

Talking Points and Answers to Usual VA Questions about TRR Program

Who is Team River Runner?

Answer: TRR is a National Nonprofit, over 50 sites around country and growing

Are you a part of Wounded Warrior Program?

Answer:-We are not affiliated with Wounded Warrior.

What is TRR's mission

Answer: Our goal is to help veterans heal thru paddling sports. We believe paddling is healing. And that it is an opportunity to get a vet involved in a healthy activity, outside and engaged in a positive way with other likeminded individuals from the local community.

Where would you take the vets paddling?

Answer; We will use whatever water venue is available to us locally. We'll take them on rivers, lakes, canal, ocean surf, marine estuaries

Doesn't TRR primarily paddle on whitewater?

Answer: TRR did start on whitewater because that's where the first two volunteers had their experience. And it is true that some sites do have a white water program. But over 50% of our sites paddle lakes or gentle class 1 river. The answer is that this program is for the vets. We try to take advantage of all the water opportunities near us and tailor the experience to what the vet wants.

What opportunities might be available?

Answer: Some vets have limited motion abilities or have some anxiety about water, so we try to provide gentle touring outings that emphasizes being outdoors and enjoying nature. We provide the watercraft that is suitable for that person, which may be a touring recreational kayak with an open cockpit or a sit on top. Other vets may be interested in individual flat water racing, and some in competition in team activities oriented like water polo or water football. And yes some vets find increasing their boating skills on white water to be very rewarding.

How about safety? How do you handle this?

Answer: Safety is first, fun is second. We always have our vets wear personal floatation vests, and where appropriate (rivers) we have them wear helmets. What TRR brings to the program is experienced paddlers, with a caring, nurturing attitude and a desire to give a good experience to the vet. We want the vet to feel comfortable, yet learning something new that motivates them to what to be more engaged. We do that that by providing a safe environment, knowing the desires of the vet, matching their capabilities to the appropriate water and weather conditions, making sure we are correctly staffed with right number of volunteers per outing.

Do this costs anything?

Answer: There are a no costs to VA or vets, TRR pays all expenses all expenses

How about insurance?

Answer: TRR provides liability insurance for our volunteers and pool.

How often do you paddle?

Answer: We aim for weekly paddling sessions because we believe weekly activity provides the right frequency to keep a vet motivated, to build confidence and in a stair stepping style, increase their skill base. However, the availability of a pool and volunteers as well as the desires of the veterans end up determining the realistic frequency of paddling.

Do you use a pool?

Answer: We don't have to use a pool. However, they are handy during winter months and even during summer time they provide a sheltered controlled environment that is great for instructing.

Does TRR conduct any trips other than local trips?

Answer: Yes, we try to promote regional trips where TRR sites in a region join together for a day or more and paddle together and TRR offers 7-8 national trips a year that we pay for. The regional and national trips are great as they introduce vets to other vets, they also a new paddling opportunity.

Do you support the VA Summer Games?

Answer; Yes, we are at VA Summer and Winter games.

Do you have any experience working with Traumatic brain injuries or post traumatic stress disorder or any disabilities?

Answer: We have a whole nonprofit that supports us on this. We are not clinicians but we are trained to recognize the symptoms of PTSD and TBI and how to handle them on the water. As far as physical disabilities, it is relatively easy to outfit a kayak to an individual's requirements. In addition the American Canoe Association provides detailed instruction for this, some of which TRR volunteers actually wrote as there was no instruction before.

What is my role as the VA clinician/department head?

Answer: Our program works the best when we have the support of the recreational therapist. Support means that the therapist recognizes the value of what TRR can provide and that they actively refer vets to TRR. Therapists are encouraged to join any instruction or outing that TRR conducts and many across the country do attend.

Are you willing to undergo VA Volunteer training?

Answer: yes, if training is held on the VA Campus. If it is off campus, it is not a VA event and all we require is referrals.

When can you start?

Answer: Let me get back to you. It should be in the next month or two. I need to get all my volunteers in place.