

Evaluate your conversations

Congratulations! By now you have probably had many conversations with veterans, their families and community members. The most important part of having these conversations is listening to what people have told you is working in their community or what they feel is missing.

When we conducted this part of our journey, we had so much information that we found it easiest to begin to group the information into categories so that we could easily identify trends and gaps.

Below are some suggested categories you might like to use to analyze your data:

What are the gaps in service?	What services work well?	What do veterans want?	What frustrates veterans?
How do veterans like to get their information?	What makes veterans angry?	What is the biggest problem veterans face?	What do families need?
What do veterans wish communities knew?	Where do families go for help?	Where do veterans go for help?	Do veterans use mental health assistance? If so, where?
Do families have mental health training?	Who supports family members?	Who do veterans talk to?	What is a barrier for accessing services?





In this section you will find a copy of a document we created called a ‘Theory of Change’. We will discuss further how to create your own in the next section – but it is important for you to have access to this now – so you can see how we began to lay out the areas that we wanted to focus on after of veteran and community conversations.

In our community, there was frustration about lack of mental health literacy, veteran isolation, veterans not knowing which services were able to help them and family’s needs not being recognized or met.

We heard the same type of comments in all our interviews with Vietnam veterans to Gulf War and Afghanistan veterans as well as their families. So, we began to cluster the information into groups to help us better understand the problems being raised.

We began to group the feedback from our interview into 4 main groups:

Veteran Isolation	Veteran Family Needs	Mental Health Stigma	Access to services
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Once we established these groupings – the information we had received from our focus groups gave us a clear pathway forward and we began to define our mission, goals, and actions.

Move onto the next section and we will help you to do the same.