



Galveston County Veterans Treatment Court

Mentor Manual



Veterans Helping Veterans





“LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND”

HONORABLE JUDGE MARK HENRY

PRESIDING JUDGE, GALVESTON COUNTY VETERANS' TREATMENT COURT

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VETERANS' TREATMENT COURT

722 MOODY AVENUE

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GCVTC

MENTOR PROGRAM

“A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you, than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you.” – Bob Proctor

“I don’t measure a man’s success by how high he climbs but how high he bounces back when he hits bottom.”- George S Patton





GCVTC MISSION STATEMENT

THE MISSION OF THE GALVESTON COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT IS TO ASSIST VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO RESTORE THEM AS AN INTEGRAL AND PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT, AND TO HONOR THEM AND RESTORE THEIR DIGNITY FOR THEIR SELFLESS SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY; WE SHALL LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND.

GCVTC MENTOR MISSION STATEMENT

THE MISSION OF THE GCVTC MENTOR IS TO MAKE CERTAIN TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITIES THAT NO VETERAN IS LEFT BEHIND. WE WILL OFFER THEM ASSISTANCE, ASSESS THEIR NEEDS, AND ASSIST THEM IN SOLVING ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE. WE WILL SUPPORT THE VETERAN THROUGH THEIR ADJUSTMENT IN BECOMING AN INTEGRAL AND PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY, ASSIST THE VETERAN WITH NAVIGATING THROUGH THE COURT, TREATMENT, AND VA SYSTEMS, AND ACT AS A MENTOR, ADVOCATE AND ALLY.





MENTORS' ROLE

Your role as a mentor is vital in the mentee's road to recovery. Your unique role; serving as a facilitator, advisor, sponsor and support role with the mentee is paramount in their path to graduation. Mentors are required to participate in at least one court session per phase, however, you are encouraged to attend as many sessions as you like. You are expected to maintain constant communication with your mentee between court sessions via text, phone call, email or in person. We will do our best to pair mentors and mentees using your application.

The role of the veteran mentor is to act as a coach, guide, role model, advocate, and peer support for the individual mentee with whom you are paired with. The mentor is NOT a counselor and this is strictly enforced. We leave counseling to the professional. The mentor will be a resource to the mentee. Access to support services will help reduce the mentee's stress that may be caused by distractions like housing, family needs, VA benefits, educational assistance, civil legal services to name a few. The mentor is the "Secret Sauce" in assisting the veteran's road to recovery.

At no time will the mentor and mentee engage in any illegal acts, inappropriate relationship or any activities that violates the mentee's contract with the Galveston County Veterans Treatment Court.





Why have a court for Veterans?

Veteran's are a unique population with a common core of experiences that their non-military peers have not experienced. This calls for a tailored treatment program that can support our service members and their families. Delivery of high quality care for psychological and substance abuse prevention, early intervention, and treatment by providers who are knowledgeable about military members, is essential to effectively treat participants.

Judge Mark Henry realized the need for a treatment court tailored to veteran's and their families. Judge Henry created the VTC in 2013. The VTC allows for veterans to go through the treatment court process with people who are similarly situated and have common past experiences and needs. This type of court links individuals with service providers who, either share, or understand the unique experience of military service, military life, and the distinctive needs that may arise from those experiences.





Key Components of Veterans Treatment Court

Operates similarly to a Drug Treatment and/or Mental Health Courts and is a hybrid court combining Drug and Mental Health Courts into one.

Operates within the guidelines of the Ten Key Components of specialty courts.

VTC Ten Key Components

- 1) Integrates alcohol, drug treatment and mental health services as needed, with justice system case processing.
- 2) Uses a non-adversarial approach where prosecution and defense counsel promote shared goals while protecting veteran participants' due process rights.
- 3) Identify eligible participants early and promptly and place them in the VTC program.
- 4) Provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.
- 5) Monitor abstinence through frequent alcohol and drug testing.
- 6) Respond to veteran participant's compliance through a coordinated strategy.
- 7) Maintain essential, ongoing judicial interaction with each veteran.
- 8) Measure achievement of program goals and gauge program effectiveness through monitoring and program evaluation.
- 9) Continue interdisciplinary education and promote effective Veteran Treatment Court planning and implementation and operations.
- 10) Forge partnerships among Veteran Treatment Courts, Veterans Administration, TVC, public agencies, and community-based organizations to generate local support and enhance Veterans Treatment Court effectiveness.





