



Semi-Structured Interview Questions

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Introduction:

The purpose of my research is to better understand how young, female veterans with service related disabilities are readjusting to civilian life after military service. While I have a number of questions I'd like to ask, I really want to hear your own story. When my research paper is completed, I hope to be able to develop greater insights into the female veteran experience, and offer recommendations that I hope can help more veterans like yourself achieve success in the civilian world.

But first, as you know, I've been using the term 'service-related disabilities' in my research. Would you prefer that I use another term that we can use to discuss whatever impacts they have had on your post military life-like perhaps 'service-related injuries'? (*Why choose that term or another?*)

Pre-Military Life Circumstances

- I'd like to start by learning more about you. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself in the years leading up to military service?
 - *Probe: What was it like growing up in your family and in your community?*
 - *Probe: What about your pre-military life might have influenced your decision to enlist?*

Motivation to Enlist

- What can you tell me about why you decided to enlist in the military?
 - *Probe: Why did you choose that branch of service?*
 - *Probe: What was the reaction from friends and family to your enlistment?*
 - *Probe: Do you feel as if your enlistment expectations were met?*

Adjusting to Military Life

- What was it like adjusting to a military lifestyle, and what was easy or hard about that?
 - *Probe: Were you prepared mentally and physically for military life?*
 - *Probe: Do you think adjustment to military life is different for females than for males, and in what ways?*
 - *Probe: In what ways do you think that you succeeded or didn't succeed in adjusting to military life?*

Military Service

- Let's talk about your military service-can you paint a picture for me about your military career?
 - *Probe: Are female and male servicemembers treated any differently during military service and in what ways?*
 - *Probe: How about the ways you were regarded by friends and family when you were in the military? Are those types of reactions different for female rather than male servicemembers?*
- What can you tell me about the way that the military trains you for success in the military-are those skills helpful in the civilian world?

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- *Probe: What about not only physical or mental toughness; what do they teach you about confidence and decision-making that you regularly use in civilian life?*
- Did your military service include any overseas deployments, including to the Middle East? Can you talk with me about those experiences?
 - *Probe: During deployment, and particularly if you served in combat-exposed situations, what was there about military training that got you through those times?*
 - *Probe: Are female and male servicemembers treated any differently in those situations and in what ways?*

Discussion Framework #2: Military to Civilian Transition

- Women and men in your age bracket typically use those years to start and grow families, pursue college education, and embark upon their civilian careers. Can you talk about how military service affects achievement of any or all of those goals?
 - *Probe: Did military service affect the friendships that you had before you entered the military and since you separated from service and in what ways?*
 - *Probe: Some people say that serving in the military makes it harder to move forward in life. To what extent do you think that is the case?"*
 - *Probe: Do you think the military helps men and women transition back into civilian life the same or differently?"*
- Do you think that life gets easier or harder during the first few years after you left the military and in what ways?
 - *Probe: What about the first months or years after separation from active duty-was adjustment different during this time period compared to where you are now, and in what ways?*

Discussion Framework #3: The Life Course and Military to Civilian Transition - Impacts of Service-Related Disabilities (Service-Related Injuries)

- How does having a service-related disability (*Service-Related Injury*) affect your success in civilian life?
 - *Probe: Earlier, I mentioned life goals like starting and growing a family, pursuing education and starting civilian careers. Particularly, how does your disability (Service-Related Injury) affect achievement of any of your goals in this area?*
 - *Probe: In what ways does military service prepare or not prepare you to deal with your disability (Service-Related Injury)?*

- If having a disability (*Service-Related Injury*) presents challenges in some aspects of your life, where or who do you turn to help you get over the rough spots?
 - *Probe: Are other veterans more or less able to help you through those times compared to civilian friends and family?*
 - *Probe: How about professional help, like through the VA or other veteran's programs? In what ways are they helpful or not helpful?*

Discussion Framework #4: Parting Thoughts

- How could the military, or those around you in civilian life, do better at making the military to civilian transition easier for female veterans?"
 - *Probe: In what ways can the GPS Transition services better prepare servicemembers like you as they get ready to transition back into civilian life?*
 - *Probe: In what ways can educators or employers better help female veterans with service-related disabilities (Service-Related Injury) to achieve education and employment success?*

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- *Probe: In what ways can your friends and family better support you in civilian life?*

I can't thank you enough for participating in this interview and I'll send your gift card right out to you by mail. But, before we end, is there anything that you would like to add to the conversation, or ask a question?" I wish you great success in everything that you want to do in life and thank you for your service.