Instructions to notetakers:

* Take as close to verbatim notes as you can, but also, don’t worry too much about. Unless notes are \*\*really bad\*\*, don’t recommend going back to clean up. This can be done as needed during analysis phase. Just try to get as much as possible during the session then take a breather until the next.
* Indicate in bold when moderator speaks.
* Give initials M for moderator and P for participant.
* Note the time of the interview
* Title the notes using the following format: 2023-12-time-P(#)-device-gender-age.md
* Indicate in (\_italics\_) when you’re describing a behavior. E.g., “umm, I think I should do this (\_clicks on sign in button\_).”

**Current VA benefits usage**

**1. What kinds of devices do you use? How comfortable are you with each one?**iphone, [android smartphone (?)], laptop rented from college - usu uses those two  
  
Comfortable w/ them, uses the computer extensively

Spends more time on phone, more accessible

**2. How do you currently access VA benefits and services? What do you do digitally and what do you do in person? How do you decide what to do?**

Typically uses VA app - helps keep up with appts, easiest way to communicate with primary care

Other method is good ol phone call, takes longer, but typically gets answers quicker when I can talk to someone

With the app you usu have to wait for the response

If you need to have it taken care of right away, like education benefits, I’ll call for that. If it’s something like appointments, I’ll do it through the app, then they’ll call back - uses messaging to make appts

**3. What veteran IDs do you currently have? Which have you had in the past, post - service? Tell me about how you use them.**

1. Has the one that gets her into VA medical facilities - VA healthcare card
2. Used to have a Veteran ID card when she was active duty but it was temporary (green one) but that expired
3. Her Washington DL states Veteran on it, can use it for discounts. Since she has the other card, she flashes that one too.

Was trying to figure out Veteran on license plate, has to figure out the system because they charge you extra, is waiting for the next registration period to do get plates

* **What do they use when?**
* **For what?**
* **What makes them pick a specific card?**
* **How do they describe each card, its purpose and use?**

**4. Have you ever submitted for travel reimbursement from the VA?**

* **How (Online? Kiosk? Mail?)**
* **Why did they pick online/mail/kiosk?**

Considered it when she was contemplating moving home, when she was getting released from active duty, but she doesn’t need it

No, doesn’t even consider it an option. Never thought they would cover something like that. Even trying to get her disability rating for the injuries she has, I know how tough it is to get something through VA, travel is minute enough, never thought about it, it’s already been a challenge.

**Current discount usage**

**5. What retailers or retail categories would you say you shop at regularly?**

Doesn’t really shop for clothes or anything that much, already shops at Goodwill, doesn’t ask  
  
But always asks for discounts when I go out to eat  
  
Online: will order coffee from DR, things we can’t get at the store, I usually shy away from online shopping because people can hack into my account, it’s happened in the past

**6. Historically, how have you learned about veteran specific discount programs? Where have you learned about them?**

Word of mouth, people (Veterans) tell her “make sure you ask for a Veteran discount”  
Has gotten accustomed to asking

**7. When was the last time you successfully used a veteran specific discount at a retailer or non-VA healthcare facility?**Got to DR on the 17th, when I got here and was grabbing something for breakfast, asked if they did a Veteran discount. They didn’t ask for an ID.  
  
It was a mom and pop place. Asked the cashier. They didn’t ask for discounts.   
  
Typically pulls out her Drivers License to show she’s a Veteran  
  
**(M: The time before that…?)**

Typically does it at restaurants, usually clothes retailers don’t do it. Usually gives it to the cashier or waitress. Sometimes they ask for it, especially on Veterans Day because everyone is coming in for it. There are a few places that will ask but out of habit I pull it out (Drivers License) of habit, but most of the time they don’t even look.   
  
Sometimes I ask if they give a Veterans discount even if I know, it’s a weird…l don’t want to be pressing, out of courtesy I ask. Sometimes the people aren’t’ aware of it and they need to ask their supervisor and they come back and type in the code.

