

VIS

MENTOR MANUAL



Central Oregon Vet Center
Veterans Intervention Strategy
Updated: 1/25/2024

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MENTOR WELCOME

If you are reading this manual you expressed interest in being a mentor or were recently assigned a mentee in the Veterans Intervention Strategy (VIS). Thank you for taking on this responsibility and being a critical part of the success of our veteran participants and the VIS program. This manual provides an overview of the VIS program and answers many questions new mentors have as they begin working with their new mentees.

Please read this document in full and don't hesitate to ask questions. This is a guide and provides an abundance of information, but it is not all-encompassing. The program would not be as successful as it is without the work of the VIS Peer Mentors. Your participation has a direct impact on the mentee's successful completion of the program. Thank you again for your interest in being a mentor.

VETERANS INTERVENTION STRATEGY OVERVIEW

The Deschutes County DA's Office Veterans Intervention Strategy (VIS) is a veteran-focused diversion program designed to improve community safety by providing justice involved veterans (JIVs) with the opportunity to transform their lives through addressing personal life challenges and reducing their involvement in the criminal justice system. VIS balances the community's desire to improve the type and level of support provided to our veterans in the criminal justice system, while taking into account the resources available and needed to implement a comprehensive veterans program in Deschutes County.

Purpose

Veterans returning after deployment face monumental challenges that include combat wounds, head injuries/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), unemployment, homelessness, strained relationships, and significant reintegration issues. These challenges when not effectively treated and managed, lead some veterans into the criminal justice system, sometimes on a recurring basis.

According to the National Council for Behavioral Health, 30% of veterans deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq have mental health conditions requiring treatment, but only about 50% have received the treatment they needⁱ. Current research also shows that veterans suffering with PTSD are more likely to engage in criminal activityⁱⁱ and TBIs are associated with a 59% increase in the odds of justice involvement among veteransⁱⁱⁱ.

Deschutes County is home to approximately 13,000 veterans, and over 200 individuals in 2019 self-identified as a veteran during a screening while at the Deschutes County jail. Members of our own community are dealing with these issues, and a cohesive Interagency program, such as

VIS can eliminate barriers and provide access to the services and resources these veterans need to improve their lives, reduce recidivism, and ultimately enhance community safety.

Goals / Objectives

- Improve community safety by reducing recidivism among justice involved veterans.
 - Improve veterans' lives through engagement in a targeted series of veteran programs.
 - Reduce risk and increase victims' likelihood of receiving restitution by improving a veteran's stability.
 - Collaboratively work with agencies throughout Deschutes County to provide specialized services to veterans.
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Interagency Team

The VIS Interagency team is a collaborative group involving the Vet Center, the Deschutes County District Attorney's Office, the Deschutes County Circuit Court, Deschutes Defenders, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, and Deschutes County Community Justice, working together to improve JIV outcomes in Deschutes County. Below are brief overviews of each agency's roles.

DA's Office

Makes the final determinations on which veterans are eligible for VIS, manages the case files, coordinates the VIS meetings and participant sessions, and tracks the overall success of VIS participants and the program. Represents the state in court, and attends the VIS case review meetings, Interagency meetings and VIS participant sessions.

Deschutes County Circuit Court

provides legal oversight of the case. Sets aside a day each month for VIS cases to be seen by a judge, and determines the veterans sentencing.

Deschutes Defenders

Represents and advocates for the veterans as their defense attorney, if the veteran has not already retained their own legal defense. Provides the veterans with legal advice and assists in acquiring any required documentation. Represents the veteran in court, and attends the Interagency meetings, and when necessary is invited to participate in the case review meetings.

Parole and Probation

Monitors and provides oversight of high risk VIS participants that are actively engaged in Community Justice.

Sheriff's Department

Identify potential JIVs through citation or arrest. Attends the Interagency meetings and provides funding for basic program needs.

Vet Center

Provides treatment programs and oversees the coordination of treatment, screenings and the development of individual treatment plans for JIV participants, and case management. Recruits and trains, and supports the mentor veterans. Hosts monthly VIS sessions at the Vet Center and attends the VIS case review meetings, Interagency meetings and VIS participant sessions.

Veterans Affairs Health Administration

Provides a VJO as needed to help veterans eligible for VA benefits connect to appropriate services and navigate the system.

