

## Successful Transition Domains Over Time

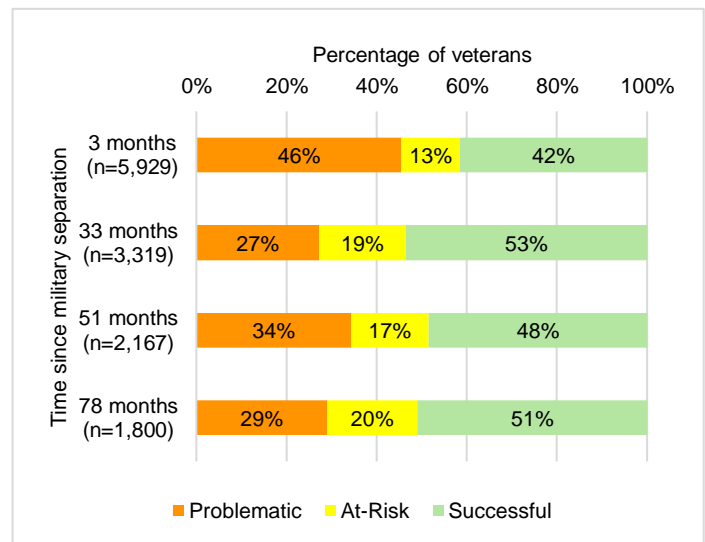
**Takeaway:** The transition success of a veteran cohort that separated from the military in 2016 was examined across six domains: employment, financial, mental health, physical health, social, and legal. Veterans experienced the most challenges in the employment and financial domains 3-months post-separation from the military. Veterans faced persistent challenges in the social, mental health, and physical health domains up to 78-months post-separation from the military. An overwhelming majority of veterans are successful in the legal domain. When working with veterans, particular attention should focus on the initial time post-separation from the military but should also consider the subsequent years after separation as some veterans continue to need assistance. Veterans may need help regardless of the elapsed amount of time since their transition to civilian life.

### Employment Domain

Veterans' transition success in the employment domain was determined using work status and work satisfaction. The sample for this domain only includes veterans who work full time or unemployed veterans who are searching for work, and it excludes veterans enrolled in higher education. The criteria for the transition categories of this domain follow:

- Problematic = 1) Unemployed but looking for work OR 2) Being dissatisfied with work
- At-risk = 1) Working full time AND 2) Being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with work
- Successful = 1) Working full time AND 2) Being satisfied with work

The problematic category was at its highest level at 3-months post-separation; however, this level shrunk considerably at 33-months post-separation until it increased again at 51-months post-separation, which coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, the successful category remained relatively stable, ranging from 48% to 53%, starting at 33-months and continuing through 78-months post-separation.

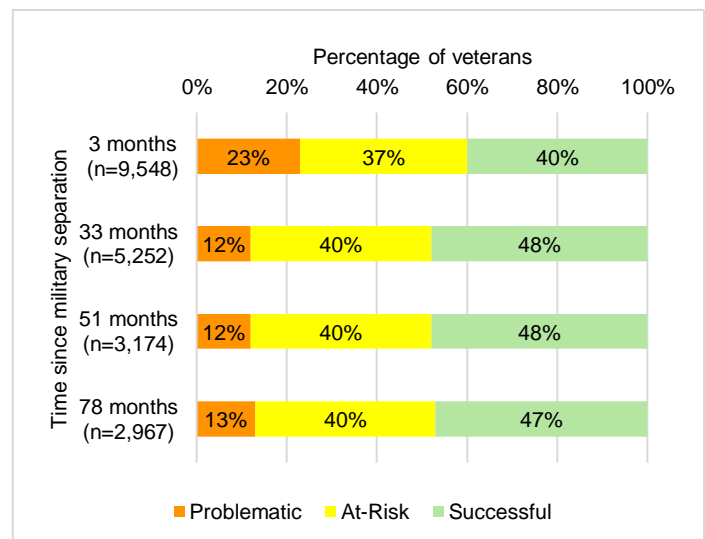


### Financial Domain

Veterans' transition success in the financial domain was determined using the ability to meet immediate (e.g., paying bills) and future (e.g., savings) financial needs. The criteria for the transition categories of this domain follow:

- Problematic = Being unable to meet all immediate financial needs
- At-risk = Being able to meet all immediate financial needs but being unable to meet all future financial needs
- Successful = Being able to meet all immediate and future and financial needs

The problematic category was at its highest level at 3-months post-separation. Subsequently, starting at 33-months post-separation, the problematic group decreased in the remaining times, and approximately half of the veterans were in the successful category, and 40% were in the at-risk category.

