



ASSERT/Littleton Mental Health Court, Grafton County Alternative Sentencing Veteran Track

The ASSERT/Littleton Mental Health Court Program is pleased to be providing specialized services tailored to veterans. The program actively seeks to identify potential veteran referrals through a coordinated effort with the Veteran's Justice Outreach Worker (VJO) from the White River Junction, VT VA. The ASSERT referral form specifically asks if the individual referred ever served in the military. ASSERT staff and the VJO are both actively involved with all levels of law enforcement and criminal justice, therefore veterans can be referred to ASSERT directly or through the VJO worker, since both receive referrals from the jail and from community law enforcement. This approach attempts to ensure that veterans won't slip through the cracks.

If a veteran is referred to ASSERT releases are signed and, if not already involved, the VJO is pulled in to the application/evaluation process. In this way, supports are immediately offered while the veteran is being considered for the ASSERT Program. The veteran applicant is offered services from the White River Junction, VT VA and/or the community mental health center/Northern Human Services, White Mountain Mental Health. This collaboration offers the best range of options for treatment and geographical proximity to supports.

Utilizing the Mental Health Court structure and Team, collaborating with the VJO and White River Junction VA (including Veteran Peer Support Specialists), and now having access to the new VA Clinic in Littleton we can maximize how we utilize existing resources to monitor treatment options, progress and compliance to improve the health and well-being of veterans, as well as the safety of our communities.

ASSERT is an intensive and comprehensive Mental Health Court program designed as an alternative to incarceration for individuals with mental health and co-occurring disorders.

Veteran participants are served and guided by the principles of the ASSERT Mental Health Court Program, which are to:

- 1) Maximize the communication and cooperation between mental health, substance abuse, veterans justice, and criminal justice;
- 2) Improve access to community mental health services (including co-occurring substance abuse treatment);
- 3) Expedite case processing time with a team approach;
- 4) Reduce recidivism;
- 5) Better protect the safety and well-being of the community;
- 6) Improve appropriate treatment for identified defendants;
- 7) Ensure that punishment for non-compliance with the treatment plan be swift and graduated to fit the circumstances;
- 8) Incorporate community-based educational programs, vocational supports and training, mental health supports (including counselling and medication), and peer supports and self-help, into a comprehensive treatment plan of recovery self-improvement. substance use;
- 9) Encourage family members and others who provide significant natural supports to become involved in the treatment and recovery process, when appropriate.