VIS vs. VTC

It is important to note that although the VIS is modeled after Veteran Treatment Courts (VTC), the VIS is not a VTC even though it involves the Deschutes County Circuit Court. The goal and plan is for this program to be flexible to fit the needs of Deschutes County veterans. Open communication between partners and stakeholders allow us to make the changes necessary to provide the best benefit to our veterans, while also ensuring that the program doesn't become so cumbersome that it isn't feasible to continue from an agency standpoint.

Participant Eligibility Criteria

While there are veterans that may appear to be a good candidate for the VIS program there are a number of eligibility criteria that must be in place for a veteran to be accepted into the program. Preliminary eligibility includes:

1. Proof of service in the military or National Guard.
2. A pending eligible felony or misdemeanor offense in Deschutes County.
3. Being a legal resident or citizen of the United States of America and residing in Deschutes, Jefferson, or Crook County
4. Having or being diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder, including post-traumatic stress disorder; traumatic brain injury; depressive, anxiety, and psychotic disorders; and/or substance use disorder that is related to the criminal offense.
5. The veteran submitting to a clinical evaluation to confirm the pending or underlying offense was related to a mental illness or substance abuse.
6. Receiving confirmation from the Vet Center that there is a nexus between the underlying issue, the crime, and the veteran's military service.

7. Receiving the VIS DDA's recommendation for inclusion in the VIS program, which includes the DDA and defense attorney establishing legal, and determining the veterans program track.
8. The veteran agreeing to the program terms and signing all required VIS documents.

Participant Experience

Since the goal of VIS is to identify the best intervention for each veteran participant, how each individual's case is managed and processed will vary by individual, history and current charges. Under some cases the veteran will be eligible for dismissal, while other cases may provide the veteran other benefits including, but not limited to a misdemeanor conviction, an agreement to reduce charges upon completion of the program, downward departure, less jail, or supervision.

Below is a snapshot of the VIS program from the participant's standpoint.

1. Complete a VIS Intake form and sign the VIS ROI indicating that they are agreeing to allow the Vet Center to conduct an assessment to help determine program eligibility and to share that information with the partner agencies.
2. Willingly participate in a comprehensive assessment with the Vet Center.
3. Admit guilt to the charges.
4. Execute the Individual Treatment Plan that is deemed acceptable by the VIS Interagency Team.
5. Complete a VIS Individual Treatment Plan and revise and update the plan periodically throughout the program timeframe.
6. Attend VIS Interagency meetings at pre-scheduled times based upon the Track and Phase requirements or at the request of the VIS Interagency team.
7. Follow-through on the agreed upon medical, treatment and care plan that was established.
8. Not reoffend while engaged in VIS
9. Submit to UAs as requested by Vet Center, VA Medical Center, PO, and/or drug treatment providers.
10. Meet regularly with a Vet Center mentor.
11. Pay restitution, if appropriate.
12. Acquire/maintain stable housing.
13. Apply to phase-up
14. Graduate

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program is designed to provide a maximum of 20 veterans a year, with current charges, the opportunity to improve their lives by participating in a structured, individualized program that provides active support, but holds participants accountable. Veterans with a pending charge can be referred to the VIS by law enforcement, deputy district attorneys, defense attorneys, the Vet Center, other veteran programs or the veteran themselves.

Referred veterans that are determined to be preliminarily eligible by the District Attorney's Office based on the crime and baseline eligibility criteria are then screened by the Vet Center to determine current veteran status, and if the veteran has any mental health illnesses or substance use disorders, and whether or not those conditions played a role in the veteran's criminal activity. This information, along with past criminal history, input from the victims, and space within the program will be considered in determining program eligibility.

The program has two Tracks for which each veteran will be assigned to one or the other. Individuals in Track I will follow a program format that requires a three phased intervention. Track II participants will follow a program format that requires a more intensive four-phased intervention. A veterans placing in Track I over Track II is determined by the DA's Office, based on the veteran's current crime, past criminal history and health history. After the track has been determined, and an agreement regarding a legal incentive has been worked out, the eligible VIS veteran will be invited to attend the next scheduled VIS meeting.

Prior to the VIS session with the participants, the VIS Interagency team meets to evaluate the veterans progress. This evaluation is based on the veterans monthly self-progress report, the Vet Center case manager, and reports from treatment providers, POs, and partner agencies. Mentors do not attend this meeting.

