

Cornell University
ILR School
Employment and Disability Institute

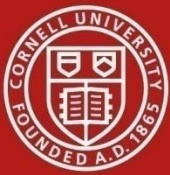
Welcome!

Beyond Yellow Ribbons:

Welcoming Veterans with Disabilities in our Workplaces

April 21, 2014

Hannah Rudstam, Ph.D.



Goals for session



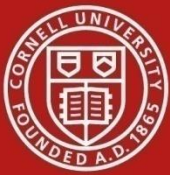
The faces behind the numbers

Overview: Why this matters!

Veterans with disabilities in higher education

Veterans with disabilities in the workplace

Your thoughts & questions



Making Work Happen Online Toolkits

A free, interactive online resource...

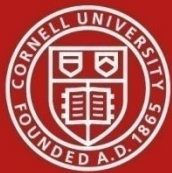
Go to...

<http://www.makingworkhappen.com>



Scroll to

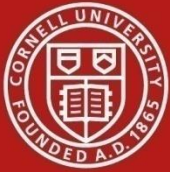
**Making Work Happen:
Veterans with Disabilities Toolkit**



Before we get to the numbers...



The stories and the faces



Activity: Why is this a burning issue?

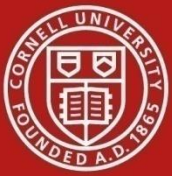
Discuss:

1. What are the issues?
2. What are some options?
3. Which option is best?

A 30 year old veteran returns from Iraq with PTSD. A middle school teacher prior to his service in Iraq, he now plans on limiting his job search to non-skilled work because he is sure he will never be hired for professional jobs when he tells his potential employer about his PTSD diagnosis.

A 24 year old soldier is recovering from a traumatic brain injury. She plans on hiding her disability from her employer because she fears she will be terminated if her employer finds out.

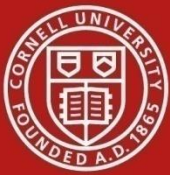
A 32 year old returns from Iraq with a spinal cord injury. An IT professional prior to his service, he believes he will not be able to return to his old job because the building he worked in lacks an elevator.



The story behind the iconic image



Sergeant
Lance
Corporal
Blake Miller



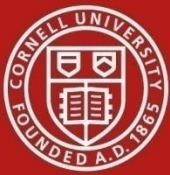
Comparing Blake's life in the picture with his life now...



“...when we come home, there is a whole other fight we have to deal with. That's the part of the fight when nobody takes pictures, and it's hard to get people's attention, and it's hard to get resources.”

Paul Rieckhoff, Iraq vet and Executive Director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

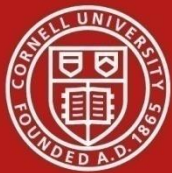
(As quoted in Rolling Stone Magazine, 2008)



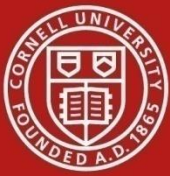
“Never Truly Over”*



Drew & Molly Pham



**What are the issues
behind the faces and
stories?**



Some highlights (2012)...



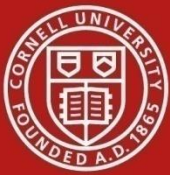
21.2 million veterans in U.S. population

- 1.6 million women veterans
- 11.3% African-American
- 5.7% Hispanic
- 1.3% Asian-American
- 79.6% non-Hispanic white

5.4 million served since 1990

8.7 million veterans in the workforce (age 18 – 64)

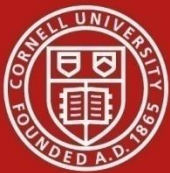
26.7% have college degree (as compared to 29.1% of the total population)



How many veterans are returning from recent engagements (Gulf War Era II Veterans)?



- Hard to predict!
- There are about 2.5 million Gulf War Era II vets (served since Sept, 2001)
- More than a third were deployed more than once
- About 400,000 were deployed three or more times



How many veterans have disabilities?*

Using American Community Survey data:

- 29.6% (3.5 million) veterans ages 21-64 have a disability
- 12.4% (1,495,000) veterans have a service-connected disability
- 6.7% report both an ACS and a SC disability



Using National Center for Veterans data:

- 1996: About 2.2 million veterans report SC disability
- 2011: About 3.4 million veterans report SC disability

Using Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013 Report:

- 28% of Gulf War Era II veterans have a service-connected disability

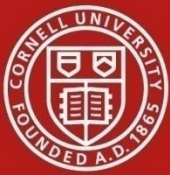
Using Veterans Disability Claims data:

- As of 2012, 45% veterans filed one or more disability claims

Erickson, W., & Rudstam, H. (2013). *Fact Sheet: Employment of Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities*.

National Center for Veterans Analysis & Statistics, 2012.

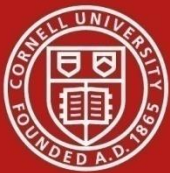
US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013). *Employment Situations of Veterans Summary*



Why the higher rates of disability?



- Nature of weaponry—TBI closed-head blast injuries from roadside bombs and mortar attacks
- More vulnerable to PTSD because of combat conditions: Unexpected, stressful & face-to-face
- More likely to have repeated deployments without recommended rest period between deployments
- Quick transition back to civilian life
- Recruited from National Guard and Reservists—may lack the sense of shared community of enlistees

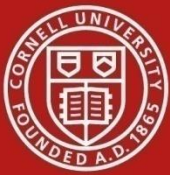


The “signature” disabilities...

