



MENTAL
HEALTH
AWARENESS MONTH



DEIB MYTH BUSTER | MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH EDITION



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MYTH:

"DEIB IS JUST ABOUT RACE AND DOESN'T APPLY TO VETERANS OR MENTAL HEALTH."

At its core, DEIB is about removing barriers created not just by identity, but also by lived experience—including military service, trauma, disability, and the complex journey of reintegration.

During Mental Health Awareness Month, it's especially important to recognize the mental health realities facing today's veterans:



- 7 in 10 veterans will experience PTSD during their lifetime (Charlie Health, 2023)
- Rates of depression, anxiety, alcohol misuse, and suicide are higher among veterans than civilians (National Library of Medicine, 2021).
- Veterans from underrepresented backgrounds—such as women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+—often experience delayed diagnoses, stigma, or misinterpreted symptoms in care settings (BMJ Military Health, 2023).

But there is a solution—and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging is part of it.

REALITY:

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING (DEIB) MIGHT OFTEN BE ASSOCIATED WITH CIVILIAN WORKPLACES—BUT FOR VETERANS, IT'S DEEPLY RELEVANT. IT TOUCHES EVERYTHING FROM ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE, TO HOW CARE IS DELIVERED, AND WHETHER VETERANS FEEL UNDERSTOOD, RESPECTED, AND SUPPORTED IN THEIR POST-SERVICE LIVES.

Research shows that culturally competent care, where therapy is responsive to a veteran's background and service experiences, can significantly reduce PTSD and depression symptoms and even lower suicide risk (Scientific Research Publishing, 2023).

As Military.com notes, more veterans are bravely sharing their stories of recovery—reminding us that healing requires systems that see the whole person. Resources like **Make the Connection** feature hundreds of real stories from veterans and their families, showing how culturally aware support, representation, and open dialogue lead to hope, recovery, and resilience.

DEIB isn't about dividing us. It's about ensuring that every veteran—regardless of their background—has equitable access to healing, belonging, and a life of dignity after service. As we reflect this Mental Health Awareness Month, let's challenge outdated myths—and make room for what truly supports veterans and all individuals, meeting them with care and support at the level of their need.

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Make the Connection. <https://www.maketheconnection.net/>