

Ant 307 Veterans in West Michigan Group 5

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Objectives

- Class Objective
 - will learn participant observation, using ethnographic surveys, Life Histories, and Focus Group methods as they collect and analyze data.
- Group Objective

Outcomes

-Class outcomes

- Use anthropological methods to assess healthcare status of Veterans living in West Michigan;
- Undertake intervention to improve the health and wellbeing; and
- Share findings with concerned policy makers, leaders, GVSU stakeholders, and other professionals.'

- Group Outcomes

Methodology

- Convenience sampling.
- Memorial day, and extra training set us back a few
- Grand Rapids area; Kent county (none from other counties)
 - Mostly students from Grand Valley.
 - All males
- Survey completed in paper form for interviewed veterans, Online for others.
- One life history was conducted
- One focus group was conducted.

Results

- All males
 - Aged 23-80
- 4 Iraqi veterans
- 1 Korean War veteran
- 1 Non-conflict veteran
- 1 Life Story
- 1 Focus Group Discussion
- None used solely the VA
 - Relied on private benefits
 - Many didn't know what was available to them
- Everyone saw a problem with health care benefits



Literature Review

- Dealing with health, but not health care
 - PTSD and depression
- Operationalized definition of veteran crucial
- Demographics of West Michigan Veterans
 - 93% male 7% female
 - 45 to 65 years old
- Economic status of veterans
 - Difficult to discern, however Michigan is the lowest per capita state in government spending for veterans
 - One fact states that 51% of veterans make \$20,000 a year or less. The majority of veterans, thusly, could be greatly benefitted by government health care.

Findings

- A general consensus that the VA paperwork is too complicated, and takes too long to go through
- Most veterans cited a lack of knowledge of veterans services as one of the largest problems with
- Veterans suggested universally that some sort of veteran program to inform them of veterans services
 - Some said that a day-long class after discharge would be helpful to alert them to all the veteran services they could take advantage of
 - Others thought that they should be out when they're out, but wanted a brochure to tell them about all the otherwise unknown veteran services that are available
- All agreed that the nature of the service has changed greatly
- The older veterans had differing perceptions of women in the military than the younger veterans

Recommendations-- Military

- Have a more thorough exit screening
- Mandatory check-up on veterans
 - 6 months after discharge
 - 1 year after discharge
 - 5 years after discharge
- Provide military personnel with what resources are available for them

Recommendations--Study

- Archive findings
- Use statistics and stories to start a change
- Make the public aware
 - WGVU
 - Public library
- Help at least 1 veteran realize what they've done for their country is invaluable

Limitations

- Limited time frame
- Limited sample frame
- Completed only in West MI
 - Continue nationally
- Some interviews didn't see how they were important



Conclusion

- Anthropological skills
- Transition from required course to a personal growth experience
- New respect for those that serve
- Military teaches what you can't learn elsewhere
- Memorial Day
- Our study was mainly younger generation Iraqi/Afghanistan veterans. They're stories are equally as riveting and heartbreaking as older generations.
 - Being bombed
 - Friends/family/public against the war