PTSD, TBI and depression



- Veteran is likely still on a journey to understand the impact and meaning of the disability AFTER the return to civilian work life
- Under-diagnosed & under-reported—Inadequate screening mechanisms
- Many will not be fully diagnosed & treated until long after return to civilian life
- Change a lot over time
- Can have a wide range of symptoms and subtle manifestations
- Tend to be highly stigmatized & misunderstood



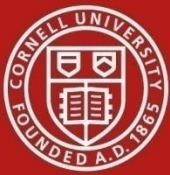
About PTSD:



- A critical review of the literature by Richardson, Frueh & Acierno (2010) places the rate of PTSD at **4% - 17%**
- Tanielan & Jaycox, though, place the rate of PTSD among returning veterans at **about 19%**

Richardson, L., Frueh, C, Acierno, R. (2010). Prevalence Estimates of Combat-Related PTSD: A Critical Review. *National Institutes of Health Public Access Manuscript*. Accessed at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2891773>.

Tanielan T, Jaycox, L, (Eds.) (2008). *Invisible wounds of war: Psychological and cognitive injuries, their consequences, and services to assist recovery*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Center for Military Health Policy. Accessed at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG720.html>.



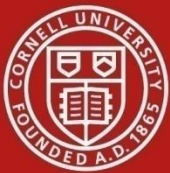
About TBI



- Tanielan & Jaycox (2008) found that **about one-in-five** returning veterans had TBI, the most common being a “pressure wave” close-head TBI
- Type of weaponry & combat result in increase in close-head TBI (US DoD, 2011)

Total casualties: **54,509**

Largest reason code--WEAPONRY,
EXPLOSIVE DEVICE: **34,647**



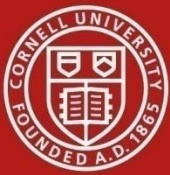
Waiting for VA disability claims

- Backlog of claims: 611,000 in March 2013; 344,000 on April 2, 2014*
- Average wait time to begin receiving disability compensation: 273 days in 2013; 154 days in 2014
- Yet...Much longer waits:
 - In large cities
 - For appeals of initial benefits ratings (2012 wait is 675 days; end of 2013 wait is 923 days)



*Serbu, J. (2014). VA's Disability claims backlog down by 44 percent. *Federal New Radio*. Accessed at <http://www.federalnewsradio.com/538/3594791/VAs-disability-claims-backlog-down-by-44-percent-but-problems-remain>

*US Dept of Defense. (2014). VA Disability Claims Backlog Drops by 44 Percent. Accessed at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=121944>

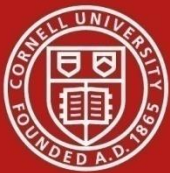


Waiting for VA disability treatment



- Significant increase (about 40%) in mental health treatment budget between 2009 - 2012
- For mental health treatment: VA goal is to evaluate and plan treatment within 14 days of veteran coming forward*
- As of 2012: Only about half got evaluated within 14 days; remainder waited on average of 50 days for treatment*

*U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs. (2012). *VA's Mental Health Wait Times*. Vantage Point: Dispatches from the U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs. Accessed at <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/6510/on-mental-health-wait-times/>.

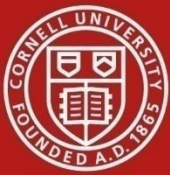


Yet, medical care & screening for veterans has improved*...

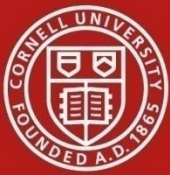


- Aug. 31, 2012: Executive Order signed by President Obama to improve access to mental health services for veterans
- Executive Order included research for a National Action Plan to improve diagnosis and treatment for TBI and PTSD

*U.S. Dept of Defense (2013). *National Research Action Plan*. Available at www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/nrap_for_eo_on_mental_health_august_2013.pdf



The education of veterans with disabilities



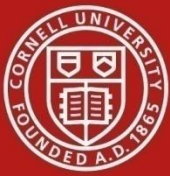
Student veterans...

85% of student veterans are 24 or older



47% have a family

At least 30% will be attending college with a disability



Veterans with Disabilities...

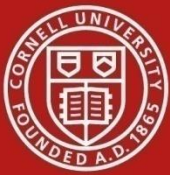
What Laws Apply in Higher Education?



Rehabilitation Act Section 504

Post 9/11 GI Bill

Executive Order 13607—Principles of
Excellence for Educational Institutions



Post 9/11 GI Bill



Eligibility:

- Served >90 days after 9-10-01
- Service connected disability after > 30 service days

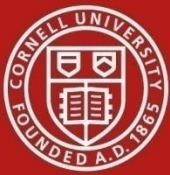
Provides:

- Tuition/fees, depending on length of service
- Housing allowance
- Books/supplies stipend

Can be transferred to spouse/dependents when serving more than 4 years

*US DVA (2014). *Post-9/11 GI Bill*. Accessed at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp.

*U.S. Dept of Education. (2014). *Higher Education Opportunity Act*. Accessed at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>.



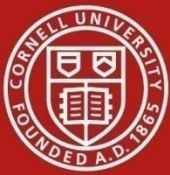
Higher Education & Veterans with Disabilities

Higher Education Opportunity Act



- Covers all students (including vets) with disabilities
- Right to non-discrimination in admissions and other aspects of college life
- Right to reasonable modifications
- Right to modified student loan discharges

*U.S. Dept of Education. (2014). *Higher Education Opportunity Act*. Accessed at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>.

