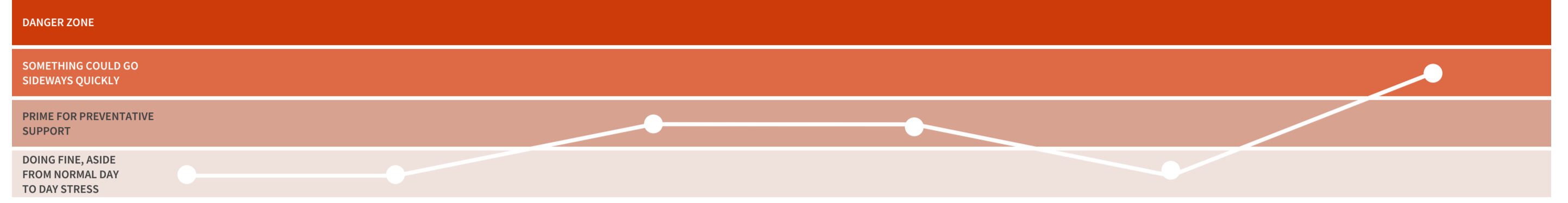




**MY PRIORITY: STAY THE COURSE**



**ANXIETY LEVELS (I.E. OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT)**



Military Adjacent Veterans’ “transition” often comes many years if not decades after exiting the military; upon retirement from my military-like civilian job, such as law enforcement, military contractor, or pilot. Fond of the military culture, hierarchy and camaraderie, they opted to maintain these elements post-service and got a job almost immediately and stayed in it throughout life.

The identity crisis this person feels is tied to lack of development of cross-cultural competence, due to lack of interaction with the “outside world”. It can often feel like starting from scratch and be painful.

**COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS**

- A way to pay for school
- A bit of discipline
- A steady schedule and paycheck
- A clear path between now and my next goal
- **UNDERSTAND HOW TO TRANSLATE MY MILITARY SKILLSET TO A PRIVATE SECTOR JOB**
- To maintain the hierarchy and order that I grew accustomed to in the military (whether at a police station, government job, etc)
- A slight readjustment period
- A checklist
- A plan B, in case plan A doesn’t pan out as I expect it to.
- To maintain the hierarchy and order that I grew accustomed to in the military (whether at a police station, government job, etc)
- A steady schedule and paycheck
- To not feel destitute and like a failure to myself and my family
- To not receive handouts
- Healthcare coverage to fill the gaps, but nothing long term
- Start workout routine to help withstand contracting lifestyle
- A hobby or side business to pass the time when I’m home
- To draw a hard line between work and personal life; not take the stress home with me
- Continue prospering at my job
- Maintain my routine and minimal social interaction
- **TO EXPECT AND PREPARE FOR THE IDENTITY CRISIS THAT COMES FROM TRULY EXITING MILITARY CULTURE FOR THE FIRST TIME UPON RETIREMENT**
- To maintain homeostasis even when the pillars of my identity (job & partner) go away
- To figure out ways to occupy my mind upon retirement

**PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT**

<p><b>TONE/LANGUAGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frame asking for help as practical and precautionary</li> <li>• Sensible, non-sensational language</li> <li>• Military cultural references are comforting and relatable, not alienating</li> </ul>	<p><b>COMMON SOURCES OF SUPPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military contracting buddies who I spend most of my time with overseas</li> <li>• Adrenaline releases such as power lifting</li> <li>• My immediate family, especially for those who live in the middle of nowhere</li> <li>• Long periods of time spent in the garage working on hobbies and side projects</li> <li>• Myself</li> </ul>	<p><b>RISK FACTORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• Losing my partner</li> <li>• Not knowing how to ask for help when I need it later in life</li> <li>• The loss of hierarchy that I’ve grown accustomed to</li> <li>• The loss of built-in social networks, as I’ve not have to work hard at developing them</li> </ul>
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**DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?**

No, but only because I don’t need to. It makes me swell with pride and feel lucky as hell to have been able to serve alongside the people I did. But Veteran? Nah.

**WHAT’S MY VIEW OF VA?**

My service was a job, just like any other job. I don’t need special treatment. I’m more likely to engage on the serving side of things at VA than to ever be a patient. It’s for people who have medical and psychological needs based on combat exposures.