Immediately following the Interagency meeting, the veteran VIS meeting occurs. VIS participant meetings take place every 2nd and 4th Monday at 1:30pm (schedule may be changed if it falls on a holiday). VIS participant veterans typically attend their VIS sessions in-person, monthly, and rotating every month between the Vet Center and the Deschutes County Circuit Court. We request the mentors attend the meetings for which their mentees are scheduled.

During this meeting, the veterans provide the Interagency team with a personal update. The Interagency team members provide feedback and the mentor is also invited to provide feedback as well. It is also during this meeting that the Interagency team will have the ability to grant rewards and issue sanctions to the veteran, and the veteran will be able to share successes and discuss challenges. This meeting occurs every other month at the Vet Center and on the opposing month at the Deschutes County Courthouse. In both environments the

veterans are encouraged to speak honestly about their challenges and successes, but as would be expected the courthouse sessions are a bit more formal. In addition, in the courthouse, the veteran, mentor and the veteran's attorney go to the defendant table when the veteran is called by the Judge. Sometimes the veteran's mentor may attend court virtually, and in those circumstances, the veteran and mentor should still plan to go to the defendant table to respond to the judge.

At the first VIS meeting for each participant, the veteran will meet the Interagency team, be provided with an overview of the program requirements, sign enrollment documents, be given a VIS manual that outlines the rules of the program and their Track.

It is important to note that the program is designed to be supportive and understanding that addressing mental health and substance use issues is challenging. Participants (in both tracks) that do not meet the criteria to phase up in the program, will be given, under most circumstances, additional time to meet the program goals. The program is structured to be completed in approximately 12 months; however, participants may engage in the program for more than a year to finish all the requirements of each phase in order to graduate.

Examples of rewards for participant excellence include verbal praise, decreases in the number of required treatment programs or VIS meetings, or being allowed to travel out of state. Sanction examples can range from writing apology notes, to additional check-ins with the VIS Interagency team or treatment providers, additional months within a program phase, or program termination.

Participants may be required to engage in UAs. The scheduling, frequency and types of tests will be determined and implemented by the different treatment providers and agencies that require UAs as part of their formal plans. Participants' UA results will be shared with the Interagency team and/or the veteran's case manager.

As noted above, the goal of VIS is to work with the veterans to help them move toward a more successful life, so individual relapses or failures will not automatically result in being revoked from the program. However, if a participant is no longer interested in engaging with the team, entirely stops attending required programming or is making little to no effort termination would be appropriate.

As each veteran completes the requirements for their Track-Phase, they will apply to phase-up, by completing an application. A graduation ceremony will be held for veterans that complete the program, where they will receive their legal benefits determined at program entry, a graduation certificate, and a coin.

MENTOR PROGRAM

While all of the staff from the above Interagency organizations play a critical role in the programs administration, it is the mentors and the relationships that develop between the VIS participants (mentees) and their mentors that truly make the VIS a success.

The VIS mentor program is an essential component of the VIS as the veteran mentors provide direct peer support to veteran participants. 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 that they will remain in treatment, attain and manage sobriety, maintain law-abiding behavior and successfully readjust to civilian life.

JIV are likely to respond more favorably with another veteran than with others who have not served or who have not had similar experiences. Research from other programs has learned that veterans feel relaxed and comfortable about their situation and circumstances when talking to a fellow veteran. The conversation and interactions between the Peer Mentor and JIV 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 VIS Program. Mentors' active and supportive relationships, maintained throughout treatment, will increase the likelihood that a JIV will remain in treatment and improve their chances of sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

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

Mentor Coordinator

The Vet Center Mentor Coordinator is responsible for recruiting prospective mentors, screening candidates, selecting peer mentors, training the selected candidates, and educating them about the Deschutes County VIS Program.

The Mentor Coordinator is responsible for individual and group supervision as well as scheduling mentors to be present during the Court's proceedings. The Mentor Coordinator will also coordinate all activities with the Court team staff, Court Coordinator, and the Judge.

Please feel free to contact Mentor Coordinator at the Central Oregon Vet Center (541) 749-2112 with any questions, or comments or with a peer mentor referral.

Mentor Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities

1. Recruit and train volunteer Veteran's Court mentors
2. Assist in the retention of volunteer mentors

3. Organize and conduct training for volunteer mentors
4. Assist in supervision of mentors
5. Assist in developing specialized training projects
6. Perform duties as assigned by the VIS Program
7. Sustain and evolve the Peer Mentor Program
8. Maintain “Mentor Log” to assist Interagency Team with participant accountability
9. Share information, as needed, with mentors in regards to their mentee

Who Can Be a Mentor?