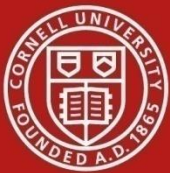


Summary of Principles of Excellence for Colleges (Executive Order 13607)*



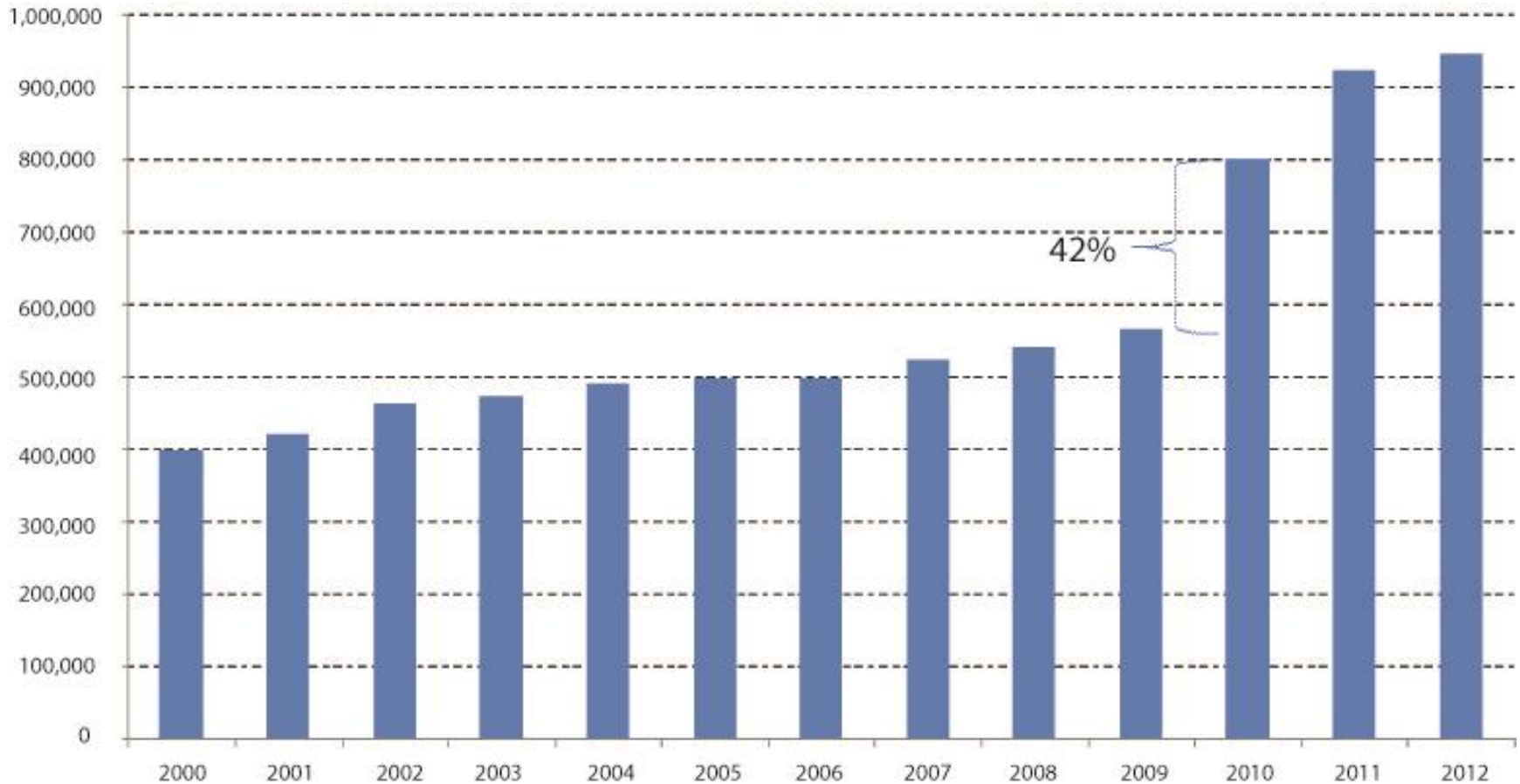
Give veteran students...

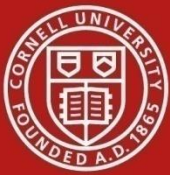
- Clear and accurate communication about total costs
- Individualized educational plans
- Honest and clear student recruiting practices
- Effective plans when students are deployed
- A point of contact for academic and financial counseling
- Enrollment in fully accredited programs
- Refund policies aligned with Title IV of Higher Education Act



Education Program Beneficiaries, FY 2000 to FY 2012*

(42% increase due in part to the Post-9/11 Bill Program being full enacted)





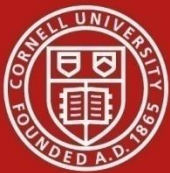
Veterans' higher education attainment: A mixed bag*



- A higher percentage of veterans than non-veterans have completed some higher education
- Yet, a slightly lower percentage of veterans have completed a bachelors degree
- And...significantly more veterans the non-veterans had an advanced degree and this trend intensified throughout the decade

Source: National Center for **Veterans** Analysis and Statistics (January 2011). Educational Attainment of Veterans vs Non-Veterans: 2000-2009. Accessed at

www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SpecialReports/education_FINAL.pdf



Resources

Toolkit for Veterans Friendly Institutions

<http://vetfriendlytoolkit.acenet.edu/Pages/default.aspx>

Principles of Excellence—Executive Order

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/27/executive-order-establishing-principles-excellence-educational-instituti>

Student Veterans of America

<http://www.studentveterans.org>

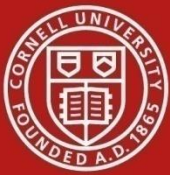
DVA Online GI Bill Comparison Tool

<http://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool>





The employment of veterans with disabilities



Veterans with Disabilities...

