITION | NON-VHA VETERANS

IN SERVICE

DECIDING TO LEAVE

LEAVING

INITIAL ADJUSTMENT

THE SECOND SHIFT

REST OF LIFE

## COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

- To have a stable career and lifestyle
- To find love and support, likely in the form of a partner
- To be responsible and honorable
- To support my family — which feels impossible with this current salary and lifestyle
- Less theory and more practical knowledge about how to get to where I want to go and tactical information about what to do when I get there
- A job that doesn't stretch me too much and a short-term housing option while I save for a house
- To secure healthcare and insurance quickly and without hassle for my family — and I'll benefit from it as well, I guess
- CROSS CULTURAL COMPETENCY** training is especially important for me to be able to thrive in a largely civilian/non-military environment; "I can't just yell at my employees like we did in the military"
- My decision making is chiefly driven by my focus on supporting my spouse and my family
- I'm not going to take your "handouts", VA
- To recall my military service quietly and not "be the veteran"; I'm leading with a different identity. I'm a civilian who once served in the military.
- Learn to manage stress levels; not avoid them
- A buddy or old co-worker to connect me to a job that I can then excel in
- I will need some help with my **NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS** in order to mitigate stressors with civilians
- To move up the chain and make more money. A meritocracy; to earn my position
- To take time for myself — alone — in the woods
- Learn to balance life and work without burning myself out, another **NON-COGNITIVE SKILL** that I need to learn
- To maintain family ties, as they are my closest social support outside of work
- Aim to be a good supportive spouse. I want to keep my marriage and it's a priority for me
- I'm not going to anticipate the identity crisis I will feel as I go through retirement
- Support during post-retirement identity crisis or loss of my partner, potentially in extended family or friendships that I haven't spent time developing while being a full time father and husband
- To continue to have the freedom and resources to travel and to have hobbies; not feel the need to change the world
- I need to raise my children with the values I have: honor, integrity, discipline

The Noble Self Sustainer lives on the pillars of integrity and honor. As such, he believes that it's a citizen's duty to serve, so he did. Cautious by nature, his version of the good life includes staying close to what he knows which, for him, means which for him means going back home to a familiar job; where he has family or extended family and old friends.

After the military, he seeks relationships and paths that feel safe and secure, i.e. the familiar and the known. This type of person feels a deep and keen responsibility for (and sense of pride around) taking care of himself and his family; being a reliable provider.

## ANXIETY LEVELS & OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT

DANGER ZONE

SOMETHING COULD GO SIDEWAYS QUICKLY

PRIME FOR PREVENTATIVE SUPPORT

DOING FINE, ASIDE FROM NORMAL DAY TO DAY STRESS

## PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

### TONE/LANGUAGE TO USE

- Reminders that using VA Care is a huge source of support (if even back-up) for you and your family
- Language that emphasizes the well-being of my family (e.g., GI Bill communications can be a pathway to other VA relationships)
- Facts and figures about the cost-effectiveness of VA care
- Say patriot, not veteran

### WHO & WHAT I TURN TO FOR HELP

- My immediate family or my spouse's friends, who are often the only social outlet I have outside of work
- My co-workers' advice or time spent listening
- Myself and my self-confidence that stems from my career and being able to provide support to my family
- My personal hobbies: gym, hunting, fishing, hiking
- Throwing myself into my work
- I don't seek support from past military friends

### RISK FACTORS TO WATCH FOR

- Losing my job, which is my identity and the way I spend my time. It's the way I support the most important thing to me: my family
- Losing my partner: my closest friend and one of if not the only person whom I open up to
- Not knowing how to reach out for support if and when I need it or not recognizing the need
- Financial hardship, notably economic crashes and/or recessions

### DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?

**Not out loud.** I joined the military to serve my country; I'm proud and quiet about my time spent in service. Most of my civilian coworkers don't even know I'm a veteran. Most days, I miss it.

### WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA?

The VA is there to take care of those injured gravely during battle. Everyone else is taking advantage of taxpayer money. I didn't earn it like the other guys; furthermore I'm fine.

"We had family back here so we weren't too worried about it. That's pretty standard. You don't have a job lined up. That was the only thing that felt unstable"

Kellen | Salt Lake City, UT

"I was approached by a lot of people who told me to sign up for VA, but - I don't have a need. I'm healthy, my civilian employment has me taken care of. I'm pretty close-minded about it"

Carsen | Burbank CA

"You are always a marine. There maybe should be an equivalent for [the word] veteran. It's more like you're still a sailor. That experience should be yours for life, but veteran doesn't make me boil up with pride. I think it's a broad stroke term for those with DD214 - and an old term."

