

Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420

M-12, Part II

April 21, 1992

1. Transmitted is a new Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration Manual M-12, "Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers," Part II, "Direct Service Operations," chapters 1 through 5. Part I, "Administrative Operations," will be published at a later date.

2. Principal purpose for this part is to enact Public Law 96-22, 38 U.S.C. 612A which authorizes the VA to provide readjustment counseling to veterans and to assist veterans in readjustment to civilian life:

a. Chapter 1: Defines policy and legislative authority.

b. Chapter 2: Specifies impact on life cycle and life style.

c. Chapter 3: Provides background and evolution of readjustment counseling services.

d. Chapter 4: Describes operational procedures.

e. Chapter 5: Outlines procedures for contractual programs.

3. Filing Instructions

Remove pages

Insert pages

Cover page through iv
1-i through 5-12

4. RESCISSIONS: Circular 10-89-88.

James W. Holsinger, Jr., M.D.
Chief Medical Director

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FD

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**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers
Direct Service Operations

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Veteran Health Administration Manual M-12, "Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers," Part II, "Direct Service Operations," is published for the compliance of all concerned.

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FORWARD

Historically, the lives of individual veterans are profoundly affected and transformed by duty in a war. Following return from combat, veterans traverse a complex pathway back to peacetime civilian life. This transition itself is an influential phase in the human life cycle. The military-to-civilian transition may proceed smoothly and without impediment, furthering personal growth and development. Conversely, effects of the stresses of wartime duty may persist, and interfere with civilian adjustment.

As noted throughout recorded history, the unusual stresses of wartime duty produce complex reactive states and psychological conditions. The extent to which veterans recover from such conditions and utilize them in healthy living greatly varies, not only according to military experiences, but according to homecoming experiences post-war.

Homecoming, welcoming and post-war debriefing opportunities routinely furnish veterans with a transition from war-related experiences which may range from common mild reactive stress states to the condition known as post-traumatic stress disorder. Aside from such specific psychological conditions, the post-war readjustment transition contains difficulties and challenges in negotiating the reestablishment of family ties, educational and employment careers, and the general integration of the military experience into the veteran's life.

During the period 1969 through 1979, Congressional hearings were held which indicated the presence of readjustment difficulties in some veterans returning from duty in Southeast Asia and in others who had served elsewhere during the Vietnam era; the hearings led to 38 U.S.C. 1712A. In response to this enabling legislation, VA established the Readjustment Counseling Service and Vet Centers to provide the required outreach and counseling services.

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2. SPECIFICATIONS OF SERVICE NEEDS
3. DEFINITION OF SERVICES
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RESCISSIONS

The following material is rescinded:

VHA Circular

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

1.01 INTRODUCTION

On the basis of extensive Congressional testimony and VA (Department of Veterans Affairs) consultation with experts on war-related readjustment difficulties, the character of readjustment counseling was initially established during a 10-year legislative history between 1969 and 1979. As implemented by VA in 1979, readjustment counseling is provided through a nation-wide system of community-based Vet Centers. In 1982, VA initiated a new organizational element, RCS (Readjustment Counseling Service), to administer the Vet Centers and the provision of readjustment counseling. Based upon 12 years clinical experience with Vietnam veterans, VA initiated legislative action to provide post-Vietnam era war veterans early access to readjustment counseling and to prevent possible development of delayed and chronic forms of war-related PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

1.02 POLICY

The RCS provides outreach, psychological counseling and supportive social services to assist all Vietnam era veterans, and veterans of Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf War, to resolve war-related psychological difficulties, and to help eligible veterans achieve a successful post-war readjustment to civilian life.

1.03 AUTHORITY

In 1979, the Congress passed and the President signed Public Law 96-22, which added to 38 U.S.C. (United States Code) Section 1712A (formerly Section 612A) providing readjustment counseling to any eligible Vietnam era veteran. In April 1991, Congress amended 38 U.S.C. 1712A to authorize VA to furnish readjustment counseling to veterans of the Persian Gulf war and the conflicts in Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama.

a. Section 1712A provides that:

(1) Readjustment counseling shall be provided, on request, to any eligible:

- (a) Vietnam era veteran,
- (b) Veteran of the Persian Gulf war,
- (c) Veteran of conflict in Lebanon,
- (d) Veteran of conflict in Grenada, and
- (e) Veteran of conflict in Panama.

(2) This counseling shall include a general mental and psychological assessment to determine whether the veteran has mental or psychological problems associated with readjustment.

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b. The law further authorizes:

(1) Referral of ineligible persons discharged from military duty to sources outside VA for assistance;

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- (2) Training of personnel to provide readjustment counseling services;
- (3) Utilization of paraprofessionals, volunteers, and work-study students;
and
- (4) Contracting for services from private sector providers.

c. Further definition of eligible veterans by periods and locations of service is specified in M-12, part II, chapter 5, paragraph 5.02.

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