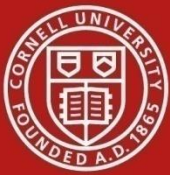
What Laws Apply in Employment?



**Americans with Disabilities
Amendments Act (ADAAA)**

**Uniformed Services Employment &
Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)**

**Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment
Assistance Act (VEVRAA) **New rules!****



ADAAA

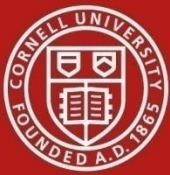
(ADA Amendments Act)



- Veterans with disabilities:
 - Not automatically protected
 - Independent of military benefits disability rating
- Hiring—Right to an accommodation during hiring process itself
- Hiring—Right to disclosure as a choice
- Accommodation—Right to an accommodation
- Other work processes—Right to have equal access to training, development, coaching, equal compensation, promotion, etc.
- Right to an accessible workplace

EEOC (2009). *Understanding Your Employment Rights under the ADA: A Guide for Veterans*. Accessed at http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/ada_veterans.cfm.

EEOC (2009) *Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for Employers*. <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/veterans-disabilities-employers.html>



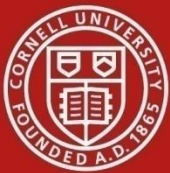
USERRA

(Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act)

Employers:



- Cannot discriminate against service members
- Must hold jobs open when service members are deployed
- After deployment, must place into job-level veteran would have had if not deployed (provide training, etc.)
- Must provide accommodations to veterans with disabilities



VEVRAA

(The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act)

Requires federal contractors/subcontractors:

To take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment specified categories of veterans

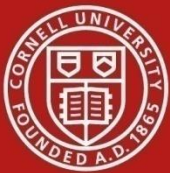
- Vietnam era veterans
- "Special disabled veterans"

To list job openings with employment service delivery system and to give covered veterans priority

To submit annual report

Enforced by US DOL and OFCCP

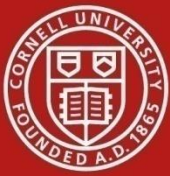




Strengthening VEVRAA: New rules



- Took effect March 24, 2014
- Employers who are federal contractors/subcontractors with at least \$100,000 contract
- New tracking and reporting requirements
- Include covered veterans in recruitment & hiring
- Affirmative Action aspirational goals using benchmarked national data
- Voluntary self identification of covered veterans
- Form partnerships with agencies who can supply veteran talent

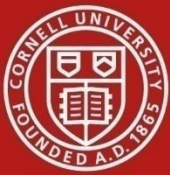


Veterans with disabilities in the workplace



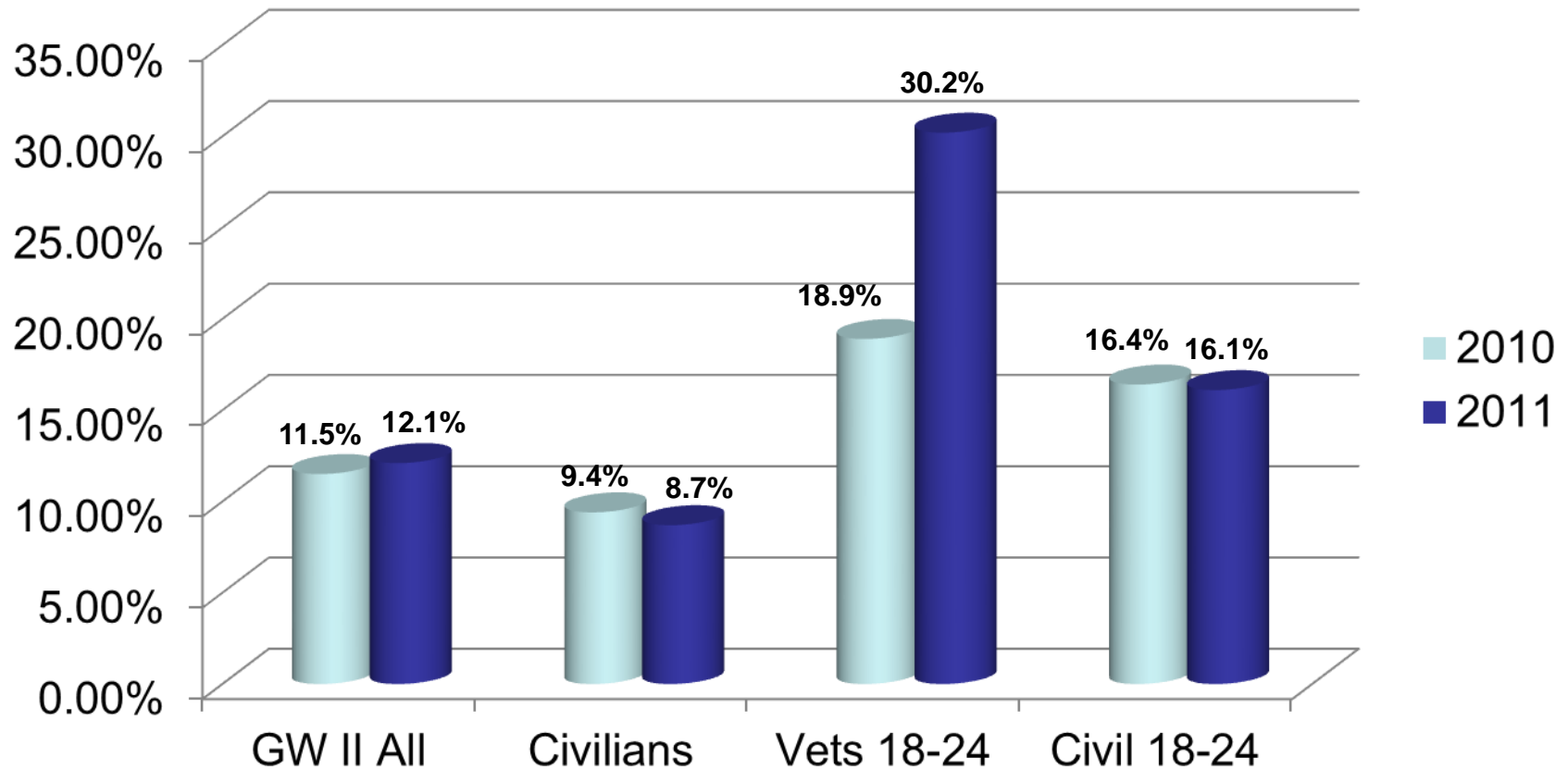
Work: It's not just about \$!

