



# **Arizona Faith-Based Initiative**

Engaging Faith Communities in Service to  
Military Members, Veterans & Their Families

# PURPOSE

To engage faith-based communities (FBCs) to provide effective care and support to Arizona's 600,000+ service members, veterans & their families and to connect them to the right resources at the right time.



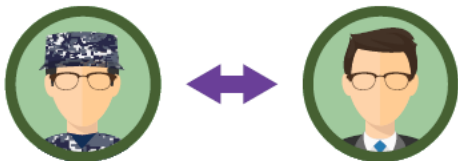
# OBJECTIVES

- Highlight some of the needs, challenges & issues facing service members/veterans/family members.
- Review the role of spirituality on veteran wellness and healing.
- Detail how Faith-Based Communities can get involved.



## ACTIVE DUTY

- 5 military installations
- 20,600+ service members



## NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVE

- 13,600+ service members



## VETERANS

- +/- 600,000 veterans of all eras
- 25% live in rural areas
- High concentration of OEF/OIF/OND relocating to AZ



## FAMILY MEMBERS

- Spouses, significant others, children, parents, siblings, etc.

# CHALLENGES VETERANS FACE

- Isolation
  - Fear of Large Crowds
  - Over stimulating environments (noise)
- Internal struggle
  - Dealing with stages of grief from loss of friends
  - Necessary actions for survival during combat create “soul wounds”
- Feeling Disconnected
  - Having a hard time relating to others (civilians)
  - Having a hard time relating to family
- Employment and education
- Family Challenges
- Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Trauma

# TOPIC AREAS OF CONCERN



EMPLOYMENT



FAMILY &  
SOCIAL  
SUPPORTS



FINANCES



HIGHER  
EDUCATION



HOUSING &  
HOMELESSNESS



LEGAL



MENTAL HEALTH



PHYSICAL HEALTH



SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality can improve post-trauma outcomes through:

- Reduction of behavioral risks through healthy religious lifestyles.
- Expanded social support through involvement in spiritual communities.
- Lessening of feelings of isolation, loneliness & depression related to grief and loss.
- Enhance coping skills & understanding trauma that result in meaning-making.
- Improve physiological mechanisms (i.e. "relaxation response") through prayer or meditation.
- Places veterans amongst caring individuals who can provide encouragement, emotional support, & financial assistance.

# UNIQUE ROLE OF FBCS

- Faith-based communities can play a major role in healing and reintegration of veterans.
  - FBCs are in nearly every community of our state.
  - Military personnel, veterans and their families may be cautious about who they allow to engage with them; Veteran-competent FBCs can earn their trust.
  - FBCs often have ministries already in place to that can be called on to help military personnel, veterans and their families.
  - Veterans may have spiritual, as well as psychological and physical wounds.
  - Faith communities can provide a supportive “home.”



1. Identify 1 or 2 people passionate about helping vets.
2. Obtain leadership support.
3. Assemble like minded people – congregation bulletin.
4. Meet together to assess feasibility, interest & identify potential areas of assistance.
5. Attend and/or host BE CONNECTED training.
6. Identify the military veterans/families within YOUR community. What are their needs?

7. Create a plan. Seek leadership/congregation council approval.
8. Publicize the ministry.
9. Organize – meeting times, team membership, etc.
10. Start small. Pick one priority make it happen.
11. Add more activities – do not over task the team!

Note: A “military ministry” does not have to be a separate group. It could be just a coordinator who leverages the other ministries.

- Raise awareness among FBCs about the contributions and needs of service members, veterans & their families.
- Engage FBCs in providing effective care & support by equipping key staff/volunteers with information, training and resources.
- Connect FBCs into the network of organizations that serve the military & veteran community.
- Train faith-based organizations on the BE CONNECTED campaign to connect service members, veterans and family members to resources and support.

**The goal of the faith-based initiative is a  
CALL TO ACTION.**



**be connected**  
service members • veterans • families • communities



## Contact information:

**1-866-4AZ-VETS | [www.BeConnectedAZ.org](http://www.BeConnectedAZ.org)**

**[connect@arizonacoalition.org](mailto:connect@arizonacoalition.org)**

# LEADERSHIP PARTNERS



**In partnership with the Office of Senator John McCain**

## Q & A

### Personal Reflections:

- Can you think of ways that your congregation could serve military personnel, veterans and their families?
- What are some ways your congregation can partner with other congregations to assist?
- What is one thing you could do next week based on what we have presented today?