Not everyone is qualified to be a mentor. The VIS program has stipulated criteria for peer mentors to help us identify the best individuals to serve in this important role.

Mentor Criteria

- Be a United States military veteran: Army, Marine Corp, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or their respective Reserve or National Guard branches.
- Participate in the screening and vetting processes
- Be a good standing and law abiding citizen
- Have genuine concern for veterans in the legal system
- Adhere to all the policies and procedures of the VIS Program
- Commit to program participation for a minimum of one year
- Attend VIS sessions as scheduled
- Participate in necessary trainings initially, annually or as necessary
- Reach out to the Vet Center when feeling triggered or overwhelmed at any time in regards to your role as a mentor
- Be ready to respond when needed in Court

As you read through this section of the manual, you will be offered guidance and suggestions on how to engage with your mentee in different phases of the VIS program. Please note that this manual has been created with mentors in mind and for mentors, meaning if anything needs to be changed or updated please feel free to work with the VIS staff to make it happen. The more knowledge and wisdom added, the easier the process can be.

Every mentor is valuable. Each mentee that is assigned can be and will benefit from the person to whom they are assigned. The mentor is a chameleon, though this does not mean you are the mentee’s therapist, probation officer, or disciplinarian. A mentor, according to the Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program, is a “person or friend who guides a less experienced person by building trust and modeling positive behaviors. **An effective mentor understands that his or her role is to be dependable, engaged, authentic, and tuned into the needs of the mentee.**”

You, the mentor, are meant to guide and provide feedback. The mentor acts as a coach, a guide, a role model, an advocate, and a support for the JIV. The mentor's coaching, guidance and support will demonstrate the special understanding that only another veteran can provide. You are an invaluable piece of this process, so you should possess and demonstrate some of the following characteristics.

Characteristics That Mentors Demonstrate and Possess

- Being an active listener
- Being consistent with your actions and words
- Being motivating and encouraging to yourself and your mentee
- Being an advocate when necessary
- Being able to see things from multiple perspectives
- Being empathetic
- Being encouraging and supportive
- Being tolerant and respectful of individual differences
- Having realistic expectations about the mentees and the impact a mentor can have on a mentee
- Having the ability to problem solve and seek out support from the VIS group to overcome difficulties
- Knowledge of Veterans Affairs services
- Knowledge of Central Oregon Vet Center services
- Knowledge of community resources and services

If you have been chosen to be a mentor, please know that you already possess and demonstrate some, if not all of these characteristics.

Mentor Role Description

Mission

To ensure that every JIV receives the services they require by helping them 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, to be a resource when the veteran encounters life issues and obstacles, and to be a support for their mentee. **The mentor is *not* a counselor, probation officer, attorney, or case manager.**

Values

Courage to help another meet the demands of the VIS program and civilian life, focused on the mission of restoring integrity to the veteran, teamwork, and honor in all you do.

Goals

- Volunteer Veteran Mentors help our fellow veterans receive the services they need to reach their full potential as productive members of society.
- Help them navigate the court system, treatment system, and the VA system.
- Assess their needs and help them adjust back to civilian life.

Mentor Duties and Responsibilities

- Attend court sessions with your mentee
- Attend weekly mentor group meetings
- Attend monthly support group for mentors
- 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 JIV and other Peer Mentors
- Use the mentor Log 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 JIV on the Mentor Log prior to VIS meetings

As noted above, a mentor provides support and guidance based on the mentee's track. Please review the Track specific VIS participant manual for your mentee, as there are differences between what your mentee will need to do if they are a Track I vs. a Track II participant.

- Track I is for individuals who have committed a "lower-level crime," most often a misdemeanor and has also been diagnosed with a less severe mental health or substance use issue.
- Track II is for individuals who have committed a "higher-level" crime, most often a felony and/or have been diagnosed with a mental health and/or substance use issue that is more severe or is considered higher risk.
 - Track II individuals are required to abstain from alcohol and drugs and will be required to provide UAs, as scheduled by treatment providers.

The Mentor Experience

Below you will find guidance on how to work and interact with your mentee through their engagement in the VIS program. If you find yourself in a situation that may not be listed below ask for help. This VIS staff and the VIS Interagency Team are here to help.