Brian | Fort Scott, KS





# SUPPORTED & STEADFAST

TOP PRIORITY: MY MISSION

MILITARY CIVILIAN TRANSITION | NON-VHA VETERANS

IN SERVICE

DECIDING TO LEAVE

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THE SECOND SHIFT

REST OF LIFE

## COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

- To serve and grow as a leader
- To find kindred spirits and to serve proudly alongside them
- To plan for the next step while also dutifully serving
- To be a part of something bigger than myself

- I often don't anticipate and prepare for the inevitable identity crisis that comes when transitioning from military to civilian
- To begin planning how to find meaning and purpose in civilian employment
- To have my expectations set

- New **NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS**, for me, start with learning how to operate outside of a strict and shared higher mission, like the one I became accustomed to in the military
- To connect with potential employers and begin to shape my civilian persona by telling the story (via resume or in person) a few different ways
- To meet people outside of military culture to prime that I begin to truly shift to civilian world and develop necessary **CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCIES**

- Love and support through a identity crisis and breakdown
- To remember that the first step is simply a starting point, and doesn't have to be perfect; to work with mentors to set expectations and examples of success
- Guidance and time to build my "civilian persona" and identity in a way that feels authentic
- To find kindred spirits who are ambitious about their careers and lives and a bigger mission of service
- A way to find private sector jobs that prioritize mission over profits
- Find a mentor

- Someone I love and trust to tell me when I need to stop and take care of myself
- To speak regularly about my time in the service with a few close military contacts
- A reminder to take care of pressing health concerns before I crash and burn
- To completely unplug every once in awhile so that I can recharge my own personal batteries and return to the mission full-heartedly

- To serve as a loving partner, parent, employee sibling, mentor and family member
- To continue to find fresh and meaningful challenges that stimulate my creatively and intellectually
- To retire purposefully, anticipating and hoping to avoid yet another identity crisis
- To again find my next mission in my next chapters

A **Supported & Steadfast** Veteran was born with a "we must leave the world better than we found it" mentality. As such, she likely thrived while serving as a leader in the military. The first few years out of service tend to be the most painful for this type of person, as they re-orient their compass towards a new civilian mission and a world that is often more about the bottom line than about having a shared purpose. While not a joiner of legacy veteran organizations, this type of person often joins or starts veteran support groups at work and in the community; often serves as a leader and mentor for other veterans in ways they wish they had been supported.

## ANXIETY LEVELS & OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT



## PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

### tone/language to use

- Reinforce how seriously we're taking our mission as VA, as mutual respect goes a long way
- Always explain the purpose and reason behind something; why it matters
- Use respectful language that offers me choices and frames opportunities in terms of convenience
- Frame using VA services as a part of serving and leading by example for other veterans

### WHO & WHAT I TURN TO FOR HELP

- A similarly motivated social and family network
- My partner and family
- 1-2 close Military buddies
- Civic and public service organizations
- Close/kindred-spirits and friendship
- Mentors, professors and bosses I've found along the way
- Speaking about my experiences in public

### RISK FACTORS TO WATCH FOR

- Loss of or inability to find a mission that is purposeful, makes the world a better place, and that I can work towards
- Working a soulless, corporate job will result in a period of unemployment or job hopping
- Standing still for too long or the inability to feel as if I'm making progress will result in heightened periods of intense anxiety and restlessness
- Not being able to find kindred spirits who share a sense of mission will result in feelings of

### DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?

**What kind of veteran?** Being a veteran is a big part of how I see myself but I'm very specific about what kind of veteran and when I hear the word, often assume it's referring to someone besides me.

### WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA?

I've found a way to thrive on my own. I thought about using VA but it wasn't convenient so I opted out. Also, it doesn't feel like it's for "my type of veteran".

"My support is and always was: duty first"

Jarrod | Salt Lake City, UT

"I would say to expect the identity crisis. Knowing that you're going to feel it will make it easier to cope. There are very few places in our society where you will feel the duty-honor-country part. Be prepared that it's far more likely to be about making money than about serving"

Noel | Los Angeles, CA

You went in with a bunch of people on your left and right — and you're getting out. Get a new [family], and get it fast.

