**Benefits Taxonomy Conversation Guide**

**Main Interview**

**Warm-Up**

1. For how long have you been out of active duty military? I retired in 2015 so almost 7 years.
2. Where, geographically, are you based right now? I am in Colorado Springs. I live more in a rural area but the town is 650K
3. Can you tell me about a time you’ve utilized a VA service? I have in 2012 we had this house built and we used the VA home loan and I have been to the VA facility to check it out.

Are you familiar with VA.gov, and if so, what do you typically use it for? Um yes I am familiar. I have only used it because I am 80 percent disabled so I go check on medical stuff here and there.

Steps to get questions answered: I would call the bank.

Personal bank: Well yes that’s where I would start. How we actually started was with the realtor. We were PCSing to Colorado springs. We knew someone here and we called them. She answered all of our questions

Tell me more: Yes primary contact for things.

Used va resources while making the decision: I kind of just googled the va home loan. This was the first home we bought. I was in the military for 29 years and this was the first home

When googling what was helpful: Yeah, it took me to a va website where it had FAQ’s.

* Familiar with page: I am not no.
* How would you use this tool to help you: I guess I would put the town I live in Peyton, CO. Then I am looking for benefits because we are going after buying the house so looking for va assistance. I read everything before I click something. I would click va home loan help and search. So that’s the town and it has a bar and post office. Fallon there has the same zip code as Peyton. Colorado springs here and now it’s a space force base, I work there as a civilian. Then my house is right here on the golf course. I get sidetracked because I love maps. I would zoom out and look for a facility. I assume the red dot is Peyton which it is. So now I would change the town to Colorado Springs. It is letting me go to the town but doesn’t highlight anything. Well I would check everything on here to see if I am missing anything.
* Surprised no results: yeah it is really strange because theres the Air Force bases, Fort Carson and the academy. There are 4 major bases without va support makes no sense.
* What if you are doing it on your own: I would know where to go. I know where the va is here and there’s lots of va companies that help you with the va in Colorado springs.
* What type of companies: there is hire heroes but I actually used one to do my medical records when I retired.
* Are they private companies or part of the bases: they are all donation based services, not belonging to the va.
* What does the map tell you about locations: there a for region benefits, address/phone number. Then B is in Baltimore.
* Next steps: I would click there to get more information for the site. It is closed. So contacting them by phone or phone. I am more an online type of person so I would look for a chat function but there isnt one. I am looking for home loan help so I would call this number.
* How confident the location/number could help: Well its closed so that’s the first turn off. Then the number is the same as Baltimore so I think I will need to press 123 and be on hold forever. So let me check out the website. Go to benefit, then home loan. Since I saw the numbers I would try to figure it out before I have to call
* Have you taken similar steps in the past? Yes
* How did that help: It’s not hard as long as the information is there. This one is okay because it tells me about the home loan and if I am eligible. That’s nice, it tells you the interest rate and how to apply. I can obtain and eligibility letter through ebenefits and I have an account. The next thing is going to ebenefits. I want to get the letter right, right here certificate for eleiable for home loan. I would need to login. I do have a DS login account.
* Get everything line up before call: well now that I have the letter I would call my realtor to see what needs to be done next. If she doesn’t know I would then call.
* Did you see the services list, did any of them seem helpful or clear to you: They seem clear but why aren’t there quick links there. So burial claim help, I should be able to click on it and go to it.
* Home loan help here, other labels factor in, tempted to use another: Yeah that’s big, I just followed the trail. Like for services for burial claim help I know it’s a service but how do I get to it. I guess I would go to VA benefits and health care then go to burial then theres all of the information. These are easy because I can click on it to see if I am eligible
* Other services want more information on: Yeah I don’t have an issue reading it and finding somewhere to get more information but I don’t think my dad that passed away he would have given up already because it’s a lot to look at. I think older veterans would have an issue with this, if you could short cut the links here that would be good.
* How would you make the page better to assist in your request: Chat boxes are big; everyone waits on the phone forever now. Then for older veterans they like buttons, so have a click here. I know what this means the website but you might want to be clearer. For more infomration on the national capital region benefits office click here for website.
* Infomration was good, what’s good: The tab at the top is nice because there’s link to everything. This is setup perfectly because everything I want to know is a click away I don’t need to go anywhere else to get to it. if you could do this down here it would be perfect.
* Big menu above to help, how would you do it: let’s see. Yupp housing assistance. This makes it sound like I need assisted living or something.
* What other term would you use: Make housing benefits.
* Anything else: housing assistance doesn’t sound right it sounds like I am homeless and need help finding somewhere to live you know. Maybe housing benefits is better than housing assistance.
* Other labels that are a little off to you: records I assume it’s how I get my records.

