



# Veterans - Surviving and Thriving after Trauma

*Carol Butler, Ester R. A. Leutenberg*

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**Written for practitioners, *Veterans Surviving and Thriving after Trauma* will assist professional facilitators to help veterans adapt after serving their country.** Veterans risked life, limbs, relationships and careers, some lost one or more of these basic life support systems. They freed others, but continue to fight the aftermath of death and destruction. Many suffer emotional and physical scars, guilt, grief, and loss. Some are eaten away by anger or enslaved by substances.

Initially, homecoming is happiness, applause and affection, but reintegration to daily life does not always resume as they knew it. Veterans, their partners and families have changed. The labor market may not welcome their skills; their finances may plunge. Statistics show alarmingly high suicide and unemployment rates.

As more veterans return from combat, society is increasingly aware of their needs. They will be directed toward professional and spiritual counselors. Veterans differ from other abuse survivors; they have seen atrocities and experienced horrors most civilians cannot comprehend. Their intelligence, determination and resilience that served our country are now needed to save themselves, to heal their invisible and visible wounds.

The *Veterans Surviving and Thriving after Trauma* workbook will help facilitators working with veterans:

- individually
- in groups
- and in conjunction with their families

The book's goal is for participants to:

- realize they are not alone facing fears, feelings, and challenges
- re-integrate, as changed people, into their families and civilian life
- deal with trauma, stress, depression, guilt, and grief
- overcome anger and resentment
- prevent or begin recovering from substance abuse
- handle relationship issues
- rebound and rehabilitate emotionally, physically, vocationally, and spiritually
- cope, using cognitive, creative, expressive, altruistic and other modes

Veterans with or without serious emotional, physical, relationship and financial problems will benefit from the exercises which apply to the many challenges they face.

**Research indicates cognitive therapy helps veterans deal with trauma and helps them improve their lives.** The activities focus directly on recognizing and changing distorted ideas. Veterans see how thoughts affect feelings and actions. They are encouraged to think and act as survivors, to empower themselves to thrive despite setbacks or losses.

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