*“Nothing has changed except you’re not wearing a boots. Not super different from being in uniform. Life stayed pretty simple*

- Jason | Ft Leavenworth, KS

*“The army takes care of you. A lot of structure and balance and diet and exercise and a positive approach to getting a job done. Many people leave and maintain that mindset. I was lucky enough to.*

Carsen | Burbank, CA

*“I don’t want to put myself above anyone. I think I was meant to be on the serving side. It feels like a conflict of interest to also be a patient”*

Quinn | Salt Lake City, UT

*“Life too a dip when I left the military — because I’m not invited to play anymore. Comes down even further when I had to retire out [as a policeman].”*

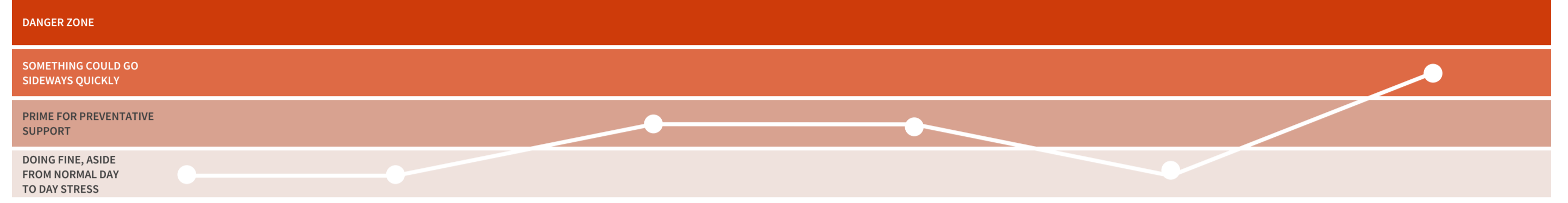
Carsen | Burbank, CA



MY PRIORITY: SAFETY & SECURITY



ANXIETY LEVELS (I.E. OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT)



The Noble Self Sustainer lives on the pillars of integrity and honor. As such, he believes that it's a citizen's duty to serve; so he did. Cautious by nature, his version of the good life includes staying close to what he knows, which for him means working for a construction company in Arizona, where he grew up, and raising his four children. After the military, he used the GI Bill to take a few classes but opted to take on more hours at work instead of pursuing a degree. This kind of person feels a deep and keen responsibility for (and sense of pride around) taking care of himself and his family; being a provider.

COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

- To have a stable career and lifestyle
• To find love and support, likely in the form of a partner
• To support my family — which is impossible with this current salary and lifestyle
• Less theory and more practical knowledge about how to get to where I want to go and tactical information about what to do when I get there
• A job and a short-term housing option while I save for a house
• To secure healthcare fast and without hassle for my family and I'll benefit from it as well, I guess
• CROSS CULTURAL COMPETENCY training is especially important for me to be able to thrive in a largely civilian/non-military environment; "I can't just yell at my employees like we did in the military"
• My decision making is chiefly driven by my focus on supporting my spouse / my family.
• I'm not going to take your "handouts", VA
• To recall my military service quietly and not "be a veteran"; I'm leading with a different identity. I'm a civilian who once served in the military.
• Learn to manage stress levels; not avoid them
• A buddy or old co-worker to connect me to a job that I can then excel in
• I will need some help with my NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS in order to mitigate stressors with civilians
• To move up the chain and make more money. A meritocracy; to earn my position
• To take time for myself — alone — in the woods
• Learn to balance life and work without burning myself out, another NON-COGNITIVE SKILL that I need to learn
• To maintain family ties, as they are my closest social support outside of work
• Aim to be a good supportive spouse. I want to keep my marriage and it's a priority for me.
• I'm not going to anticipate the identity crisis I will feel as I go through retirement
• Support during post-retirement identity crisis or loss of my partner, potentially in extended family or friendships that I haven't spent time developing while being a full time father and husband
• To continue to have the freedom and resources to travel and to have hobbies; not feel the need to change the world
• I need to raise my children with the values I have: honor, integrity, discipline

PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

TONELANGUAGE: Reminders that using VA Care is a huge source of support... COMMON SOURCES OF SUPPORT: My immediate family or my wife's friends... RISK FACTORS: Losing my job, which is my identity...

DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?

NOT OUT LOUD. I joined the military to serve my country; I'm proud and quiet about my time spent in service. Most days, I miss it.

WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA?

The VA is there to take care of those injured gravely during battle. Everyone else is taking advantage of taxpayer money.

"We had family back here so we weren't too worried about it. That's pretty standard. You don't have a job lined up. That was the only thing that felt unstable"

- Kellen | Salt Lake City, UT

"I was approached by a lot of people who told me to sign up for VA, but - I don't have a need. I'm healthy, my civilian employment has me taken care of. How much can they take care without questioning the legitimacy of it?"

