

Go Beyond, navigating life beyond service®: Preliminary evaluation of a self-directed educational program for adjustment to civilian life

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Summary: Go-Beyond, navigating life beyond service® is an evidence-informed self-directed online program designed to support veterans' adjustment to civilian life post separation from service. Through the delivery of interactive learning modules on relevant psychological and cultural factors related to a healthier reintegration and the use of evidence-based strategies, including Cognitive Behavioural and Acceptance and Commitment Therapies, the program aims to build insight into personal challenges and offer practical first steps to address key areas of needs, indicated by the Military-Civilian Adjustment and Reintegration Measure (M-CARM) [1]. We present a user-centered evaluation of the program including both veterans and clinicians currently working with ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force.

Methods-Results: A mixed methods approach, including quantitative online self-report surveys from 28 veterans and focus groups with two clinicians and five peer support workers, was conducted to evaluate the acceptability and perceived usefulness of the platform and modules content. Results indicate that over 90% of veterans found the modules useful and were satisfied with the performance, quality and accuracy of the program. Interestingly, 74% responded that they would likely implement a change in their life based on what they had learnt and 97% of participants would recommend the modules to another veteran or family/friend of a veteran. There were no differences in the overall rating of the modules, in relation to gender, type of service or time since transition ($p>0.05$). Focus group data showed that the education components of the program might also be particularly

informative to family members and friends of veterans, as well as to one-on-one clinical work, new staff induction and as part of existing transition and reintegration programs.

Conclusions: Overall, although further studies are required, these preliminary results suggest positive acceptability of Go-Beyond, as a supportive self-directed tool for veterans in transition to civilian life. The recommended changes from this study were incorporated to revise features and components of the program which has progressed to a 12-months pilot phase, aiming to have 500 veterans accessing and completing the program by end of June, 2022.

Reference: [1] Romaniuk, M., Fisher, G., Kidd, C., Batterham, P. (2020). Assessing psychological adjustment and cultural reintegration after military service: development and psychometric evaluation of the post-separation Military-Civilian Adjustment and Reintegration Measure (M-CARM). *BMC Psychiatry*, 20, 531.