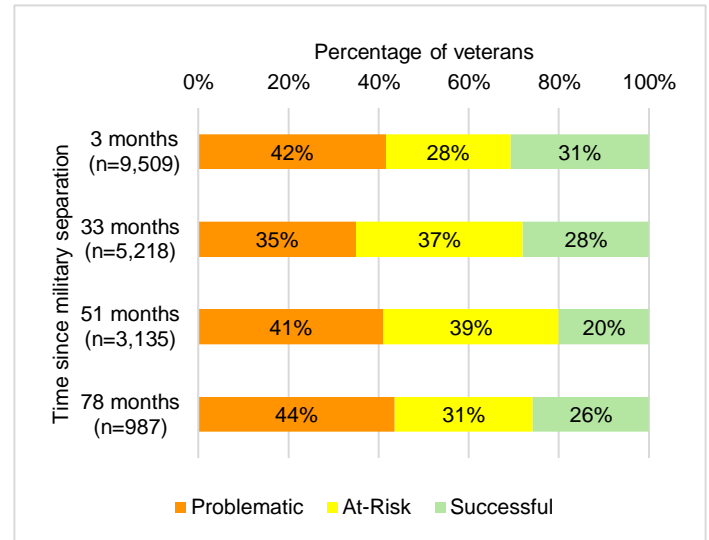


## Mental Health Domain

Veterans' transition success in the mental health domain was determined using symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and satisfaction with mental health. The smaller sample at 78-months post-separation was due to a survey error. The criteria for the transition categories of this domain follow:

- Problematic = 1) Meeting criteria for anxiety, depression, or PTSD OR 2) Being dissatisfied with mental health
- At-risk = 1) Having symptoms of anxiety, depression, or PTSD but not meeting criteria OR 2) Being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with mental health
- Successful = 1) Having no symptoms of anxiety, depression, or PTSD AND 2) Being satisfied with mental health

The problematic and at-risk categories in this domain remained high over time and peaked at 51-months post-separation, which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The successful category was at its highest at 3-months post-separation and lowest during the COVID-19 pandemic, after which the successful category did not fully return to pre-pandemic levels.

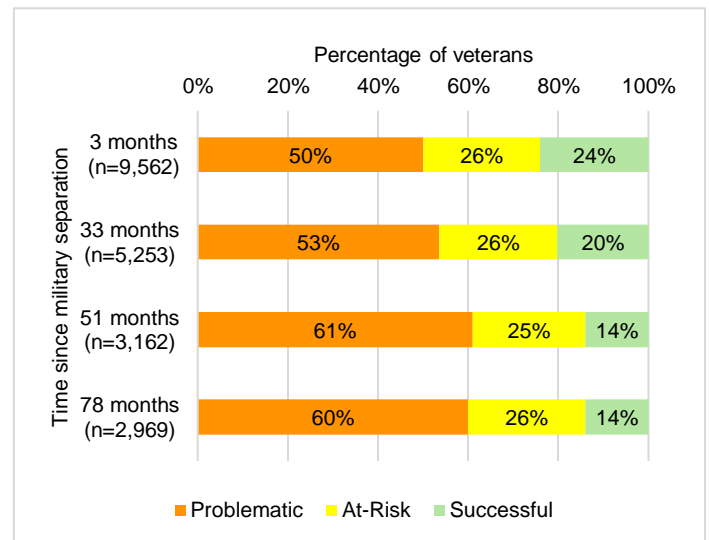


## Physical Health Domain

Veterans' transition success in the physical health domain was determined using engagement in health promotion (e.g., physical activity, quality sleep) and satisfaction with physical health. The criteria for the transition categories of this domain follow:

- Problematic = 1) Never or rarely engaging in health promotion OR 2) Being dissatisfied with physical health
- At-risk = 1) Sometimes engaging in health promotion OR 2) Being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with physical health
- Successful = 1) Often or most of the time engaging in health promotion AND 2) Being satisfied with physical health

The problematic category in this domain increased from 3-months to 51-months post-separation, while the successful category decreased during the same period. All categories remained steady between 51-months and 78-months post-separation.