Getting Assigned a Mentee

Before being assigned a mentee, the VIS mentor coordinator may approach you and inform you there is a new mentee that you may be a good fit to mentor. Before making a decision ask yourself several questions:

1. Does this person live near me?
2. Would I have the time to meet with this person at least weekly?
 - a. Am I prepared to spend a minimum of 6 hours/week on 1 mentee?
 - b. Should I set boundaries? Is it okay to get calls 24/7?
 - c. What responsibilities do I have now that might prevent me from meeting regularly?
 - d. Do I want to dedicate time to this?
 - e. Will I be available to take a call in the middle of the night?
3. Does the mentee have transportation? Reliable cell phone service, or internet service?
 - a. If the mentee doesn't have transportation or can't communicate over the phone or virtually, would that be a significant barrier for me to provide mentorship?
 - b. Can I drive to meet them?
 - c. Am I willing to meet with them in their home or in my own home?
4. Am I able to work with more than one mentee? (This is only for those who are approached about having a second mentee.)
5. Do I want a lower risk Track I or higher risk Track II participant?

Some of these questions may help you decide if you can work with a mentee based on the information on hand.

Working with Your Mentee

After you have been assigned a mentee you will follow your mentee through their program phases based upon their track. The general phases of the program are outlined below.

Track I		Track II	
Phase 1	Engagement	Phase 1	Engagement
Phase 2	Action	Phase 2	Treatment
Phase 3	Maintenance	Phase 3	Reclaiming Self
Graduation	Program Completion	Phase 4	Maintenance
		Graduation	Program Completion

Phase 1 (Engagement): Getting to Know Your Mentee and Settling In

As you and your mentee begin to work together you may consider the stages of relationship building. Below is a guide on each stage and what may occur:

- 1) **Forming:** Individuals may have positive expectations for future interactions. At the same time, they may feel anxiety, wondering how they will fit into the new situation and how or if their performance will measure up.
 - a. This aligns with Phase 1.
 - b. Set the atmosphere. It is *not* the participant against the system. We are a team.
 - c. Set a reoccurring date and time for you and your mentee to ‘meet.’ This may be in person (preferred), but over the phone or via Zoom are also options.
 - d. Mentees may have a lot of questions. Ask them to review their manual and focus on each individual stage. Ask them where they want to be in a year from now.
 - e. Discuss with your mentee what their schedule should look like regarding their VIS commitments.
 - f. In most cases the Vet Center can gain access to information regarding the final plea deal, but it may take some time for the Vet Center to receive that information.
 - g. Attend the VIS meetings with your mentee to provide support and maintain awareness of what progress they are making.
 - h. Begin to discuss what goals the mentee may have during their engagement in the VIS program, and how you can help the mentee achieve those goals.
 - i. Focus on active listening, consider interjecting if they diverge from the topic or need to be redirected. Consider sharing personal stories to connect. Ask open-ended questions and let the mentee work through their thoughts and reflect.
 - j. Be aware of any cultural sensitivities and trauma.

Phase 2 (Track 1: Action / Track 2: Treatment): Putting in the Work

This is when the mentee may begin to experience setbacks, which provide ‘teachable moments.’ Part of this is due to the fact that you are still getting to know each other and the mentee may be experiencing additional stressors in their life, and you may also be experiencing your own life changes.

Below is guidance on what may occur in Phase 2 of the program and the Norming and Storming stages of your relationship. Please note that the Storming state has the possibility of occurring in more than one phase of the program.

Depending on your individual mentee you will be in Step 2 navigating the Storming stage together as your mentee is in Phase 2 of the VIS program. For some mentees, this step/Storming stage may reappear when then they are in Phase 3 of the program.

- 2) **Storming:** Individuals discover they may not be able to live up to their early expectations. Their focus may shift from the tasks at hand to feelings of frustration or anger with their process or progress. In this stage you may learn how to handle obstacles with your mentee.
 - a. This aligns with Phase 2 of the program.
 - b. Begin to provide feedback to your mentee. This may look like assisting them in identifying patterns of behavior and exploring ambivalence around making change.
 - c. They may approach the program seeing themselves a victim. It may take time for them to take responsibility. Consider ways to keep them moving forward.
 - d. Assist in establishing support for the mentee. This may be helping them find support groups, such as AA or hobbies such as gardening or cooking classes.
 - e. If they are making decisions not in their best interest, remind them of the direction they should be moving in to maintain progress and a good standing in the program. Despite your feedback, they will make their own mistakes. Help guide them through these lessons and assist them in regaining the right track.
 - f. Discuss what the mentee is learning through their various engagement in the VIS program.
 - g. Assist the mentee in learning how to advocate for themselves within the VIS program.