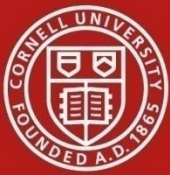
- Pride
- Identity
- Social Connection
- Growth



Unemployment Rate Veterans: 2010 & 2011

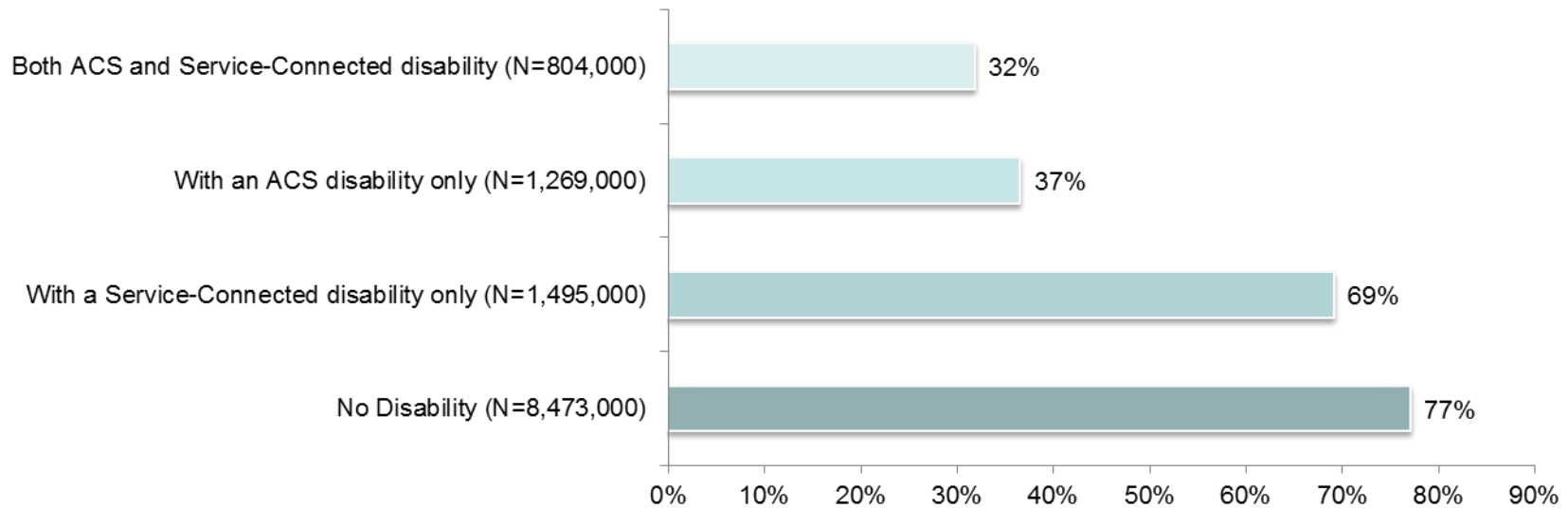
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

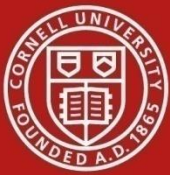




What is the employment rate of veterans as compared with veterans with disabilities?