- Carsen | Burbank CA

It was an era of desperation: I had to find it, get it going; start making some money. Our second son when he was born was very premature. I had more in hospital bills than i made in a year so i couldn't sign back up for service i had to go get a real job.

Colin | Salt Lake City, UT

MY PRIORITY: MY MISSION



ANXIETY LEVELS (I.E. OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT)



A Supported & Steadfast Veteran was born with a “we must leave the world better than we found it” mentality and thrived while serving as a leader in the military. The first few years out of service tend to be the most painful for this type of personality, as they re-orient their compass towards a new civilian mission and a world that is often more about the bottom line than about having a shared purpose. While not a joiner of legacy veteran organizations, this type of person often joins or starts veteran support groups at work and in the community; often serves as a leader and mentor for other veterans in ways they wish they had been supported.

COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

- To serve and grow as a leader
- To find kindered spirits and to serve proudly alongside them
- To plan for the next step while also dutifully serving
- To anticipate and prepare for the inevitable identity crisis that comes when transitioning from military to civilian
- To begin planning how to find meaning and purpose in civilian employment
- To have my expectations set
- Non-cognitive skills, for me, start with learning how to operate outside of a strict and shared hierarchy, like the one I became accustomed to in the military
- To connect with potential employers and begin to shape my civilian persona by telling the story (via resume or in person) a few different ways
- To meet people outside of military culture to prime that I begin to truly shift to civilian world and develop cross-cultural competence
- Love and support through a complete identity crisis and breakdown
- To remember that the first step is simply a starting point, and doesn't have to be perfect
- An outlet for my “military persona” and to create my “civilian persona”
- To find kindred spirits who are ambitious about their careers and lives
- A way to find private sector jobs that prioritize mission over profits
- Find a mentor
- Someone I love and trust to tell me when I need to stop and take care of myself
- To speak regularly about my time in the service with a few close military contacts
- A reminder to take care of pressing health concerns before I crash and burn
- To completely unplug every once in awhile so that I can recharge my own personal batteries and return to the mission full-heartedly
- To serve as a loving partner, parent, employee sibling, mentor and family member
- To continue to find fresh and meaningful challenges that stimulate my creatively and intellectually
- To retire purposefully, anticipating and hoping to avoid yet another identity crisis

## PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

### TONE/LANGUAGE

- Always explain the purpose and reason behind something; why it matters
- Use respectful language that offers me choices and frames opportunities in terms of convenience
- Reinforce how seriously we're taking our mission as VA, as mutual respect goes a long way

### COMMON SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- A similarly motivated social and family network
- My partner and family
- 1-2 close Military buddies
- Civic and public service organizations
- Close/kindred-spirits and friendship
- Mentors, professors and bosses I've found along the way
- Speaking about my experiences in public

### RISK FACTORS

- Loss of or inability to find a mission that is purposeful, makes the world a better place, and that I can work towards
- Working a soulless, corporate job
- Standing still for too long or the inability to feel as if I'm making progress
- Loss of financial independence
- Not being able to find kindred spirits

**DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN?**

*“My support is and always was: duty first”*

Jarrood | Salt Lake City, UT

What kind of veteran? Being a veteran is a big part of who I am, but when I hear the word, I picture a Vietnam Veteran sitting at a VFW, which I don't identify with or even feel invited to sit next to at one of those bars.

*“I would say to expect the identity crisis. Knowing that you're going to feel it will make it easier to cope. There are very few places in our society where you will feel the duty-honor-country part. Be prepared that it's far more likely to be about making money than about serving”*

Noel | Los Angeles, CA

**WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA?**

I've found a way to thrive on my own. Who are you again, VA? I tried once and it wasn't convenient (or someone was rude), so I've literally never thought about it again. It's for someone else; not for me.

*You went in with a bunch of people on your left and right — and you're getting out. Get a new [family], and get it fast.*

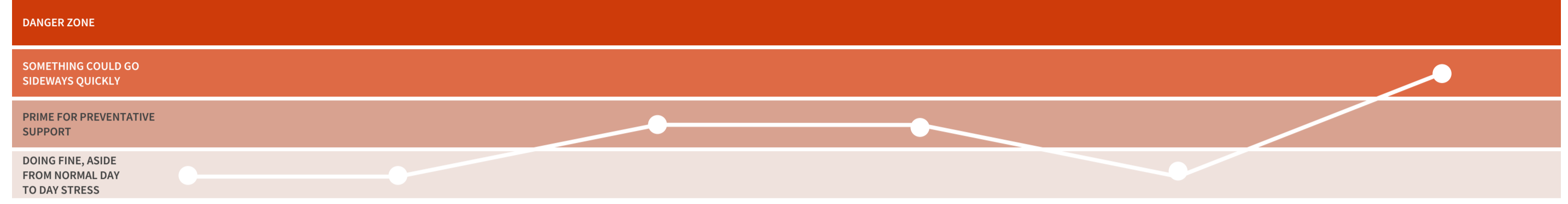
Sierra | Oakland, CA



MY PRIORITY: SELF CARE



ANXIETY LEVELS (I.E. OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT)



