



UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY FROM COMBAT TO CAREERS

The term *disability* holds different meanings for different people. It is even defined differently depending on the context. In the military, disability is a rating one receives after time in service, specifically for benefits and compensation. In education and the workforce, disability is generally defined as a functional limitation, with an associated need for an accommodation to a program, service, or environment in order to promote effectiveness and prevent discrimination.

While the military has come a long way in helping its personnel gain a better understanding of disability and how it may affect future workforce success, most wounded service members do not identify as or consider themselves a person “with a disability.” The psychological process for accepting disability takes time, especially for those with a military background. At first, they may view their disability — and the need to ask for help — as a sign of weakness.

Wounded service members with newly acquired injuries (both visible and unseen) are developing an understanding of how their disabilities may impact their learning or physical environment. Many of these wounded service members may simply need time to adjust and to figure out what they need to be successful.

DISABILITY ≠ WORKFORCE INABILITY

Disability is a very personal experience. No two individuals with the same disability will be impacted the same way, and they may or may not require an accommodation to be successful or to feel comfortable sharing disability-related information.

Keep in mind that an accommodation is a change in the way things are normally done at work that enables an individual to perform a job, apply for a job, or enjoy equal access to a job’s benefits and privileges.

As a whole, the military community is an exceptionally resilient and resourceful group. Many experiencing the impact of an injury acquired during their time in combat will come to the workforce with an understanding of what they need for success. Others may need some time to figure out what works and what doesn’t. Time, patience, and disability education will go a long way — and our wounded service members deserve it.

DISABILITY IS NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL

As the American workforce ages, the likelihood of acquired injury and the need for workplace accommodation increases. Therefore, it is necessary for today’s workplaces and academic environments to develop a universal understanding of flexibility and accommodations.

Being proactive and applying good management practices is often the best way to start.

- ★ CONTACT US TODAY
- ★ wtow@woundedwarriorproject.org
- ★ TO BEGIN THE DISCUSSION.

The Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Warriors to Work® program is here to help you as you consider hiring wounded veterans who look forward to contributing to your company.

WWP can support your company in becoming a preferred employer, providing reasonable accommodations and facilitating a productive and long-lasting relationship once the wounded veteran begins work — and continuing through the life cycle of employment.



4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300
Jacksonville, FL 32256

woundedwarriorproject.org