

**United Association**

# **Veterans In Piping Program**

**MEMBER ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM (MAP)  
TRAINING OVERVIEW**



**UAVIP.ORG**





In 1987, I joined UA Local 114 in Santa Barbara and two years later, I joined the U.S. Navy. Since that time, I wanted to protect and serve my fellow military members and my UA Brothers and Sisters.

I have enjoyed my work with the Veterans In Piping Program and could not be more proud of the training and assistance we provide to our VIP Instructors and our VIP students in regard to their mental health. This need has come out of experience and in the hopes of offering future prevention services.

The UA Veterans in Piping's Member Assistance Program sets a precedent in the construction industry's mental health promotion and suicide prevention initiatives, going beyond raising awareness or referring to established mental health services.

Our program demonstrates the capacity of peer support as the gap-filling ingredient needed to ensure members who are struggling get help in an accessible and effective way.

What the VIP Program has implemented for our instructors gives them the needed knowledge, skills and confidence to support students in the VIP Program. Looking ahead, we will expand upon lessons learned and actionable recommendations to continue to improve the breadth, depth and delivery of this effort

In Solidarity,  
Micheal Hazard  
Training Specialist  
UA International Training Fund



# ABOUT VIP

The United Association's Veterans In Piping (UA VIP) Program is recognized as one of the most effective programs for providing high-quality training and employment to U.S. transitioning active-duty service members.

Through 18-week accelerated courses - provided free of cost on military bases across the country - VIP participants earn industry-recognized certifications and a direct entry into solid private-sector jobs with good pay and benefits.

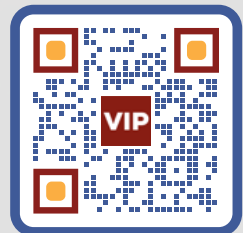
The UA Veterans in Piping Program offers career preparation training in three disciplines within the piping industry: Welding, HVACR and Fire Sprinkler Fitting. Since inception in 2008, the UA VIP Program has trained and placed over 2,500 service members into careers with the United Association in the pipe trades.

The UA VIP Program currently operates nine career training programs exclusively for transitioning active-duty service members.

- Camp Pendleton
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Fort Carson
- Fort Hood
- Camp Lejeune
- Fort Campbell
- Naval Station Norfolk

VIP graduates earn guaranteed job placement direct entry with a United Association Local Union.

Watch this video to learn more about the VIP Program's career pathway for transitioning active-duty service members.







# VIP MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TRAINING

While peer support has long existed in first responder communities, especially after critical incidents, the role of peers in mental health promotion and suicide prevention among construction workers has been more recent.

Due in part to first hand experience, over the last year the UA VIP Program boldly tackled this health and safety need by developing an innovative Member Assistance Program (MAP).

Member Assistance Program training involved over 38 hours of learning and discussion hours covering a wide range of introductory peer support skills and mental health literacy development. Significant gains were reported across knowledge, skills and confidence since UA VIP implemented this training.

For the program to succeed and continue to be successful, it is necessary to provide instructors with a range of mental health literacy and supportive skills training. The following pages are to provide an overview of the implemented MAP training.

## VISION:

We envision a United Association where everyone talks about the power of peer support and has the confidence and competence to help one another through tough times





# REPORT EXAMPLES

When evaluating the effectiveness of UA VIP MAP training, data points specifically from the VIP instructors through a Self Assessment Survey have led to following conclusions:

Compared to the beginning of the VIP MAP training, I would say my confidence to use the skills of peer support and tools related mental health, addiction and suicide is...

- 81.8% Extremely Improved
- 9.1% Significantly Improved
- 9.1% Somewhat Improved

Compared to the beginning of the VIP MAP training, I would say my skills in peer support are...

- 72.7% Extremely Improved
- 27.3% Significantly Improved

Compared to the beginning of the VIP MAP training, I would say my knowledge in the areas of mental health, addiction, and suicide is...

- 81.8% Extremely Improved
- 18.2% Significantly Improved

At the outset, we explored how a VIP trainer's service as a peer supporter might affect their current role(s), particularly if we see changes related to:

- Increased investment in VIP success
- Improved understanding of what VIPs are experiencing over time
- Enhanced empathy for VIP stressors/challenges
- Insight for curriculum/training improvements
- Strengthened job satisfaction Time constraint challenges
- Role confusion/multiple role challenges that might cause conflict for trainer
- "Insider information" impacting equity in the classroom



# REPORT EXAMPLES

When it comes to recruiting and selecting individuals who will provide core peer support services – regardless of model – certain qualities are essential and/or recommended:

