



JENNY PACANOWSKI, FOUNDER & DIRECTOR,
WOMEN VETERANS EMPOWERED & THRIVING



Empowerment Workshops bring Veterans together to share resources, build community, and embrace creativity and camaraderie.



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WOMEN VETERANS EMPOWERED & THRIVING ADVANCES EMPLOYMENT AND RESEARCH IMPACT

Women Veterans Empowered & Thriving (WVE&T) continues to set a national example for innovative, arts-based Veteran reintegration. Founded by Army Veteran Jenny Pacanowski, the organization blends storytelling, ritual, and community to help Veterans move from surviving to thriving after military service. What began as a peer-to-peer space for expression and healing has grown into a fully developed empowerment model now recognized by academic and professional communities for its measurable impact.

One of the organization's biggest milestones this year is the introduction of part-time employment for Veterans serving as empowerment facilitators and public speakers. These paid roles formalize the leadership that has always been at the heart of WVE&T—providing meaningful income and professional experience, while allowing Veterans to continue sharing their stories and guiding others. **"This change reflects our belief that Veterans should be compensated for their time, expertise, and emotional labor,"** said Pacanowski.



WVE&T's programs continue to be grounded in both lived experience and research. In 2025, Pacanowski completed a graduate thesis focused on the organization's Empowerment Reintegration Model, providing formal evidence of its effectiveness. The study analyzed how WVE&T's approach—rooted in guided writing, ritual, and performance—**builds emotional resilience, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose among participants.** Veterans who engaged with the program reported measurable improvements in self-awareness, coping skills, and community connection.

The research also explored how shared storytelling creates psychological safety and collective growth. Whether through writing, performance, or dialogue, WVE&T's model encourages participants to reclaim their narratives, acknowledge trauma, and rediscover strength through creative expression. The organization's facilitators are Veterans themselves and certified in the Reintegration Empowerment Model of WVE&T. They reference their experiences to mentor others and build bridges between the military and civilian worlds.

Looking ahead, WVE&T is extending its impact beyond the Veteran community. A new **Support Members of Veterans Empowerment Workshop** offers civilians the opportunity to experience the same framework used in Veteran programs. This interactive session helps non-military participants face and understand the challenges in their own lives, with a focus on learning strategies for resilience and empowerment. The next session takes place on Dec. 16, 2025, with upcoming dates in the new year, in addition to the free, ongoing, virtual empowerment workshops available for Veterans throughout the year.

As WVE&T continues to evolve, its mission remains clear: to ensure that every Veteran has access to meaningful community, creative self-expression, and opportunities to thrive. **"Empowerment isn't just a word for us," said Pacanowski. "It's a practice, a process, and a promise to keep Veterans at the center of their own stories."**



Jenny Pacanowski Reads Her Poetry at a Poetic Theater Productions Event.

Learn more about Empowerment Workshops and Women Veterans Empowered & Thriving at womenveteransempowered.org, or RSVP for the December 16 workshop [here](#).