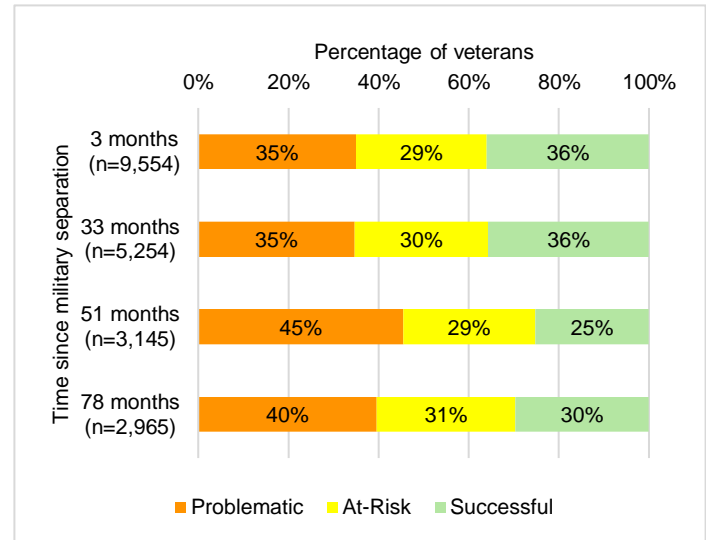


## Social Domain

Veterans' transition success in the social domain was determined using social support and satisfaction with aspects of social life (e.g., relationships, the area where a veteran lives). The criteria for the transition categories of this domain follow:

- Problematic = 1) Having little to no social support OR 2) Being dissatisfied with aspects of social life
- At-risk = 1) Having some social support OR 2) Being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with aspects of social life
- Successful = 1) Having social support most or all of the time AND 2) Being satisfied with aspects of social life

Categories in this domain remained steady at 3-months and 33-months post-separation; however, the problematic category increased, and the successful category decreased at 51-months post-separation, which was during the COVID-19 pandemic. At 78-months post-separation, the problematic category decreased and the successful category increased; however, they did not return to pre-pandemic levels.

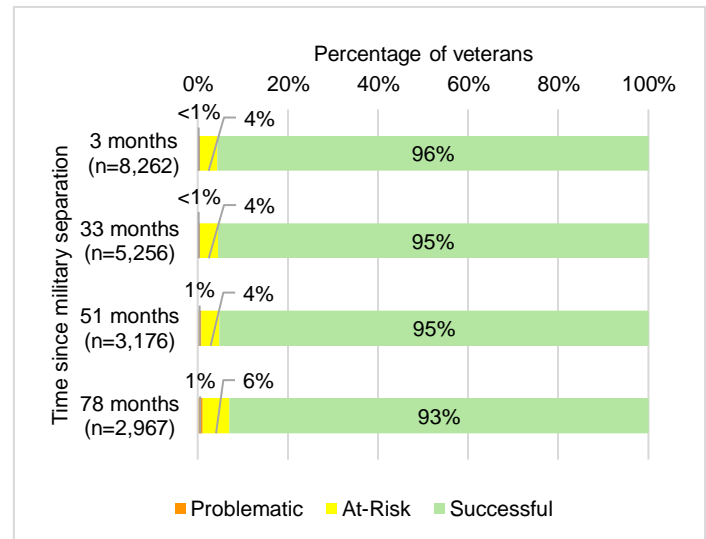


## Legal Domain

Veterans' transition success in the legal domain was determined using the severity of trouble with the law. The criteria for the transition categories of this domain follow:

- Problematic = Experiencing major trouble (e.g., arrest) with the law
- At-risk = Experiencing minor trouble (e.g., speeding ticket) with the law
- Successful = Experiencing no trouble with the law

The successful category was over 90% from 3-months through 78-months post-separation from the military. The at-risk category remained low and stable with a small increase at 78-months post-separation, while the problematic category remained at or below 1% through 78-months post-separation.



## Study Summary

The Veterans Metrics Initiative: Linking Program Components to Post-Military Well-Being (TVMI) collected six waves (i.e., 3, 9, 15, 21, 27, and 33 months) of well-being and program utilization data from almost 10,000 post-9/11 veterans who had separated from military service in 2016. Additional waves (i.e., 51 and 78 months) of data were collected independently by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State through the Veterans Engaging in Transition Studies (VETS), which is part of the VETERANetwork. 3,514 veterans from TVMI voluntarily chose to participate in VETS.

## Acknowledgements

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