- 3) **Norming:** Individuals begin to resolve the discrepancy they felt between their individual expectations and the reality of their experience. Mentor and mentee may search for common ground, experience an increased acceptance and sense of comfort in expressing their "real" ideas and feelings, and build trust.
 - a. This aligns with Phase 2 of the program (Track 1: Action / Track 2: Treatment).
 - b. Ask questions about their family to show interest and learn more about the mentee. As if their family understands their challenges.
 - c. Meet mentee's family, visit their home.
 - d. Participate in social activities to offer opportunities to bond.

- e. Review mentee’s initial goals set at the beginning of the program and reassess.
- f. There may be setbacks for you, your mentee, and your relationship. Offer support and opportunities for conversation to work towards healing. Remind them that change doesn’t come easy.

Phase 3 (Track 1: Maintenance / Track 2: Reclaiming Self): Maintaining Attained Goals and Looking Forward

In Phase 3 of the VIS program, you and your mentee may be entering or already in the Performing stage. In the Performing stage, the trust deepens between the mentor and mentee, and a comfort level in the relationship is reached.

Mentees in Track 1 will be in this maintaining goals and looking forward a step as they are in the maintenance phase of the program. For Track II mentees, they will likely enter this Performing stage of your relationship while they are in Phase 3 (reclaiming self) and may also be in it into Phase 4 – track II’s maintenance phase. (Note: Track I does not have a Phase 4.)

- 4) **Performing:** Individuals feel satisfaction in their progress. They share insights into and are aware of their own (and each other's) strengths and weaknesses. Individuals feel attached to the team dynamic.
 - a. This aligns with Phase 3.

Phase 4 (Track 2: Maintenance): Next Steps

During Step 4 of your relationship, you and your mentee may be entering the Mourning stage. The Mourning stage marks the end of the formal mentoring commitment with potential for a less formal friendship to begin.

- 5) **Mourning:** Individuals may feel a variety of concerns about the end of the program. They may be feeling anxiety because of uncertainty, sadness, or a sense of loss about the changes coming to their relationships. And at the same time, individual members may feel a sense of deep satisfaction for their accomplishments.
 - a. This aligns with Phase 4.
 - b. Assist your mentee in preparing for their future graduation.
 - c. Meetings between mentor and mentee should focus on how to maintain goals met in the program.
 - d. Discuss what next steps and goals are for when they complete the program.
 - e. Remember that the mentees get to choose whether they would like to continue the relationship post-graduation. They may not reconnect after graduation, and

that is not meant as a personal criticism against the mentor. Respect the mentee's choice and know that you have made a difference in their life.

- f. If the mentee would like to continue a relationship, connect with them once a month.
- g. Remind them to take a day off once in a while.

Mentor FAQs

I am interested in being a mentor, what should I do?

Any Vet Center-connected veteran that is interested in being a VIS mentor, should reach out to the VIS Mentor Coordinator to express interest in the program. They should talk with current VIS mentors and ask questions about what it is like to be a mentor to help you decide if it is the right opportunity. And they should review the mentor manual.

I have concerns about my mentee what should I do?

Depending on situation there are different approaches to how to address concerns with a mentee:

1. If it is a lower-level concern, share your experience at the mentor meeting. Check in with other mentors to see if they have had similar experience or concern and find out how they managed to successfully address that concern with their mentee.
2. If the situation is more serious or the mentee has shared something that you don't feel is appropriate to share with other mentors, talk directly with the VIS mentor coordinator or the Vet Center director.
3. If your concern relates to your mentee being in immediate danger, contact the Veterans Crisis Line.

I have suggestions or concerns about the VIS program, who should I contact?

If you have suggestions or concerns about the VIS program share them with the mentor coordinator or contact the VIS director at the DA's Office. Some things the coordinator or VIS director may be able to address immediately, while other issues may require the idea to be brought to the full Interagency team for discussion.

Are mentors provided with the police or incident report on their mentee?