Sierra | Oakland, CA





# PIECING IT TOGETHER

TOP PRIORITY: THE NEXT IMMEDIATE STEP

MILITARY CIVILIAN TRANSITION | NON-VHA VETERANS

IN SERVICE

DECIDING TO LEAVE

LEAVING

INITIAL ADJUSTMENT

THE SECOND SHIFT

REST OF LIFE

## COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

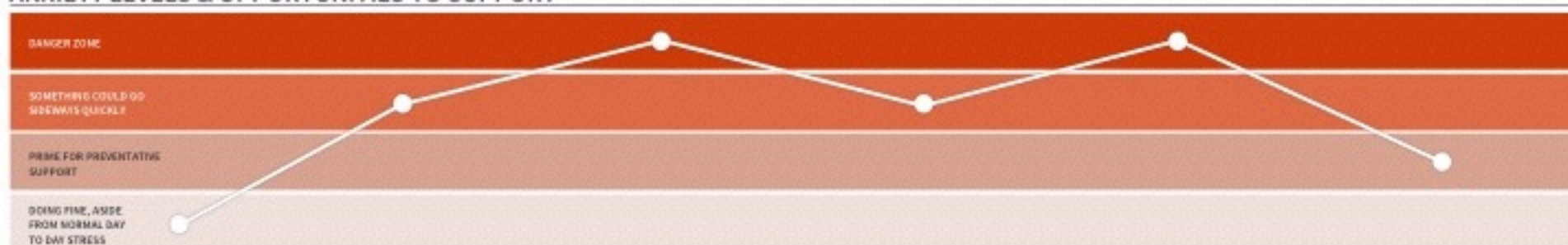
- For options to become available through my time in the military
- To be reminded constantly the benefits of saving money
- A way to pay for school
- Benefit the most from military family and structure and personalized and unit discipline
- To hear stories of what others have done upon leaving the military as inspiration for what I could and should do; I need specific examples of how to be successful and what to avoid
- Someone to connect the dots between how long I should stay in service and what else I want to do in life
- Mentorship about specific options for me, to include whole of life advice and strong recommendations for healthcare, life insurance, employment, financial health
- Individual attention to make a plan that fits the needs I have a hard time realizing; someone to help me actually do all the paperwork and check my "to-dos" off the list
- At least the first couple steps in place to be able to answer the inevitable "so, what's next?", which is anxiety-ridden for me, though I tend to avoid these feelings
- To not just go back home because that feels a bit like failure and there were influences there I was trying to leave when I joined the military
- To learn **NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS** such as being told not knowing is okay while simultaneously urged to not sit still or stall out
- To be able to see and experience a range of future opportunities, not just hear about them
- A supportive community (bar, school, job) who knows me and my story...otherwise I feel lost quickly
- Check-in mentorship focused on my whole suite of life needs ... I need additional help to get thru the shock of getting out of the military
- To secure support from outside of military culture
- To have a health care plan in place upon leaving with an actual primary care doc who can check in on me
- My transition challenges may be years delayed if I chose school as a first step out of military
- It's still tough for me to self-organize and keep up with my needs with personalized support
- I might be feeling the confusion of transition many years after getting out of the military
- Support systems that continue to help me realize self-awareness
- Significant lifestyle changes that can lead to isolation
- Tailored healthcare advice and targeted reminders of major health & financial milestones
- Finding new community that fits the me I've grown into
- Help setting up a routine that provides the consistency I don't know how to manage

For those **Piecing it Together**, life trajectories tend to be a series of individual choices made one step at a time. For many, enlisting in the military was a common sense step in that it provided both discipline and options (i.e. school) for the future.

Though this type of person could benefit greatly from using VA healthcare, they would rather risk it than deal with the hassle and the disrespect that the VA represents to them.

Supported mostly by friendly faces in the neighborhood and a few close military buddies, this persona could benefit the most by proactive and tailored support and guidance.

## ANXIETY LEVELS & OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT



## PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

### tone/language to use

- Make it as easy as possible to connect directly to care
- Tailored recommendations that feel familiar and achievable that indicate value achieved
- Convincing language with clear and easy calls to action that are hard to ignore or say no to
- Refer to my time in service instead of to

### WHO & WHAT I TURN TO FOR HELP

- My habits and routine
- Peers or third party acquaintances, preferably also veterans, who I can talk to who "get it"
- Non-legacy, or informal, Veteran organizations to participate in and sometimes volunteer (student orgs, running groups, gun clubs)
- Extended family for an occasional phone call or a couch to crash on
- To be able to scroll through Facebook and see updates from

### RISK FACTORS TO WATCH FOR

- Loss of few close acquaintances, who are my primary lifeline
- Significant healthcare and insurance coverage gap between service and civilian life
- Loss of autonomy and independence
- Sitting still for too long
- Major life changes

### DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?

**Hard No.** Though I prefer spending time with other military veterans and loved serving, I don't respond personally to the word veteran. It's an outdated term that doesn't encapsulate the pride and fondness I hold for having served.

### WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA?

I know it's there if I need it, but I don't - or I think I don't. It's actually on my list of things to do, but I'm not convinced that it's worth the hassle. I'll deal with it when I absolutely need to.

"There's a sense of detachment that isn't healthy. Refocusing yourself on something is one of the biggest things"

Jose | Austin, TX

"So I stayed with my sister at her house and then moved into an apartment with her and just tried to figure out what I was doing. That apt had no internet so I kept going to Subway to get internet. I was in a small town in Wisconsin... I was in a one stoplight town."

Constance | Lawrence, KS

"I realized how long it took me to actually start the transition process - of accepting civilian, being comfortable, not always wanting to be around military. A lot of that came from not having any support outside of the military."

Sierra | Oakland, CA





# MILITARY CONTINUED

MILITARY CIVILIAN TRANSITION | NON-VHA VETERANS

## TOP PRIORITY: STAY THE COURSE

IN SERVICE

DECIDING TO LEAVE

LEAVING

INITIAL ADJUSTMENT

THE SECOND SHIFT

REST OF LIFE

### COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

- Adventure and personal challenge & accomplishment
- A bit of discipline
- Being a part of a tight and competent unit

- A steady schedule and better paycheck
- A clear path between now and my next goal
- Build network of veterans in military-like jobs in preferred location

- To maintain the order and unit cohesion that I grew that I grew accustomed to in the military (whether at a police station, government job, etc)
- A slight readjustment period
- A checklist to help me get to where I already know I want to go
- A plan B, in case plan A doesn't pan out as I expect it to.

- A steady schedule and paycheck
- To not feel destitute and like a failure to myself and my family
- To not receive handouts
- Healthcare coverage to fill the gaps, but nothing long term; I'll get long-term plans thru my job

- Start workout routine to help withstand contracting lifestyle
- A hobby or side business to begin to build an identity outside of military culture

- Continue prospering at my job
- Maintain my routine
- To expect and prepare for the identity crisis that comes from truly exiting military culture for the first time upon retirement
- To maintain homeostasis and develop **CROSS CULTURAL COMPETENCIES** as the pillars of my identity (job & partner) change
- To figure out ways to occupy my mind upon retirement

A Military Continued Veterans' "transition" often comes many years if not decades after exiting the military; upon retirement from a military-like civilian job, such as law enforcement, pilot, or military contractor. Fond of the military culture, hierarchy and camaraderie, they opted to maintain these elements post-service and got a military-like job almost immediately and stayed in it for the duration of their career. The identity crisis this person feels is tied to lack of development of **cross-cultural competence**, due to lack of interaction with the non-military or civilian world. It can often feel like starting from scratch and be quite painful.

### ANXIETY LEVELS & OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT



## PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

### TONE/LANGUAGE TO USE

- Frame asking for help as practical and precautionary; frame as military-like duty
- Sensible, non-sensational language
- Military cultural references are comforting and relatable, not alienating

### WHO & WHAT I TURN TO FOR HELP

- Military contracting buddies who I spend most of my time with overseas
- Adrenaline releases such as power lifting
- My immediate family, especially for those who live in the middle of nowhere
- Long periods of time spent in the garage working on hobbies and side projects

### RISK FACTORS TO WATCH FOR

- Retirement and delayed transition
- Struggles to find hobbies and preferences outside of military culture resulting in identity crises
- Not knowing how to ask for help when I need it later in life
- The loss of hierarchy that I've grown accustomed to resulting in feelings of intense alienation and loss
- The loss of built-in social networks, as I've not have to work hard at developing them

### DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?

No, but only because I don't need to. It makes me swell with pride and feel lucky as hell to have been able to serve alongside the people I did. But Veteran? Nah.

### WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA?

My service was a job, just like any other job. I don't need special treatment. I'm more likely to engage on the serving side of things at VA than to ever be a patient. It's for people who have medical and psychological needs based on combat exposures.

"Nothing has changed except you're not wearing a boots. Not super different from being in uniform. Life stayed pretty simple."

Jason | Ft Leavenworth, KS

"The army takes care of you. A lot of structure and balance and diet and exercise and a positive approach to getting a job done. Many people leave and maintain that mindset. I was lucky enough to."

Carsen | Burbank, CA

"I don't want to put myself above anyone. I think I was meant to be on the serving side. It feels like a conflict of interest to also be a patient"

Quinn | Salt Lake City, UT

"Life too a dip when I left the military — because I'm not invited to play anymore. Comes down even further when I had to retire out (as a policeman)."

Carsen | Burbank, CA