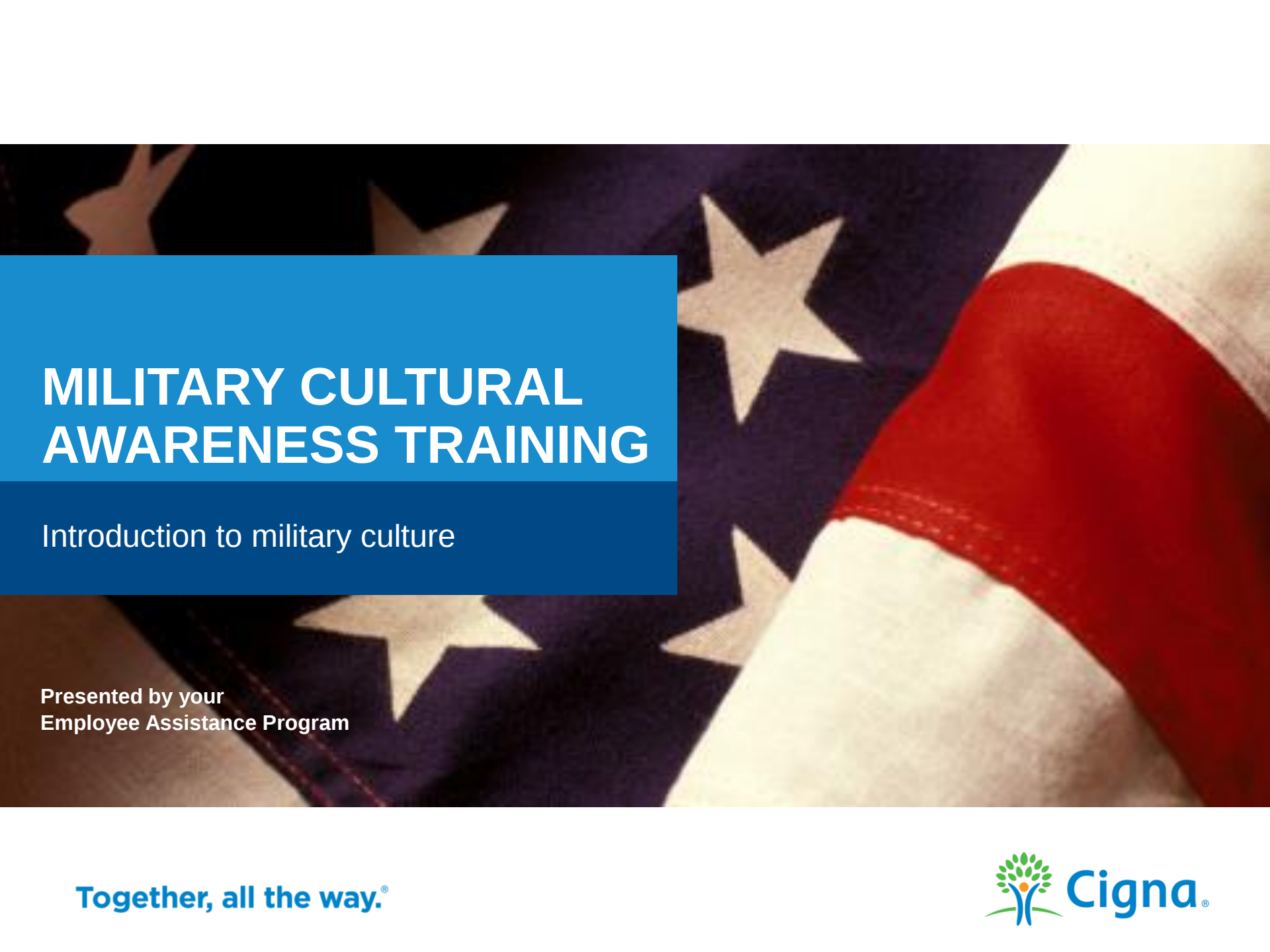


A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The flag is draped, creating soft folds and shadows. The stars are a light tan color against a dark blue field, and the stripes are red and white.

# MILITARY CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

Introduction to military culture

Presented by your  
Employee Assistance Program

**Together, all the way.®**

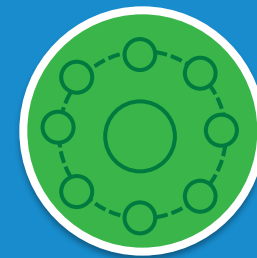


# SEMINAR GOALS



- Become familiar with common military terms and concepts
- Gain a greater understanding of the challenges of modern warfare
- Review the short- and long-term effects of deployment
- Explore communication “do’s” and “don’ts” when talking with a veteran
- Know the benefits of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

# UNDERSTANDING MILITARY CULTURE



# MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS

## ACTIVE DUTY

Army (Soldiers)

Navy (Sailors)

Air Force (Airmen)

Marine Corps (Marines)

Coast Guard (Coasties)



About 40 percent of U.S. military personnel are active-duty troops, 30 percent are Reservists and 25 percent are civilian contractors.