Mentors are not provided with their mentee's police report. The VIS program wants mentee to develop trust with their mentor. One of the key ways to build that trust is for the mentees to decide on their own when they are ready to share the details of their situation with their mentor. Having additional knowledge of the situation takes away a lot of that opportunity for a mentor and mentee to build a trusting relationship.

It is also important to remember that although many mentors feel that the police report provides details that may help them better understand their mentee, a police report is just one officer's narrative of a situation. A police or incident report does not tell the whole story and the narrative within the report is based on what one officer sees after arriving on the scene that is often already chaotic and/or volatile. Because the information in the report is always based on one or two officers' recollections of the situation, but it is never going to be 100% accurate. Reading that report, whether intentional or not it will cause the mentor to make assumptions, decisions, or judgements about their mentee -- clouding their view of who the mentee is or what they did and will hurt the relationship that is being forged.

Are mentees part of the case review process?

Mentees are not part of the case review process. The VIS interagency team wants to ensure that the VIS participants (mentees) know that they share information with their mentor and that the information won't make it back to the "authorities." If mentors were involved in the case review meetings not only would mentors be privy to information that could cloud their view mentees, it would also create a culture that wouldn't support transparency between the mentor and mentee. Mentees would feel as if the mentors might share personal details. For the success of the program, it is critical that we keep the mentor/mentee relationship separate from the administration/operations of the program.

If the mentees trust their mentor and feel confident that sharing details of their life won't be automatically shared with the DA's Office or law enforcement, then they are much more likely to be honest about their challenges, mishaps, as well as their successes.

Are there training opportunities for mentors?

Yes. As training opportunities arise, that relate to the experiences that mentors may encounter, the Mentor Coordinator and the DA's Office will work with the training agencies to allow mentors to participate in those training sessions. Not all trainings will be open to all mentors, but the mentor coordinator will aim to provide opportunities for everyone over time. Examples include: Deschutes County Behavioral Health offers Crisis Counseling on a semi-annual basis to members of the community. Other training opportunities are available for Mentors who are interested (see *Mentor Resources* below).

In addition, the mentor sessions at the Vet Center are also an important training opportunity for the mentors to learn from one another. Mentors should attend those sessions regularly and contribute to the discussions.

Can a VIS participant become a mentor?

Yes. If they select that they would like to become a mentor on their graduation application, they will begin the preliminary steps to become a VIS mentor. They are welcome to join as an official mentor one year after graduation. This is to ensure the VIS graduate maintains the successes they have achieved in the program.

Mentor Resources

Mentor Log

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/deschutescounty2/mentorlog>



All Rise Veteran Mentor Online Courses

Register for a free account to access free modules developed in partnership with Psycharmor Institute designed to provide you with critical fundamentals necessary to be an effective mentor or incorporate mentoring in your program.

www.allrise.org/trainings/veteran-mentor-online-courses/



Veterans Crisis Line | Confidential Support Available 24/7

Chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Chat) | Dial 988 Then Press 1 | Text: 838255

While this program is about creating positive change it is important to mention that currently 20% of all suicides involve Veterans. Mentors are requested to have the Veterans Crisis Line ready in the event a mentee is a danger to themselves or others.

Trauma Informed Care

TIO | [Trauma Informed Care Principles \(www.traumainformedoregon.org\)](http://www.traumainformedoregon.org)

Deschutes County Crisis Services

Crisis services is a 24-hour program that responds by phone or face-to-face. Services may include assessment, intervention planning, information and referral services. In addition, we provide brief crisis stabilization through individual or group treatment. Crisis services are provided to any individual in need, Oregon Health Plan coverage is not required.

Crisis Line: dial 988 or (541)322-7500 x9 or call (800) 875-7364 (toll free) or walk into the Stabilization Center which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Stabilization Center: 63311 NE Jamison Street, Bend, OR 97703

Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Deschutes County Stabilization Center (DCSC) serves children and adults who are in need of short-term, *mental health crisis* assessment and stabilization, but do not require the medical capabilities of an acute care hospital or longer-term residential care. DCSC is not designed for substance use treatment. The DCSC welcomes individuals to walk in when they are experiencing a mental health crisis, or they can be referred by local law enforcement and other community partners.

ⁱ www.thenationalcouncil.org/topics/veterans

ⁱⁱ www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/da.22161

ⁱⁱⁱ www.counciloncj.org/from-service-to-sentencing-unraveling-risk-factors-for-criminal-justice-involvement-among-u-s-veterans