

## Talking Points for Module 6

### Overview of Occupational Therapy's Role in Military Transitions

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**Slide 3:** Talking Points to cover Legal Implications

1. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) has requirements for reemploying veterans with and without service-connected disabilities. The U.S. Department of Labor enforces USERRA.
2. Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits private, state and local government employers with 15 or more employees from discriminating against individuals on the basis of disability. It also generally requires covered employers to make reasonable accommodations that provide individuals with disabilities equal employment opportunities. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces Title I of the ADA.
3. The ADA Amendments Act of 2008- indicates that the definition of disability should be construed in favor of broad coverage of individuals to the maximum extent permitted by the terms of the ADA and generally shall not require extensive analysis. It changes the definition of the term "disability" to make it easier for an individual seeking protection under the ADA to establish that he or she has a disability within the meaning of ADA. Effective date: The ADA Amendments Act was effective as of January 1, 2009. EEOC's regulations to implement the equal employment provisions of the ADA Amendments Act were effective as of March 25, 2011.
4. Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act applies the same standards of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation as the ADA to federal executive branch agencies and the U. S. Postal Service.
5. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on disability. The law applies to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any federal department or agency, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Section 504 forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. Of particular importance, Section 504 protects qualified persons with disabilities from discrimination for receiving services, education, and training.

6. Executive Orders- In addition to federal laws that are currently in place, several presidential executive orders aim at increasing employment opportunities for adults with disabilities and for veterans.
- Executive Order 13078: Increasing Employment of Adults with Disabilities (1998)-Establishes a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities
  - Executive Order 13473: Authority for Noncompetitive Appointment of Military Spouses (2009)-Allows federal agencies to noncompetitively appoint spouses of military members to positions in the federal civil service. Eligible individuals must be spouses of active duty military members under orders for a permanent change of station, the spouse of a military member receiving 100% service connected disability, or the spouse of a service member killed while on Active Duty status.
  - Executive Order 13518: Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government (2009)- Establishes a council on veteran employment to coordinate a government-wide effort to increase the number of veterans employed by the federal government.

**Slide 4:** Occupational therapy's role within a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) is to help soldiers attain optimal occupational performance and gain a sense of mastery as they transition back to independent, productive living. The WTU OT promotes the soldier's return to the role of worker, whether military or civilian. OT practitioners promote, improve, conserve, and restore the skills, abilities, and aptitudes of the Warrior in Transition. They help guide soldiers toward reasonable short- and long-term goals that reflect the soldier's avocational (non-paid or volunteer) and vocational interests. A supportive military environment and engagement in purposeful work activities that match a soldier's interests and skills helps him or her to overcome physical, mental, or emotional barriers. As a result, soldiers learn to view themselves as competent workers capable of taking responsibility for their future by gaining control over their daily lives. The primary mission of a soldier assigned to a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) is to heal as they transition. Warriors in Transition focuses on activities that promote healing in the career, physical, emotional, social, family, and spiritual domains of life. A familiar military living environment, medical and rehabilitation services, and set daily routines with individualized goals, promotes the healing process.

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**Slide 7:** Photo credit : Sgt. Austan R. Owen, Pfc. Camren Bento, medic with 3rd Platoon, 978 Military Police Company, 2nd Brigade Support Battalion at the National Training Center, Nov. 7.

**Slide 8:**

1. Slide 9: OTs develop and guide job-specific programs of graded activity, job task analysis, and job station modifications; they can identify and address work behaviors.
2. Occupational therapy practitioners provide consultation and collaboration support in many areas.

Information Source: <http://www.britannica.com/bps/additionalcontent/18/34461802/The-Role-of-Occupational-Therapy-in-Warrior-Transition-Units>

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**Slide 12:** Challenges that can be discussed may include (a) increased leisure time (b) his need to be productive (d) the impact of mobility problems on ADL and leisure, and perhaps (e) any needs to develop new interests. He might consider remodeling his home to make it "aging friendly."

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**Slide 15:** Many other occupational therapy practitioners are providing services to discharged soldiers and their families outside of the military setting. They can better serve this population by learning more about the military culture, the impact of deployment on soldiers and their families, the treatment of combat injuries, and available resources. For instance, the army's Proponency Office for Rehabilitation and Reintegration is developing educational materials for occupational and physical therapists working with former soldiers with mild TBI.

Source: OT. Practice Army Occupational Therapy in the Warrior Transition Unit July 28, 2008

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**Slide 17:** AOTA's Transition Taskforce has developed a number of resources for practitioners to update their knowledge base as well as inform the public regarding their critical role in the process of transition. While the Fact Sheet and FAQ document currently available on the AOTA Web site address transition in school-based practice, there are resources on other aspects of transition found in AOTA publications including OT Practice and AJOT.

**Slide 18:** These seven vignettes illustrate transitions across the lifespan and can be viewed individually, sequentially, or in their entirety. Simply click on the photo and you will be taken directly to that particular vignette.