# Who can help people **Be Connected**?



**Everyone!**



**The Be Connected support line is for everyone:**  
Those who need help and those who are helping

**Some reasons a community member may call 866-4AZ-VETS:**

- A caller needs help finding resources for his/herself, a family member or someone they are helping
- A caller is concerned about a friend/family member who is struggling and the caller is not sure what, if anything, should be done next
- A caller is seeking guidance on how to support a friend/family member who is encountering barriers to treatment and support
- A caller feels overwhelmed by services and/or how to access those services
- A caller wants to be better equipped to help the community and is unsure how to get involved

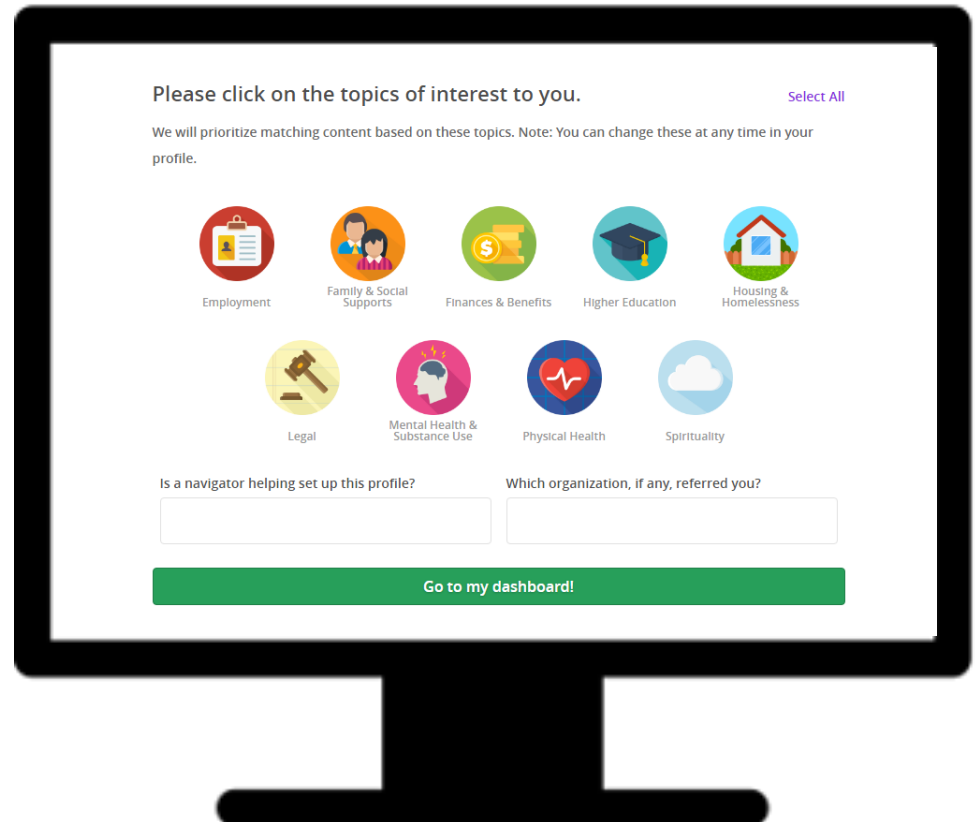




# MATCH

Personalized Resource  
Matching & Navigation

**Be Connected** offers tools to find  
the right resource at the right time:  
[www.ResourceCommand.org](http://www.ResourceCommand.org)





**LEARN**

Training and skills to  
equip yourself to help

**Be Connected** offers training  
statewide, in person and online,  
to equip everyone in our  
community to help



**Military/Veteran Resource Navigator | Suicide Prevention | Military Culture  
Over 100 online courses | Annual Statewide Symposium**

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

1. Discuss what you have learned with your faith community leaders and others in your community.
2. Arrange for a presentation by one of the Faith Based Initiative “ambassadors” at your community.
3. Become a faith-based partner to receive training, best practice info and connect with other faith communities. See: [www.ArizonaCoalition.org/network/partner-organizations/](http://www.ArizonaCoalition.org/network/partner-organizations/)