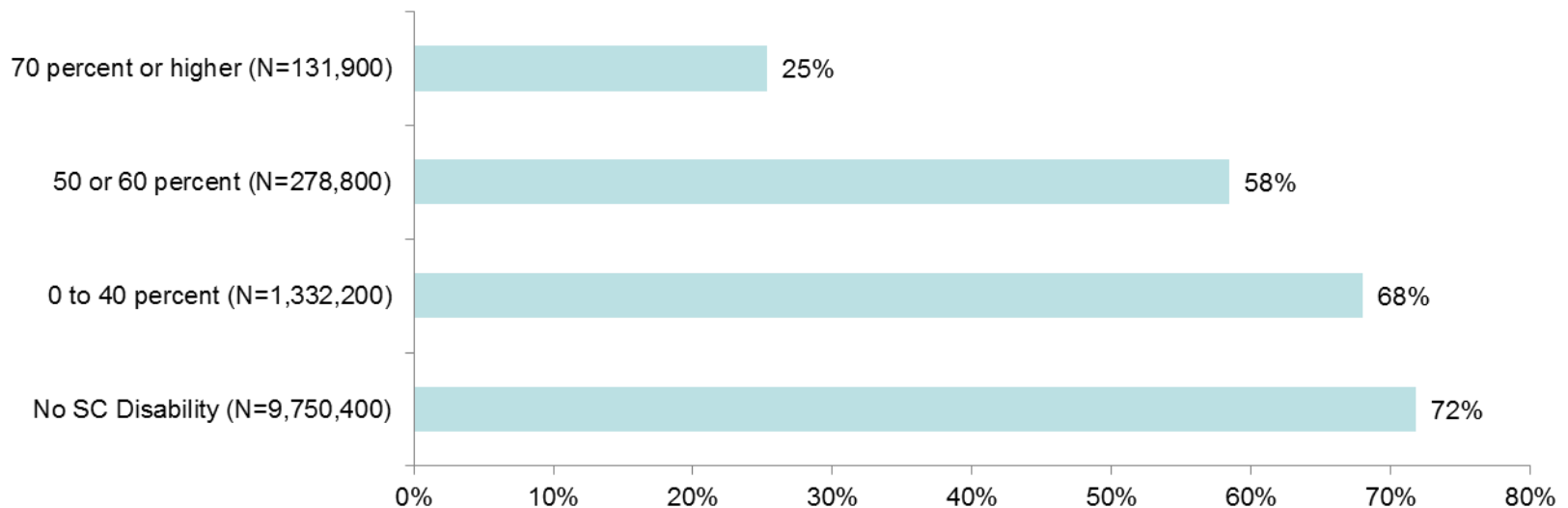
Employment rate of civilian veterans by disability status (ages 21-64)

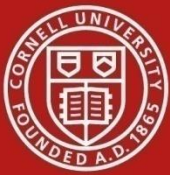




What is the employment rate of veterans as compared with veterans with disabilities?

Employment rate of civilian veterans by SC disability rating (ages 21-64)



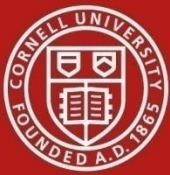


Are veterans with disabilities ready for the work transition?*



- General issues around transition: Skills translation
- Research shows*:
 - Two-thirds of veterans surveyed did not feel prepared for this transition
 - “Finding a job” was the most common reason for not being prepared
 - Have high expectations of employers

*Source: Prudential Financial (2013). Veterans’ Employment Challenges: Perceptions and Experience of Transitioning from Military to Civilian Life. Accessed at



Research: Employment of veterans with disabilities

Two studies:

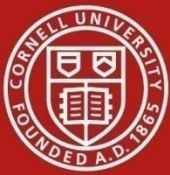
Study #1

421 Veterans with disabilities
themselves

Study #2

1,017 Employers

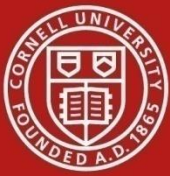




Highlights Study #1: Veterans with disabilities



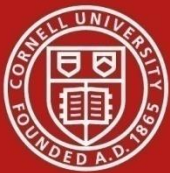
- Veterans with disabilities knew about the ADA, but most did not fully understand their rights around disability disclosure and accommodation
- Almost 60% of respondents feared disability discrimination in hiring
- Those with signature disabilities feared discrimination more
- 2/3s did not believe they were ready to advocate for themselves in the workplace as people with disabilities
- 65% thought they were fully capable of doing the job with their disability (Note: This is the case even though many did not know about their accommodation rights)