- **Compassion** – Compassion is the willingness to be present with another's pain. Regardless of the setting or role, a peer supporter must be able to relate to and support another's situation.
- **Spirit of Service** – This means someone enjoys helping their peers no matter the circumstance. A person with the spirit of service wants to give back to others by listening and learning about their situation, without the desire to be in a 'superior' or advisory role.
- **Courage** – It is not easy to be with another's pain and struggle. Sometimes, it means facing one's own fears – including the apprehension that one does not know how to help.
- **Lived Experience** – Peer support is not about having the answers to another's problems but walking along a journey with them. This does not mean peer supporters have been in the precise situation at hand. It does mean that they have lived through similar issues and are willing to share them.
- **Curiosity and Effective Listening** – When someone is genuinely curious and compassionate, they help a peer feel heard, seen, and truly cared about. Connecting in a nonjudgmental way with someone else requires humility and the desire to understand by listening.



# TOOLBOX EXAMPLES

This example shows the Toolbox resource with information to 'Educate' the instructor on the specific topic.



## What are Symptoms of Anxiety and Anxiety Attacks?

Anxiety can show up as thoughts and feelings or as physical reactions. Usually a combination of these experiences:



Thoughts/Feelings	Physical Sensations
"What ifs" and worry that you can't shake	Insomnia
Tense and jumpy	Headaches
Distracted	Sweat
Irritable or agitated	Dizzy
Scanning for worst case scenario	Frequent urination or diarrhea
"Blanking out"	Shaking
Apprehension or dread	Shortness of breath/tightness in chest

Because of all of the physical symptoms, anxiety is sometimes mistaken for a medical crisis. Anxiety (or "panic") attacks usually involve a very intense cluster of these symptoms, occurring suddenly without warning. Sometimes there is a trigger, but they often happen out of the blue and usually last 10 minutes or less. When people start having anxiety about having anxiety attacks that is what is known as a "panic disorder."






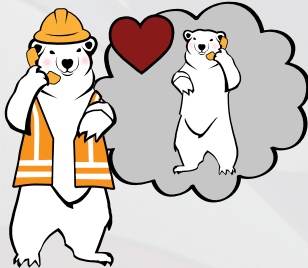


# TOOLBOX EXAMPLES

This example shows the Toolbox resource with information to 'Take Action' the instructor on the specific topic.



## Inner Circle Psychological First Aid—*Daily Check In*



It is not uncommon to feel a sense of powerlessness during challenging times. Powerlessness exacerbates distress, which means that empowerment is the antidote. One of the things we can almost always do is check in on other people we care about. It's good for them, and it's good for us.

- Step 1:** Who in your life could use a call? Do you know someone who lives alone or is living with a serious illness? Do you have anyone that you care about who has struggled with mental health challenges? Do you have anyone who you just enjoy talking to or listening to?
- Step 2:** Reach out. Send a text message or make a call. Let them know that you are thinking of them.
- Step 3:** Model sharing by disclosing some of your joys and challenges of the day.
- Step 4:** Listen and connect.
- Step 5:** Express gratitude for having them in your life and one thing you are looking forward to that involves them.





# UA VIP MAP TRAINING TESTIMONIALS

*"One of my students was acting kind of off. I just started talking with opening questions, just trying to be there for him, and turned out one of his closest friends died by suicide, and it just really messed with his head. In the past, a lot of us were problem solvers. But I didn't need to solve the problem. Throughout the day, I checked in on him and guided him to some local resources that I knew of."*

*"Before I took this training, talking about suicide was very difficult. Extremely difficult. During this training, we had an individual in this class that you could tell was going through something in his life – just off all the way around in the classroom and the weld booth. Just not paying attention, becoming almost a danger to himself. So we brought him in, had a conversation with him. And it went really, really well. We listened to what he had to say and thanked him for sharing it with us. And we got him the help that he deserved. He was extremely grateful when he saw how much we actually cared. I'm thankful for this training."*



# UA VIP MAP TRAINING TESTIMONIALS

*"It's a great feeling to know that we're getting more and more people talking about this subject. Breaking the stigma and getting people comfortable with talking about this. And now, like someone mentioned earlier, this is just in our everyday life – we're making sure everybody's okay, not just that they understand the trade and the welding or the HVAC or the sprinkler fitting. It's about the person as a whole."*

*"If you don't buy in on it, and you don't go all in on it, then it doesn't work. And you're gonna have to be open-minded because, you know, we all come from a world where we're stubborn, we're prideful, and we want to hide stuff. You've got to lose all that, you know, you've got to be a little bit more compassionate, I guess, and have a little bit more empathy."*

# Veterans In Piping Program



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