



IN SERVICE OF THE MISSION: TEAMWORK AND SHARED GOALS

Military personnel are nearly always aware of the mission with which they are tasked. For example, one Veteran said that she saw the Commander's Mission and Intent posted on the walls in every military unit in which she had served. It was there to help unit members remember their focus and achieve the Commander's mission.

The mission of the military is supported by several core values. The individual branches of the military state these values differently. For example, the Army has a Soldier's Creed. It includes statements such as, "I will always place the mission first," "I will never accept defeat," "I will never quit," and "I am an expert and I am a professional." The Marine Corps uses the motto *Semper Fidelis*, which is Latin for "always faithful." This motto reminds Marines to remain faithful to the mission, to each other, to the Corps, and to country, no matter what.

These values are introduced during initial or basic training and are reinforced and encouraged throughout an individual's military experience. This can result in high motivation to be mission oriented and can build camaraderie between military personnel rarely seen elsewhere.

Being mission oriented includes:

- Committing to the mission
- Setting high standards
- Putting the mission of the unit before the needs of the individual
- Completing tasks needed to complete the mission, despite obstacles that may arise
- Not quitting or accepting defeat
- Being disciplined and following rules
- Working together as a team
- Respecting the team leader and his or her decisions
- Leading a team effectively and motivating team members

Understanding this mission oriented approach may help you understand a Veteran. Even though the Veteran has left the service, the service may not have left the Veteran. That is, he or she may still approach work in a mission oriented way. As a therapist, it may be useful to be clear about the mission (e.g., what is the task at hand, the expectations for treatment and what is expected for quality completion of the task). Be clear about who has responsibility for different parts of the task – his or her responsibility in the course of treatment.