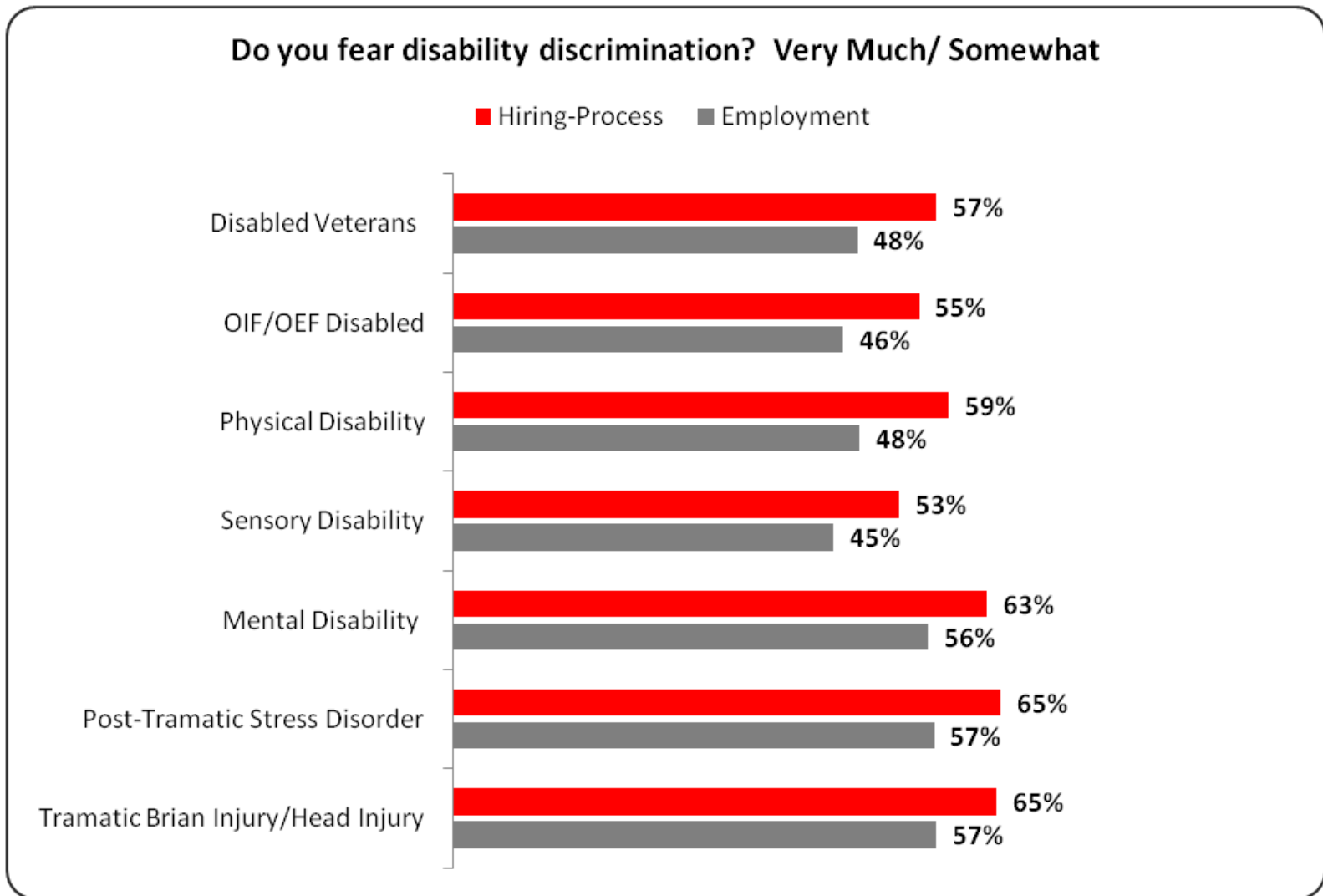
Highlights Study #1: Veterans with disabilities

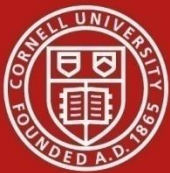


- About 2/3s do not intend to disclose
- The decision to disclose depends on the type of disability
- Most veterans do not intend to request an accommodation either during hiring or employment
- Veterans with physical disabilities were somewhat more likely to ask for an accommodation
- Significant majority do not use the online resources available to them



