

INFO BRIEF



FAST FACTS ON...

Veterans' Identities

People form social identities based on memberships in social groups and the value they attach to these. Social identities impact all domains of well-being (see table below). A key challenge for Veterans during military-civilian transition (MCT) is to achieve a new post-service identity that integrates their military and non-military social identities.

1 Veterans' Identities

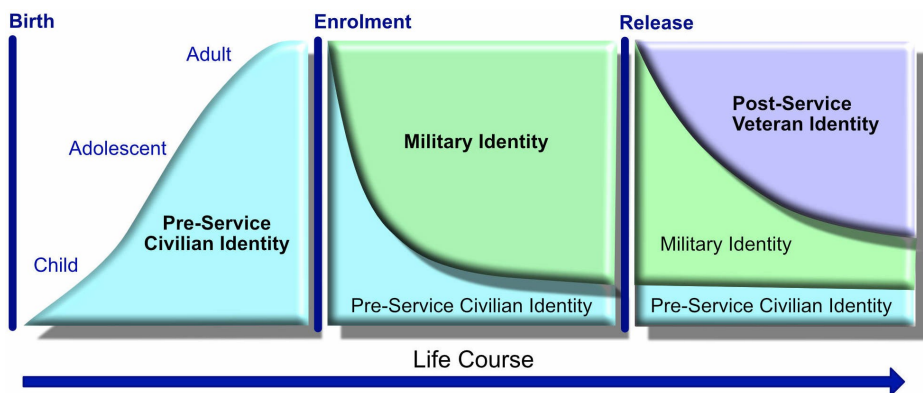
- Military personnel develop identities that are beneficial during service.
- Veterans integrate new social identities with civilian and military identities.

2 Importance During MCT

- Veterans must find, adapt to and identify with new social groups.
- Well integrated post-service social identities allow Veterans to achieve good well-being.

3 Some Practical Applications

- Identity challenges are normal during major life transitions.
- Acquire *identity etiquette* — sensitivity to others' social identities.
- Inform releasing personnel about managing identity shifts.
- Inform civilian social groups about understanding and welcoming Veterans.
- Promote peer support by Veterans who shared military identities.
- Ask Veterans what recognition works for them.



Well-being Domain	Poor Well-being	Good Well-being
Employment or other Meaningful Activity	• Employers hold false stereotypes -> leads to Veteran unemployment	• Veteran identifies with the workplace -> good workplace relationships
Finances	• Dysfunctional identity -> poor finances	• Functional identity -> better finances
Health	• Development of a chronic health condition disrupts identity	• Identifying with something other than health problem improves psychological well-being
Life Skills & Preparedness	• Lack of insight into identity issues -> negative Veteran identities	• Insight into identity issues -> positive identities
Social Integration	• Identity conflict -> poor relationships	• Identity resolution -> better relationships
Housing & Physical Environment	• Veteran's social identity leads to poor housing choices	• Veteran's social identity leads to better housing choices
Cultural & Social Environment	• False stereotypes lead to stigma and discrimination	• Realistic civilian understanding promotes functional Veterans' identities

...see over for Reference



Info Brief Reference (Veterans' Identities):

Thompson JM, Lockhart W, Roach MB, Atuel H, Belanger S, Black T, Castro CA, Cox D, Cooper A, de Boer C, Dentry S, Hamner K, Shields D, Truusa TT. *Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life — A Resource for Policy Analysts, Program Designers, Service Providers and Researchers*. Report of the Veterans' Identities Research Theme Working Group, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research Forum 2016. Charlottetown PE: Research Directorate, Veterans Affairs Canada. Research Directorate Technical Report. 01 June 2017.

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