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CVN Veterans Day Survey 2019 Reveals Divide Between Veterans' Preferences and Civilians' Actions

*Beyond "Thank You for Your Service": Veterans Share More Meaningful Ways Civilians Can
Connect and Acknowledge Their Service*

Stamford, CT., November 6, 2019 – “Thank you for your service.” It’s a common phrase civilians’s use in recognition of veterans’ service to our country. In fact, 91% of Americans say they have thanked a veteran for their service when they see them public. But nearly half (49%) of veterans and active-duty service members feel uncomfortable being thanked for their service. That’s according to the CVN Veterans Day Survey 2019, a recent poll commissioned by [Cohen Veterans Network \(CVN\)](#), a national not for profit network of mental health clinics for post-9/11 veterans and military families, and conducted online by The Harris Poll among more than 2,000 U.S. adults ages 18+.

In an effort to bridge the divide between veteran preferences and civilian actions that the survey highlighted, CVN has launched *Beyond "Thank You for Your Service"*, an awareness campaign aimed at connecting veterans and civilians in more meaningful ways. In addition to the poll, the campaign, which utilizes #BeyondTheThankYou, draws on anecdotes from veteran staff members across the organization’s network of clinics. Among the 14 Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinics in operation around the country, 25% of staff members are veterans.

“Taking an interest in a veteran’s story about their time in the military is one way to engage beyond just saying thank you for your service,” says Cohen Veterans Network CEO & President Dr. Anthony Hassan. “At CVN, we value what veterans bring to the civilian community and want to help them live their best lives.”

[CVN Veterans Day Survey 2019](#) also found that 88% of Americans believe there should be more programs available to help break the military-civilian divide. As further evidence of the divide, 39% of Americans report that they are unsure about how to start a conversation with a veteran. Additionally, 24% of Americans report they would feel uncomfortable talking to a veteran they just met about their service in the U.S. military. The survey also revealed that a majority of veterans and active-duty service members would not mind civilians asking them the following specific questions about their military experience:

- *When did you serve? (71%)*
- *Where were you stationed? (71%)*



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- *What was your job while serving? (73%)*

The survey data has been developed into an [infographic Go Beyond “Thank You for Your Service”](#) as part of the campaign. It also consists of a series of videos and social media posts in which Cohen Clinic veteran staff members share stories and ideas around the topic. Highlights from veteran staff members, include:

- ***Are you comfortable when civilians “thank you” for your service?***
“I do feel very uncomfortable when civilians say thank you for your service, because I don't know what to say back.” – Veteran Staff Member, Cohen Clinic at Valley Cities
- ***If you had to hear something from civilians in recognition of your service, what would you want them to say?***
“Instead of hearing thank you for your service, I would like to see civilians in our community give back to military families by either coaching a sport, giving a class, or going to a veterans home and just sitting and listening to the stories of our older generations.” – Veteran Staff Member, Cohen Clinic at Centerstone
- ***What is the most meaningful thing a civilian has said in recognition of your service?***
“An individual came up to me and said, ‘Thank you for signing on the dotted line and what can I do?’ This person asked what they could do to support either myself or other service members.” - Veteran Staff Member, – Cohen Clinic at UPenn
- ***As a veteran, what do you think is important for people to know about veterans?***
*“It’s important to recognize the entire support system, spouses, partners, children, family members, friends that all make some level of sacrifice in supporting the veterans service.”
Veteran Staff Member, – Cohen Clinic at Metrocare*

To further explore the veteran-civilian divide, CVN turned to [RallyPoint](#), the largest digital platform for the military community, where they have seen significant engagement among its members on this topic.

“What we’ve learned is if you’ve met one veteran, you’ve met one veteran: we are as diverse in our interests as are civilians. When it comes to being thanked for our service, this diversity still applies and you can’t make everyone happy,” says Dave Gowel, CEO of RallyPoint Networks, Inc. “We challenge you to show appreciation in additional ways for those who have repeatedly stepped in harm’s way on your behalf; think about why you are saying thanks and realize you need to do more than check the block with a simple phrase.”



[The CVN Veterans Day Survey 2019](#) was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of **Cohen Veterans Network** from October 10-14, 2019 among 2,019 U.S. adults ages 18 and older, among whom 218 are U.S. military veterans or active-duty service members. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact communications@cohenveteransnetwork.org.

Find more on [Beyond ‘Thank You for Your Service’ here](#).

ABOUT THE COHEN VETERANS NETWORK

Cohen Veterans Network is a 501(c)(3) national not for profit philanthropic network of mental health clinics for post-9/11 veterans and their families. CVN focuses on improving mental health outcomes, with a goal to build a network of outpatient mental health clinics for veterans and their families in high-need communities, in which trained clinicians deliver holistic evidence-based care to treat mental health conditions. The network currently has 14 clinics in operation serving veterans and their families across the country. Learn more about [Cohen Veterans Network](#).

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