Study #1 Employment of veterans with disabilities

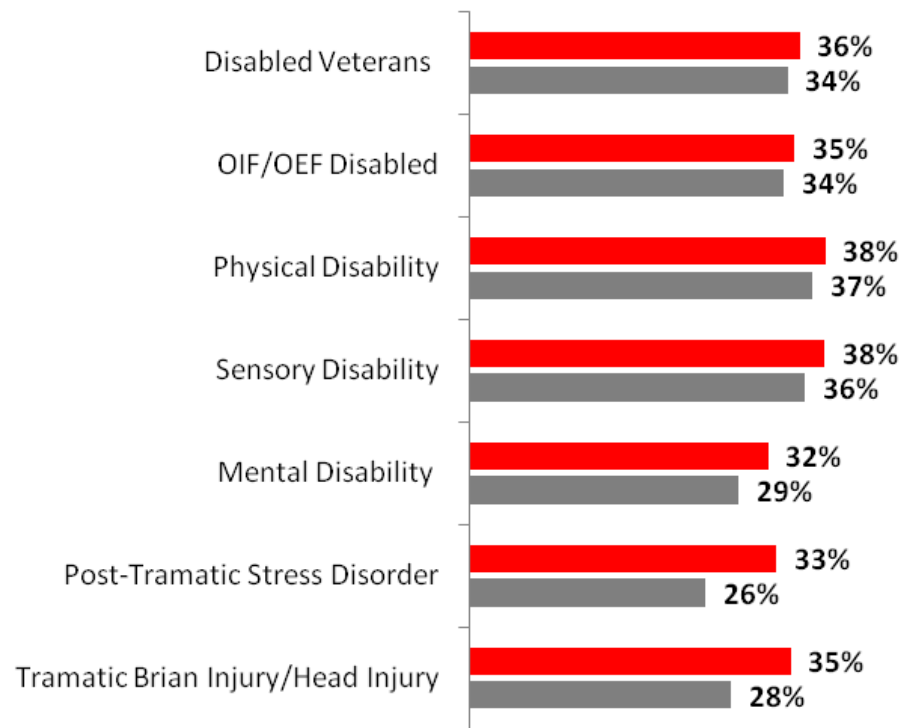


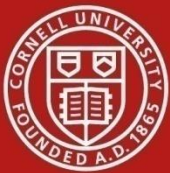


Study #2 Veterans with disabilities

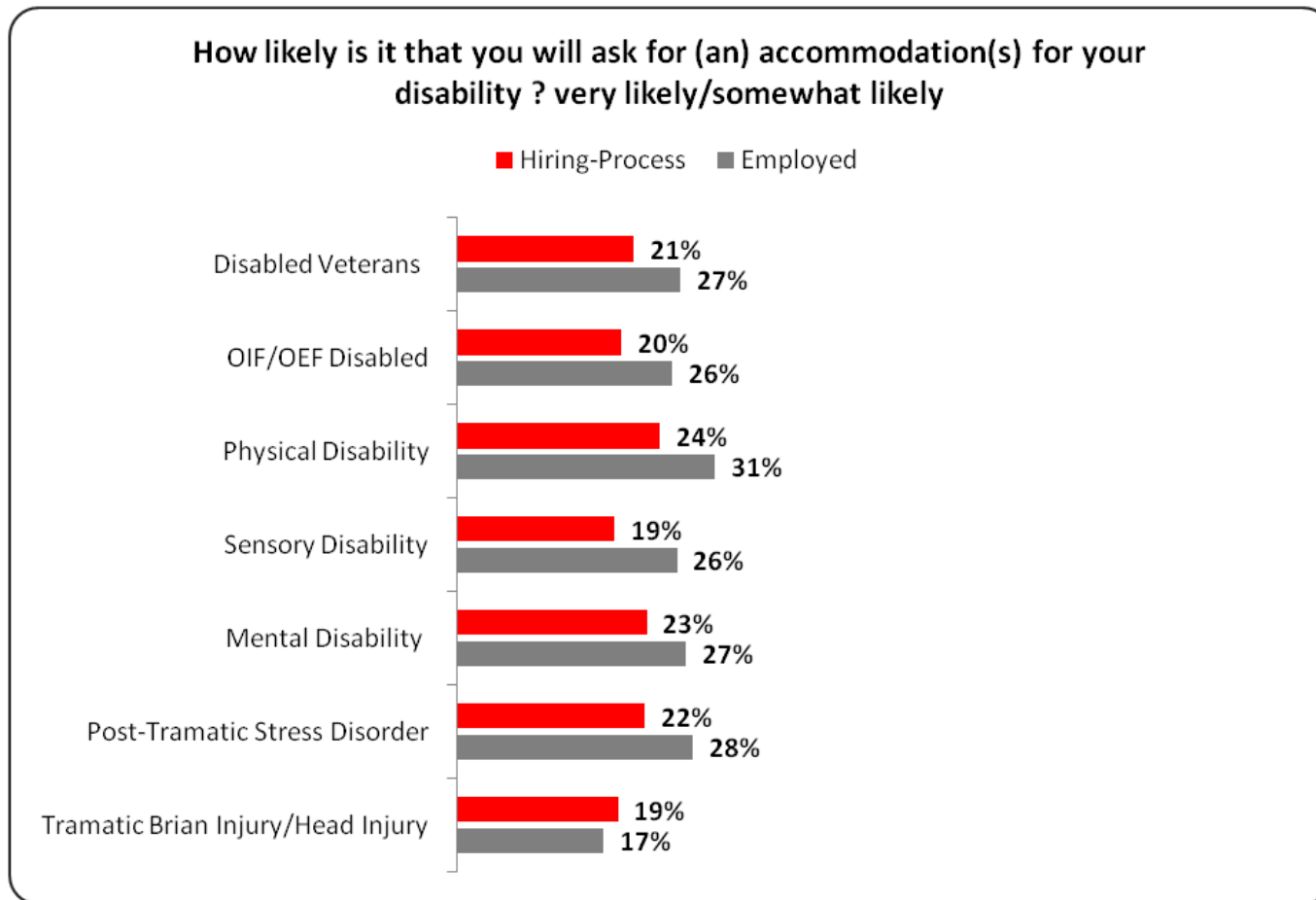
How likely is it that you will tell your employer that you have disability ?
very likely/somewhat likely

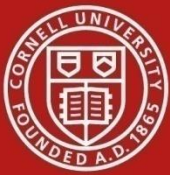
■ Hiring-Process ■ Employed





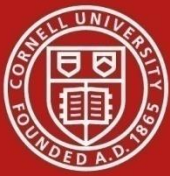
Study #2 Veterans with disabilities





Research: Highlights from Employer Study*

*Rudstam, H., Gower, W., & Cook, L. (2012). Beyond yellow ribbons: Are employers prepared to hire, accommodate and retain returning veterans with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*. 36 (2012) 87 – 95.



Highlights Study #2 : Employers' views

Were likely to include disability or veterans in diversity/inclusion policy

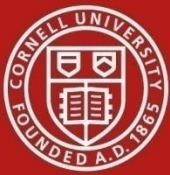


About three-fourths thought veterans with disabilities would benefit their business/organization

But this belief is largely not translating into recruitment actions:

About one-third used recruiting sources targeting veterans

Only 2% - 3% used recruitment sources targeting veterans with disabilities

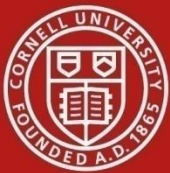


Highlights Study #2: Employers' views

Employers surveyed:

- **Had very little experience in hiring and accommodating veterans with disabilities**
 - 17% had hired a veteran who had disclosed a disability
- **Were confused about accommodation options and resources**
 - Did not know where to find this information
 - Did not know how to accommodate veterans with signature disabilities
- **Had some concerns about violence in the workplace**
- **EAP programs do not have expertise in veterans' issues**





Making Work Happen Online Toolkits

A free, interactive online resource...

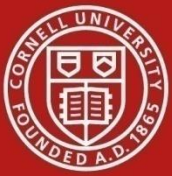


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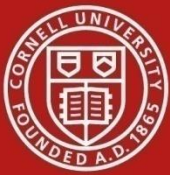
<http://www.makingworkhappen.com>

Scroll to

**Making Work Happen:
Veterans with Disabilities
Toolkit**



Your questions & thoughts...



Northeast ADA Center



1-800-949-4232

Northeast ADA Center

**...providing training, consultation
and materials on a broad range of
topics related to disability in the
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