(U.S. Department of Defense, 2018)

## RESERVISTS

Army Reserve

Navy Reserve

Air Force Reserve

Marine Corps Reserve

Coast Guard Reserve

National Guard (Guardsmen)

- › Army National Guard
- › Air National Guard
- › Army National Guard of the U.S.
- › Air National Guard of the U.S.

Civilian Contractors



# UNDERSTANDING THE WARRIOR CULTURE



- Built on structure and hierarchy
- Function as a unit, not individuals
- Discipline and acceptance of orders is key
- “Duty, Honor, and Country” and “Mission First”
- Trained to respond automatically and instantly
- Warrior ethos means never showing weakness
- Clear sense of purpose and meaning



The intensity of the experience can create tight bonds.

# VARIOUS FACTORS INFLUENCE MILITARY EXPERIENCE



- Active Duty vs. Reserve
- Enlisted vs. officer
- Combat vs. non-combat role
- Gender

“The day-to-day stress that comes with stability and support operations (SASOs) can, at worst, be as bad as that of major combat...”

The danger may be as high, the mission less clear, some civilians hostile, and stricter rules of engagement. Threats are hard to recognize. Steady progress is difficult to see. There is boredom, no privacy, restricted movement, and separation from home with poor communication.”

(U.S. Army, 2014)



# MILITARY FAMILY SYSTEMS

- Posts can be a world unto themselves
- Family must support “Mission First”
- Actions of family members can affect record
- Moves and relocation are a norm
- Deployment more disruptive for Reservists' families



# THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S WARS



# CONFLICTS

## **OEF = Operation Enduring Freedom – the war in Afghanistan**

- Started 10/7/2001 in response to 9/11/2001 attacks
- Multinational military operation aimed at dismantling terrorist groups
- Primarily focused on Afghanistan

## **OIF = Operation Iraqi Freedom – the Iraq War**

- Started 3/20/2003
- Initiated to disarm threat from weapons of mass destruction
- Grew due to insurgent groups opposing occupying forces and government

## **OND = Operation New Dawn**

- Name changed from OIF on 9/1/10 to signify end of U.S. combat mission
- 12/18/2011 last United States troops leave the territory

# WHAT MAKES THESE WARS CHALLENGING?



- Multiple deployments are common
- Asymmetric warfare type of combat
- Target service member's moral code
- There is no “safe zone” or true “down” time

Communication is more immediate and accessible. This can be both a pro and a con.



# WHAT MAKES THESE WARS CHALLENGING?



- High number of wounded in action
- Type of injuries sustained and survived
- Multiple amputations common
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) called “signature injury” of these wars



Many suffer “invisible” wounds, such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

# THE CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT



# THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE

## **Before: Pre-deployment**

- Anticipation of departure
- Detachment and withdrawal

## **During: Deployment**

- Emotional disorganization
- Recovery and stabilization
- Anticipation of return

## **After: Post-deployment**

- Return adjustment and renegotiation
- Reintegration and stabilization



# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN TALKING TO A VET

- Service members do not consider themselves heroes
- Nor do they see themselves as victims
- As warriors, they may have difficulty reaching out for help
- Make sure they and their families are aware of services/support



## **Military families may need help with:**

- Finances
- Legal issues
- Relationship skills
- Safe driving
- Getting VA benefits
- Return to work
- Stress / anger
- Alcohol / drug use



# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN TALKING TO A VET

- Avoid sharing your political views or making assumptions about theirs
- Don't try to "talk the talk"
- Stay away from insensitive or intrusive questions or comments
- Understand that many OIF/OEF vets want to go back to the war zone



## Don't say:

"Did you kill anyone?"

"Did any friends die?"

"We shouldn't have been there in the first place."

"But you volunteered..."

"You're lucky to be alive."

"Was it worth it?"



# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN TALKING TO A VET

- Each individual will be different in terms of discussing their experiences
  - Don't avoid conversations, but take your cue from them
  - Listen with empathy and without judgment
- 
- Understand that nothing is the same after a deployment



- Face-to-face sessions
- Confidential
- Prepaid
- Unlimited telephonic consultation
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Household benefit
- Work/life support such as elder care, child care and pet care
- Convenience services
- Financial services
- Legal services

# BENEFITS OF THE EAP

**Benefits vary by employer. Please check with your HR for your specific EAP benefits.**



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