Volunteer Mentor Component

An essential component of the Veterans Treatment Court program is the “mentor program” where veteran mentors act as peer support to veteran participants. Evidence has shown veterans are better served by having a support system that includes veterans who understand combat experience and the different aspects of military service. Mentors participate in a supportive relationship with participants to increase the likelihood they will remain in treatment, attain and manage sobriety, maintain law-abiding behavior and successfully develop a goal oriented healthy life.

The mentor program consists of a mentor coordinator and veteran mentors. Their roles, responsibilities, requirements and qualifications are discussed in the following sections.

Veteran participants are likely to respond more favorably with another veteran than with others who have not served or who have not had similar experiences. Also, our experience since the court began in 2013, is that veterans feel relaxed and comfortable about their situation and circumstance when talking to a fellow veteran. The conversation and interactions between the mentor and veteran participant are on the level of peers rather than from a position of authority. The change in demeanor of the veteran participants becomes an opportunity to make a profound impact on the lives of all veterans who enter the court. We anticipate the Peer Mentors’ active and supportive relationships, maintained throughout treatment, will increase the likelihood that a veteran participant will remain compliant with their contract.

Unfortunately, 20% of all suicides are Veterans. Nationwide VTC participants have reported at least one attempted suicide. All mentors are requested to have the Veterans Crisis Line ready in the event a Mentee is a danger to themselves or others.

Veterans Crisis Line- 1-800-273-8255





Peer Mentor Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities

1. Recruit and train volunteer Veteran's Court mentors
2. Assist in the retention of volunteer mentors
3. Coordinate a quarterly meeting
4. Assist in supervision of mentors
5. Perform duties as assigned by the Judge
6. Sustain and evolve the Peer Mentor Program
7. Maintain "Mentor Logs"

Peer Mentor Role Description

Mission: To ensure every participating veteran receives the services they require by assisting them to navigate the system and to act as a mentor, advocate and ally.

Function: The role of the volunteer mentor is to act as a veteran advocate, be a resource when the veteran encounters life problems/issues and be a support for the individual he/she is working with. The mentor is **not** a counselor, probation officer or case manager.

Values:

Courage to help the mentee meet the demands of the court and civilian life.

Always be faithful to the mission of restoring integrity to the mentee/veteran.

Teamwork

Honor in all you do.

Goals:

- 1) Volunteer Veteran Mentors help our fellow veterans receive the services they need to reach their full potential as productive members of society.
- 2) Help them navigate the court system, treatment system, and the VA system with our assistance
- 3) Assess their needs and help them adjust to being an integral and productive member of their community.

In general, the Peer Mentor acts as a coach, a guide, a role model, an advocate, and support for the veteran participants. The Peer Mentor's coaching, guidance and support will demonstrate the special understanding that only another veteran can provide





Peer Mentor Duties and Responsibilities

- Attend court sessions at least one time per phase.
- Attend a quarterly mentor group meeting.
- Be supportive and understanding of the difficulties the veteran clients are facing, and assist in resolving concerns when possible.
- Assist the veterans as much as possible to resolve their concerns around the court procedures.
- Assist veterans on how to access and navigate the Veterans Affairs system and other systems.
- Be supportive and helpful to other Peer Mentors.
- Work respectfully and professionally with the veteran participant and other Peer Mentors.
- Use the mentor Guide Book Resource list to identify appropriate professionals (e.g., Housing, Social Services, VA benefits, etc.). Many times, another mentor might be that professional!
- Document all contacts with the Veteran client on the Mentor/Mentee Form and email to the Mentor Coordinator every other week.

Peer Mentor Requirements

- Be a United States military veteran: Army, Marine Corp, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force or Reserve or National Guard.
- Participate in the screening and vetting processes (interviews, criminal records check, fingerprinting).
- Be in good standing and law-abiding citizen.
- Have genuine concern for veterans in the legal system.
- Adhere to all state/county/federal laws and Galveston County Veterans Treatment Court policies and procedures.
- Commit to program participation for a minimum of one year.
- Attend court sessions as scheduled.
- Participate in necessary trainings initially, annually or as necessary.
- Be ready to respond when needed in Court.



Peer Mentor desirable Qualities

- Active listener
- Emphatic
- Encouraging and supportive
- Tolerant and respectful of individual differences
- Knowledge of Veterans Affairs services
- Knowledge of community resources and services.

For more Peer Mentor information or an application, please contact David Hardie, Mentor Coordinator, at (713) 501-8661 or Christopher James, Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator, at (409) 765-2679.

