



JESSICA KNICELY

JESSICA'S SUCCESS STORY

ABOUT

Jessica is a veteran and a military spouse, and like many other professionals in military families, has experienced challenges with career continuity as military service has precipitated numerous relocations for her and her family.

Over the course of her career and her family's many military moves, Jessica has experienced 3 different types of career breaks: the first of which was a 9 year career break from 2006 - 2015 to care for her children and earn her Master's Degree, and two periods of underemployment as she sought out the right opportunities following two military moves, the most recent period lasting 2 years.

Jessica has a Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Kent State University and is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) in the state of New Mexico and Associate level Licensed Professional Counselor (A-LPC).

RELAUNCH STATS

Length of Career Break  2 years

Nature of Career Break  Military move

Time to Relaunch  5 months

CAREER TRAJECTORY

Pre-Break Employer and Job Title

Army Reserves
Suicide Prevention Program Manager

Employer and Job Title at Point of Relaunch

Veteran's Affairs (VA)
Addictions Therapist

Current Employer and Job Title

Veteran's Affairs (VA)
Addictions Therapist

HOW HAS YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE CHANGED DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS?

Even though I started my VA job during COVID, I found it to be a blessing in disguise. The Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program at the VA, or RRTP, had to scale down on admissions. This made the groups I worked with smaller, which in turn allowed me to take my time and learn things slowly as I eased into my new position.

WHAT IS THE MOST FRUSTRATING PART OF RELAUNCHING?

I'm sure many military spouses feel the same way, but for me, the most frustrating part is knowing that I have a limited amount of time to work in each location, which leaves limited space for growth or impact. However, the people I choose to surround myself with are positive and encouraging, and support me along every step of my career. I credit this support system for the professional success I have found and will continue to enjoy as I build my career into the future and advocate for the mental health profession.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO FUTURE RELAUNCHERS?

I would like to leave future relaunchers, both military spouses and those outside the military community, with a few words of advice: even if it's not the ideal job, "embrace the suck" and give it 100% effort whether you're there for one week or one year. And when you leave that job, don't burn any bridges...because those colleagues may be the advocates you need down the road.

To read Jessica's full success story, visit [iRelaunch's Success Story Archive!](#)