



Putting it All Together: Virginia CIT & Veterans



Patrick Halpern
Mental Health Association of the New River Valley

Virginia Veterans & Service Members

- ▶ **819,000** reside in Virginia; ranks **7th** in US
 - ▶ By 2016, Veterans Administration predicts rank 4th
- ▶ **130,000 +** currently deployed
- ▶ **2nd** highest number of active duty service members
 - ▶ Behind California and Texas
- ▶ **10th** highest number of Reserve Component



Veterans & Justice-Involvement

- ▶ **Veterans no more likely to be arrested than other adults**
- ▶ **Veterans and service members were trained for combat:**
 - ▶ Non-defensive driving
 - ▶ Lethally armed
 - ▶ Targeted aggression
- ▶ **Same skills make it difficult to re-adjust to civilian life:**
 - ▶ Following driving rules
 - ▶ Being armed
 - ▶ Overly aggressive in inappropriate situations
- ▶ **Justice involvement can, therefore, be easy and unintentional**



CIT & Veterans

- ▶ **Benefits of expanding CIT partnerships to Veterans Administration and Virginia Wounded Warrior Program:**
 - ▶ Provide more comprehensive, effective training
 - ▶ Veteran-specific units in 40-hour training
 - ▶ New River Valley CIT Advanced Training Series
 - ▶ Promote better understanding of challenges and resources in community
 - ▶ Improve coordination of services for veterans





CIT & Veterans

- ▶ **Benefits to CIT Officers and Deputies:**
 - ▶ Ability to identify veterans
 - ▶ Recognize signs and symptoms of combat stress reactions and disorders
 - ▶ Familiarity with appropriate community resources
 - ▶ Enhanced CIT response capability



CIT & Veterans

- ▶ **Ultimate goal of these partnerships:**
 - ▶ Improve the lives of combat veterans, service members and their families
 - ▶ Identification, engagement, referral to appropriate programs and services at the earliest opportunity along the criminal justice continuum

