



Pieces of You

Goal:

To help the veteran understand they have both positive and negative qualities – recognize that change can happen and they have tools inside to bring about that change

Rationale:

Focus on bringing positivity to the forefront and using positivity to produce change from negative to positive.

Objective:

- Veteran will identify his or her positive personal qualities/strengths/characteristics/abilities
- Veteran will access the emotional state of the personal qualities/strengths/characteristics/abilities.
- Veteran will reinforce his or her positive personal qualities/strengths/characteristics/abilities and make statements reflective of this reinforcement.
- The veteran will recognize that they have many of the same positive personal qualities/strengths/characteristics/abilities that their comrades have and recognize that as a support system
- Veteran will recognize tools/strengths/characteristics/abilities within that can produce a positive change within themselves
- Understand that everyone has the capacity to need to change

Materials:

- 2 surcingles
- laminated puzzle pieces
- dry erase markers
- carabiners hooked to the surcingle
- 2 Horses
- Lead ropes

Activity:

- First piece – ***“Write down something on the puzzle piece you are proud of, something you are good at, or something you are happy with. It’s something that makes you feel good. Pull the positive from yourself and let it manifest in what you write so you have a physical depiction of something positive within you.”*** Example: my perseverance – I don’t give up and am proud when the goal I set is met.
- Place the pieces (after they have been written on) along one wall in the arena, roughly 2 feet apart and 3 feet from the wall.
- Second piece – ***“Write down something on the puzzle piece you need or want to change within you. This may relate to the second piece but needs to be something that can be***



acted upon within and set time limit to act it. Dig deep to find something you can and will change to better yourself. Example: accept that I cannot change others, only my attitude towards others

- Place the middle pieces along a second wall; about 2 feet apart and 3 feet from the wall.
- Third piece – **“Write down a strength or characteristic that you feel is beneficial to helping you change. This is something you can rely on to help you with working through becoming a better person.”** Example: strong sense of kindness or strong support system
- Place the third pieces along a third wall; about 2 feet apart and 3 feet from the wall.
- The veteran will choose a horse, and with a long lead (but not dragging the ground), ask the horse to move down the line of first pieces. (wedding march slow with a long enough lead for the horse to drop his head all the way to the ground)
- The horse should choose a piece(s) for the veteran. (look for a pause, stop, sniff, step on, nudge or kicking arena footing on the piece). Horses may choose more than one piece per set and that is ok.
- Have the veteran hang the piece(s) on a carabiner on the surcingle
- Do the same thing with the 2nd and 3rd set of pieces
- Once they are all chosen, the horse is asked to carry the whole puzzle to the center of the arena where the therapist and veteran puts them “together”. Take the horse away and leave the veteran with the therapist.
- The therapist will then help the veteran process his/her puzzle.
- Each veteran goes through individually.
- Process their experience.
- ***Best done with at least 5 people in the group.***

Process (suggestions)

- Was this easy or hard?
- Were you surprised at what the horse chose for you?
- What do you think the horse was picking up on to choose those particular pieces?
- Are those pieces relevant to the you, why or why not?