

Independent Perspective #1878

Veteran Directed Care with Abbey Marchewka

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Our guest today is Abby Marchewka, veteran-directed, peer-centered counselor, and I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell.

00:00:15 Speaker 1

Welcome to the program, Abby.

00:00:17 Speaker 2

Thanks for having me.

00:00:19 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure.

00:00:21 Speaker 1

We've only had peer-directed care for a relatively short time,

00:00:28 Speaker 1

but I gather that you've already made some progress.

00:00:31 Speaker 1

Can you tell us how long have we had veterans directed care at the agency?

00:00:38 Speaker 2

So, the veteran directed care program was established in the month of May in 2024.

00:00:45 Speaker 2

So, it is a fairly new program.

00:00:48 Speaker 1

All right.

00:00:49 Speaker 1

And I presume that it's open to all members of American armed forces or who have been in them.

00:00:57 Speaker 1

How does one apply for services?

00:00:59 Speaker 2

So, a veteran can go to their local VA Medical Center and speak to their personal care physician and inquire about the program.

00:01:16 Speaker 2

And then they will be assessed to see what kind of daily activities they

00:01:22 Speaker 2

need assistance with and if they're a good candidate for the program.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

All right.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

Once one gets into the program, what kinds of support can they expect?

00:01:32 Speaker 2

So, the beauty about this program is they get to be in charge of their care and the decision making of their care.

00:01:43 Speaker 2

So, they get to pick a loved one or a friend that

00:01:48 Speaker 2

will become their direct care worker and help them out with these daily activities, such as going to assist them and picking up groceries, helping them out with their medicine management.

00:02:03 Speaker 2

Making sure that they're, you know, able to conduct hygiene.

00:02:08 Speaker 2

And then with working with us as a peer-centered counselor at Western York Independent Living, we do home visits.

00:02:18 Speaker 2

So, we get to check in and see how everything's going and we make phone calls and, you know, we just make sure that they're getting the care that they need and deserve.

00:02:28 Speaker 1

Would you say that people that have served in the armed forces tend to have a larger number of disabilities than the general population?

00:02:38 Speaker 2

I would say that the veteran population has their own difficulties

00:02:45 Speaker 2

that they, you know, as the result of their time in service.

00:02:50 Speaker 2

I wouldn't say that, you know, I wouldn't compare one to the other, but I do have to say that, you know, for example, a Vietnam veteran is affected by Agent Orange.

00:03:03 Speaker 2

So that is something that's gonna be completely different than, you know, a civilian.

00:03:12 Speaker 2

who did not serve.

00:03:15 Speaker 2

A lot of our veterans suffer from COPD, which can be extremely, you know, interfering with their quality of life.

00:03:24 Speaker 2

So that's a perfect example of how, you know, some of our veterans and what they're dealing with.

00:03:31 Speaker 1

I imagine many people listening probably know the answer to this, but what does COPD stand for?

00:03:38 Speaker 2

I know it's a,

00:03:41 Speaker 2

It's to do with your airways.

00:03:45 Speaker 1

Oh, like chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder or some such thing?

00:03:49 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:03:50 Speaker 2

So, it has to do with your lung and the cause of airflow is obstructed and unfortunately causes breathing problems, which can be scary.

00:04:04 Speaker 2

And you know, when you're moving about in your day-to-day life,

00:04:09 Speaker 2

it can really restrict you being able to conduct those daily activities that you need to do to survive.

00:04:19 Speaker 1

Abby, I'm afraid we're totally out of time.

00:04:21 Speaker 1

How can people get more information on the program?

00:04:24 Speaker 1

Who do they call?

00:04:26 Speaker 2

They can call our agency at Western New York Independent Living, 716-836-0822, and they can also go to their local VA medical center.

00:04:39 Speaker 1

Thanks so much for being with us, Abby.

00:04:41 Speaker 2

My pleasure.

00:04:42 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York independent living.

00:04:49 Speaker 1

Our guest today has been Abby Marchewka, veterans directed care, peer centered counselor, and I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell.