

**Mini Course: Understanding Military Culture and Behavioral Health Treatment for Veterans and Family Members**

**Instructors: Nancy Isserman, PhD, MSW and Will Barnes, D.Min, MFT**

**Dates: Tuesdays, June 18, 2019- July 9, 2019**

**Time: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

Military service is by its very nature inherently stressful. During periods of active conflict, as during the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, many Armed Service members and their families were also exposed to significant physical and/or psychological trauma associated with deployment and combat-related stressors. These military experiences and their associated physical, psychological, social, and spiritual consequences often follow military members and their families into their post-service life. In addition, the personal and family challenges associated with reintegration into civilian life are important risk factors for mental health problems and may lead to dysfunctional personal and family relationships.

This course will focus on the unique cultural factors associated with military service and veteran's status with regard to establishing and sustaining effective clinical relationships. The role of both acute and chronic stressors that accompany military life and reintegration into civilian life will be examined. The tension between empathy and vulnerability within the therapeutic relationship and a culture in which vulnerability and help-seeking are often perceived to be stigmatizing will be explored to identify the potential client and systemic barriers clinicians will face in providing mental health counseling to this population.

Topics include: stressors specifically related to the military cycle, reintegration, family issues, women in the service and post deployment, grief and loss, suicide, moral injury, military sexual trauma, PTSD, TBI, IPV, substance abuse, and intergenerational trauma will be examined through the lens of the impact of military culture and experiences.