For those Piecing it Together, life trajectories tend to be a series of individual choices made one step at a time. For many, enlisting in the military was a common sense step in that it provided both discipline and options (i.e. school) for the future.

Though this type of person could benefit greatly from using VA healthcare, they would rather risk it than deal with the hassle and the disrespect that the VA represents to them.

Supported mostly by friendly faces in the neighborhood and a few close military buddies, this persona could benefit the greatest by tailored support and guidance.

COMMON NEEDS & BEHAVIORS

- For options to become available through my time in the military
• To be reminded constantly the benefits of saving money
• A way to pay for school
• A bit of discipline
• To hear stories of what others have done upon leaving the military as inspiration for what I could and should do
• Someone to connect the dots between how long I should stay in service and what else I want to do in life
• Mentorship about specific options for me
• Individual attention to make a plan that fits the needs I have a hard time realizing
• At least the first couple steps in place to be able to answer the inevitable "so, what's next?", which is anxiety-ridden for me
• To not just go back home because that feels a bit like failure
• To learn NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS such as being told not knowing is okay while simultaneously urged to not sit still or stall out
• Advice from and a network of veteran peers whose advice I wholly trust
• To be able to see and experience a range of future opportunities, not just hear about them
• A supportive community (bar, school, job) who knows me and my story...otherwise I feel lost quickly
• Check-in mentorship focused on my whole suite of life needs ... I need additional help to get thru the shock of getting out of the military
• To secure support from outside of military culture, as a way of developing CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE
• To not get stuck in a rut
• To find a doctor that I actually connect with and can see consistently
• Individual attention to make a plan that fits the needs I have a hard time realizing
• It's still tough for me to self-organize and keep up with my needs.
• I might be feeling the confusion of transition many years after getting out of the military
• Support systems that continue to help me realize self-awareness
• Significant lifestyle changes that can lead to isolation
• Individual attention to make a plan that fits the needs I have a hard time realizing
• Tailored healthcare advice (and a nudge)
• Finding new community that fits the me I've grown into
• Help setting up a routine that provides the consistency I don't know how to manage

PLAYBOOK FOR REACHING OUT

TONELANGUAGE: Always explain the purpose and reason behind something; why it matters. Use respectful language that offers me choices and frames opportunities in terms of convenience. Reinforce how seriously we're taking our mission as VA, as mutual respect goes a long way. COMMON SOURCES OF SUPPORT: A similarly motivated social and family network. My partner and family. 1-2 close Military buddies. Civic and public service organizations. Close/kindred-spirits and friendship. Mentors, professors and bosses I've found along the way. Speaking about my experiences in public. RISK FACTORS: Loss of or inability to find a mission that is purposeful, makes the world a better place, and that I can work towards. Working a soulless, corporate job. Standing still for too long or the inability to feel as if I'm making progress. Loss of financial independence. Not being able to find kindred spirits.

DO I IDENTIFY AS A VETERAN? What kind of veteran? Being a veteran is a big part of who I am, but when I hear the word, I picture a Vietnam Veteran sitting at a VFW, which I don't identify with or even feel invited to sit next to at one of those bars. - Jose | Austin, TX

WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA? I've found a way to thrive on my own. Who are you again, VA? I tried once and it wasn't convenient (or someone was rude), so I've literally never thought about it again. It's for someone else; not for me. So I stayed with my sister at her house and then moved into an apartment with her and just tried to figure out what i was doing. That apt had no internet so I kept going to Subway to get internet. I was in a small town in wisconsin... I was in a one stoplight town. Constance | Lawrence, KS

WHAT'S MY VIEW OF VA? I've found a way to thrive on my own. Who are you again, VA? I tried once and it wasn't convenient (or someone was rude), so I've literally never thought about it again. It's for someone else; not for me. "I realized how long it took me to actually start the transition process - of accepting civilian, being comfortable, not always wanting to be around military. A lot of that came from not having any support outside of the military." - Sierra | Oakland, CA