* **Why did you want to use it?**
* **Where were you? What was it for?**
* **How did you access the discount?**
* **Probe for:** 
  + **Did they have to validate?**
  + **Who was validating their status?**
  + **Did that person say what they were looking for?**
  + **What did they use to validate?**
* **Did you plan to use the discount before you went shopping?**

**8. Have you ever tried to use a veteran specific discount at a retailer but been denied??**Yeah, I ask and they say no and I say that’s ok

* **Tell me about this experience.**
* **Where were you? What discount were you trying to access?**
* **Who denied the discount? (Cashier, manager, etc.)**
* **What reason were you given for the denial?**

**9. Have you ever wanted to use a veteran specific discount but \*\*NOT\*\* been able to do so? Any experience in line with what we have discussed that we have not covered?**

No.

**M: Anything else to share about this?**

They do vary, some people are really generous, some will do 50%, some will do 10%, I don’t know of any specific programs that give you info about places that give discounts.  
  
TYpically on Veterans Day they list restaurants that give discounts but usually you have to ask if they give discounts.

**Desired usage**

**10. We have talked about how you currently use and access veteran discounts, but if it were up to you, how would you like to access veteran specific discounts? Tell me how you would use and access these discounts.**

Maybe if there was an app where you could check and see if places do offer the discount because it would be helpful for people to decide where to spend their money. Example, we have a grocery store who offers discounts during a certain hour for Veterans to shop at a discount, if there was a way to be able to check and see what those places are, especially if you are traveling that would be really beneficial.  
  
**M: Way to show proof on the app - what would you expect?**   
  
Some ID or something to show you’re a Veteran without showing too much information, with your picture or what not.  
  
**M: What would you call this tool?**Discount locator? Would find in the app stores.

**11. Where would you expect to find these tools? Where would you like to access them? What would you call them?**

Maybe include annex - military stores on base or really close to base where you can get military rates. That would be convenient b/c if you knew you had a location close by, you could shop there.

**12. What would you expect to find around or associated with these tools?**

**Time permitting**

**13. Do you have the VA Health and Benefits mobile app?**

* **If yes: When did you notice it? Have you used it? What has your experience been with it been like?**

Has had the app for about a year. Co-worker told me about the app, made it a lot easier communicating with my PCP   
  
**M: Proof of Veteran Status**  
  
Would expect to find name, dates of service, branch  
  
**M: How would you use it?**  
When purchasing a gun, she was able to pull up her service letter on the app back in January this year

**14. Anything else you would like to share about your experience accessing veteran specific discounts that we have not covered?**

Usually I can get away using my drivers license.

**M: anything else you use the app for?**  
  
No.

**Misty M Notes - Other observations**

* + **She uses VA app (our app!) for appt and SM. Otherwise uses phone but that can take awhile to connect with someone.**
  + **If she needs something taken care of right away, calls. Example: Calls for Ed benefits. Sounds like she uses SM to request an appt directly from provider. She likes that app has SM.**
  + **She has VA med card. She used to have Veteran ID but it expired. Her DL has that she's a Veteran so she uses that to get discounts.**
  + **Never used travel pay. She's never considered that an option. She didn't think the juice would be worth the squeeze. "It's been a challenge getting disability compensation."**
  + **She asks for discounts every time she goes to eat. She gets a lot of her discounts at restaurants. Doesn't get them much at retailers/clothing stores.**
  + **Seems to have a concern about security when shopping online.**
  + **She's gotten discounts just by saying she was a Veteran. Sometimes she's had to show her drivers' license (that has an icon showing she's a Veteran). And she carries her VA med card to act as additional back-up. A lot of companies/employees barely look at ID.**
  + **She always asks about the discount and never assumes a company gives one, because some employees may just not know or a manager has to enter a code.**
  + **Some places are very generous with discounts and others less so.**
  + **There's not a centralized location of who all offers discounts. That'd be helpful. Access to info on discounts and ID all in one place!**
  + **Digital ID should be simple with basic info since most people just quickly look. (Seems like organizations trust that Veterans aren't lying.)**
  + **"Discount locator" - an app better than web**
  + **Could also include military stores**
  + **Coworker told her about the the VAHB app! "It's made things a lot easier, especially with communicating with my primary care provider."**