



## **Focus Group Discussion Topics – Family Members**

### **Introductions – overview of project and partners**

- Introductions of organizations and staff (FVHD - Jennifer, Justine, ICR - Dan, Kim)
- Resilience Grows Here - overview
  - Funded to develop a project that will support veterans returning home and rejoining their communities
  - Goals of the project:
    - Increase community understanding of veterans' experiences and needs
    - Strengthen connections between veterans and the broader community
    - Strengthen connections between and among veterans
  - Phase 1 of a larger project – gathering information from as many people as possible, veterans, active duty servicemen/women, family members and community leaders to help inform what direction the project will go
    - you are the ones with the actual experience of what it's like to be living with and supporting a veteran (or soon-to-be veteran), what things have helped you, what challenges veterans face, and what challenges have you faced as family members of military personnel
- Confidentiality
  - The information that you share with us today is very important to us. We would like to record these conversations so we can go back and listen to them and pick out key points, but the conversations will remain anonymous
  - Your participation is voluntary. You don't need to share anything you are uncomfortable with. We are interested in hearing your perspectives on what resources have been especially helpful, what resources are lacking, and what the barriers to accessing or using resources have been
- Housekeeping
  - Feel free to get up and enjoy the refreshments throughout the discussion
  - Identify location of rest rooms
  - We ask that you turn off your cell phones, or put them on vibrate
  - Each person's contribution to the discussion is valuable. We want everyone to have the opportunity to share their thoughts, and for us to accurately capture what you say. Please, one person speaks at a time. Be respectful of others' points of view.

### **Introductions of military family members**

- Where is your (relative/spouse) serving?
- How long has he/she been deployed? (How many times deployed?)
- What's the first thing that you think he/she will want to do when they are back?
- What is it like to be a family member of an active duty serviceman/woman or veteran?

### **Supports and Challenges – for veterans**

Resilience Grows Here is made possible through funding from the Movember Foundation.



- What do you think returning veterans will find most challenging when returning home from deployment?
- Is there a role that the community can/should play in helping returning soldiers and veterans? Please explain.
- What types of support do you think are/would be the most helpful for returning veterans? (Probe: services, other vets, recognition of service, jobs, social activities, faith community, safety/safe space, quiet, seclusion, peer mentoring/support, companionship...)

### **Supports and Challenges – for families**

- What challenges have you faced as a family member of someone serving in the military?
  - What is/has been most challenging for you as a family member?
- What challenges do you expect to face when that person returns home?
- Is there a role that the community can/should play in helping families during deployment and when their family members return from service? Please explain.
- What help or support do families need when their loved ones are deployed and when they return (Probe for services, activities to support both adult and child family members, and to help families support returning veterans)
- Do family members have the necessary support systems while military personnel are away? Please explain.
- What supports have you had access to, and how have they helped?
- How important/helpful is it for families to get together either during deployment of loved ones and/or after their return? And why?
  - Does this happen?
  - Are there opportunities for this?
  - If you could create a place, what would it look like and be?

### **Community Support/Engagement for Veterans and Their Families**

- What do you think is important for community members to know and understand about returning soldiers/veterans and military families?
- We'd like to hear your thoughts on what activities, community programs, events might bring vets, or vets and their families together
- What are some ways that might give community members a better understanding of veterans and what they have to offer?
- What do you see as roles for veterans in your community?

**Are there any questions or topics that you feel are important and that we haven't discussed?**