

Beyond the Barracks: Structuring Wellness in Civilian Life



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Community: A New Pillar

Strengthening the Foundation of Veteran Wellness



COMMUNITY



ACTIVITY



MENTAL HEALTH



RECOVERY & SLEEP



NUTRITION

For veterans and transitioning service members, the journey to wellness extends far beyond individual health practices. While activity, recovery, mental health, and nutrition form essential pillars of wellbeing, there's another crucial element that binds these components together: community. Today, we're proud to introduce community as our fifth pillar of veteran wellness, recognizing the profound impact that social connections and support networks have on the military-to-civilian transition and long-term wellbeing.



CONT. INSIDE ➡

MilitaryConnected.org is a nonprofit organization improving the military-connected community's transition experience through employer education, data driven research, and access to a network of job opportunities with military-ready employers.

The Vegetus Foundation is dedicated to helping Americans improve their quality of life through education on healthy living and has published the Nutrition Health Review since 1979. Learn more at nutritionhealthreview.com



LEARN MORE AT MILITARYCONNECTED.ORG



COMMUNITY Support



Why Community Matters

The transition from military to civilian life represents one of the most significant changes in a service member's journey. During active duty, service members operate within a clear structure, surrounded by peers who understand their experiences, challenges, and triumphs. In civilian life, maintaining these connections while building new ones becomes essential for:

- **Support During Transition:** Fellow veterans who have successfully navigated the civilian transition can provide invaluable guidance, mentorship, and encouragement. Their experiences serve as both a roadmap and reminder that challenges can be overcome with the right support system.
- **Continued Mission and Purpose:** Community involvement offers veterans opportunities to continue serving others—a core value ingrained during military service. Whether through veteran service organizations, volunteer work, or mentoring fellow veterans, these connections provide a sense of continued purpose. Serving others was a common bond we all had when we were in the military, getting back to that common motivating element is critical to finding ourselves post military.
- **Enhanced Physical and Mental Wellness:** Strong community ties directly support our other wellness pillars. Group fitness activities, shared meals, and peer support for mental health challenges all become more effective when practiced within a supportive community.

Building Your Community

Creating and maintaining strong community connections doesn't happen automatically. It requires intentional effort and engagement.

Here are key ways to strengthen your community pillar:

- **Join Veteran Service Organizations:** These groups offer structured opportunities for connection, service, and support.
- **Engage in Group Wellness Activities:** Participate in veteran-focused fitness classes, nutrition workshops, or mental health support groups.
- **Mentor or Be Mentored:** Share your experience with newly transitioning service members or seek guidance from those who have successfully navigated similar challenges.
- **Stay Connected Digitally:** Use social media and online platforms to maintain connections with former unit members and join veteran-focused online communities.

The Ripple Effect

A strong community doesn't just benefit individual veterans—it creates a ripple effect that strengthens the entire veteran population. When one veteran succeeds in their transition, they become a resource for others, creating a self-sustaining cycle of support and success.

Moving Forward Together

By recognizing community as our fifth pillar of wellness, we acknowledge that no veteran should navigate their wellness journey alone. The strength we found in unity during service remains just as vital in civilian life. Together, these five pillars—activity, recovery, mental health, nutrition, and now community—provide a comprehensive foundation for veteran wellness.

Whether you're just beginning your transition or have been a civilian for years, remember that your community stands ready to support you. Reach out, connect, and take pride in being part of something larger than yourself—just as you did in uniform.

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