**Scenario 1 - Category Name Evaluation**

**Research Questions to Address**

1. Do existing category names cause confusion, or do they need to be described with more clear language?
2. How can the benefits services be best presented to Veterans?

Applying for benefits is helpful

Burial claim assistant is a benefit so that’s helpful but could apply for applying for benefits right. When I see applying for benefits I think this would be it. I think all of these could be there, home loans.

How does it affect the label: I would read all of them before and if I wasn’t then I would click on applying for benefits first. If that makes sense.

Disability assistance is helpful

Ebenefits registration would be helpful if I knew what it is. I do, if I end up at this website to register for ebenefits if I end up here.

Education and career is helpful

Education assistance, I had to read it twice its almost the same thing. Yeah one of them is not helpful because it should be one. You can put that in not helpful.

Homeless assistance is helpful.

Va home loan, helpful

Insurance claim is helpful. If I were claiming life insurance or medical insurance and needed help while on vacation and I was at the hospital but covered by the va I would click there to see if I could be recouped. Or if I had a death in the family and they were a veteran.

IDES is not helpful I have no idea what it is

Pre discharge is helpful

Transition assistance is helpful, it means when I am transitioning form active duty to veteran status I can click on it and it will give me advice or a check list of what to do during the process. I am retired but my wife only Did 4years so she had to transition to a veteran status as well.

Common knowledge phrase: Absoutely.

Direct deposit is helpful.

Va rehab and employment is not helpful because I am not really sure. Maybe break it apart. I guess I don’t really understand what it is. Am I looking for employment or do I need to be in Voc rehab to get a job.

Prior knowledge of Voc Rehab: I do not

Heard of it before: No I have not heard of that.

Family member assistance: helpful. So that’s based on me being in the military for my whole life, my dad did 26 years as well. That would ben fi something happened to me my wife could click in here to see what benefits she would still have or if she didn’t to make a claim for me.

Any others you’d like to speak on: No I mean applying for benefits I would go to for home loan even though it is already here. Disability is huge for all veterans that have been damaged from active duty. Just a side note is that it is easier to go to the third party to address the va because they stand up for us while we do not know the rules like they do. They tend to deny things unless it is perfect. You don’t pay them but they are really helpful. Its been 7 years and I already forgot. They helped me with my medical records to get my approval for disability.

Name of organizations: It is veterans helpful veterans. Yeah I cant find it but I googled it and there’s a lot of veterans services like veterans united, home care and benefit administration.

**Prodding Questions:**

1. Other things you were tempted to click on: no that’s pretty good but again I know theres stud in Colorado Springs for veterans.
2. Surprised it didn’t offer the assistance: I would think the regional office would have it
3. Services it should have or expect more: well applying for benefits again here we go I should be able to apply for the home loan buts its listed separately right. I have been here and I know they have everything in there so that’s why I thinks its weird.
4. Would you have called anyways since you knew they had it: yes I would have and there you go theres the same number.
5. Number mean: I will be on hold for ever
6. Use the main number instead: yes I would go to the main number because it is a local number but I would end up in the same tree, it has happened in the past as well.
7. Anything else that jumped out to you: No not really.

**Closing**

Thank you so much for your time and for your help today!

* Did you have any questions for the team? Just remember you targeted audience should probably be veterans in the 60s the easier you make it the better for clicking.

**STOP Recording**

* Was there anything you wanted to tell us about Benefits and services that we didn't get to cover today? I don’t think so.