

About Us – Research

We're Still Here and We Still Matter:

The Shaping Purpose Military to Civilian Transition Program Evaluation and Study

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Product Evaluation: Did the effort succeed?

In December 2016, Shaping Purpose Inc. contracted a third party to evaluate the outcomes for military and veteran participants in the Shaping Purpose course. We wanted an outside study to give us real information about how our participants were doing both during and after the course.

After 20 months of studying our course and interviewing participants before, and after, with a 6-month follow-up, the study gave us feedback on what Veterans are going through and whether our course was effective or not.

The results? "...the evaluation concludes that the Shaping Purpose program has demonstrated its effectiveness as a planning and preparedness activity for military personnel in the MCT context. It is relevant to the needs of releasing military personnel, demonstrates an adequate evidence base for its curriculum, has been responsive to formative feedback, and produces outcomes desired by participants that appear to be durable over time."

10 Ways Shaping Purpose Helped Veterans Transition

1. Many of the participants noted that they would recommend the program to colleagues and/or Chain of Command. These recommendations are revealing about how participants felt about the value of the course material and process for themselves and their peers.

I would definitely recommend it. It's a well put together course. For anybody who is getting out and has to find a second career, still has kids home, and has to pay the bills. And just to get beyond this thing that your life is the military. There's a life beyond the military.

2. Participants remarked on a number of changes in attitude and outlook that were sustained between the course completion and the follow-up evaluation interviews. One of the key areas of attitudinal change that participants identified was a renewed sense of hope and a more positive outlook.

It captivated me. It opened the doors to things that I couldn't understand and made me see things that I either had refused to see or just couldn't see through the darkness that I was experiencing. I'm really setting more goals for myself, and finding ways to achieve them, which is wonderful - because when you feel accomplished in life, you feel happier.

3. A number of participants also reported that they felt calmer and more resilient to stress after attending the course.

After the course, I felt like, I really wanted to accomplish my goals much more, and make changes in my life. And then the last weeks have been really, really crazy, but despite that, I've been able to stay more positive, and understand that okay, well there's this stuff in my life, but I can still accomplish smaller goals right now, and go back to my bigger goals afterwards.

4. Many participants noted that with renewed hope and a positive outlook, they became more focused on the future.

It changed how I see things. To be around other people who have had the same experience, it gave me the sense that I wasn't alone. We were trying to do something to move on. I go to other groups and there's a lot of complaining and talking about the good old times but we're not thinking forward. This propelled me to think forward.

5. Participants shared their experiences of going home from the course with a new sense of clarity about what was most important to them in their lives.

By finding my GPV's (Gifts, Passions and Values) I'm able to finger out what I WANT as goals...before I was like, what do I want as goals? With all the exercises in that course, I was able to find out what I want, and then its easier to go on to find ways to accomplish my goals.

6. Many of the participants linked a new sense of clarity about their priorities to having had the opportunity to self reflect.

I think having that self reflection in the course gave me a bit of piece of mind in that I've done the due diligence that you need to do to figure it out and think things through. I'm not saying it gave me all the answers but at least I thought it through, put the time into thinking about it and am more mentally prepared.

7. Family figured prominently in the priorities that participants spoke about. Often, they reported that they had always known that family was important to them but that they had changed how they acted on that priority in their day to day lives.

It really did remind me of how important my family is and to not be so self absorbed and that wallowing doesn't do anyone any good.

8. Perhaps the most commonly reported take-away from the course was the systematic process of identifying personal goals, and connecting specific, planned actions taken today to those goals in order to make progress towards a desired end state.

I think about SP every day and the goals that I set out for the next 12-18 months. The whole experience was just eye opening and the way I see myself because the military changed me. You have to deal with the experiences in the military and carry that as a bag of experience going forward on the civilian side.

9. Participants spoke at length about how they had discovered that they had a contribution to make, or that they had found a new sense of direction through the course.

Its helped me think about, fight out, who I am, and that the military isn't the only thing that makes me who I am. Knowing that, there are things that I'm going to be doing in the future, and that I'm excited for the future.

10. Participant noted benefits from contact with peers who were also in the process of transitioning out of their military careers. Some found that the experience helped to normalize what they were feeling and going.

Hearing other's stories, it's made me more accepting of where I've come from, how my life has change and made it okay. I had a really tough time with acceptance of it, and not accepting it and how my life has transformed.

AT THE HEART OF A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION IS A TRANSITION OF
IDENTITY; AN EMOTIONAL SHIFT FROM BEING PART OF THE ARMED
FORCES TO HAVING A FUTURE AS AN INDIVIDUAL IN THE CIVILIAN
WORLD.
FORCES IN MIND TRUST (2013).

HAVING A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN SOCIETY FULFILLS OUR NEED FOR A SENSE OF
PURPOSE AND IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF PEOPLE'S IDENTITIES.

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