



Empowering Veterans Through Service Dog Teams

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- 1. Service Dogs: General Qualifications**

- 2. Veteran Eligibility**

- 3. Interacting: Do's & Don'ts**

- 4. Service Dog Team Behavior**

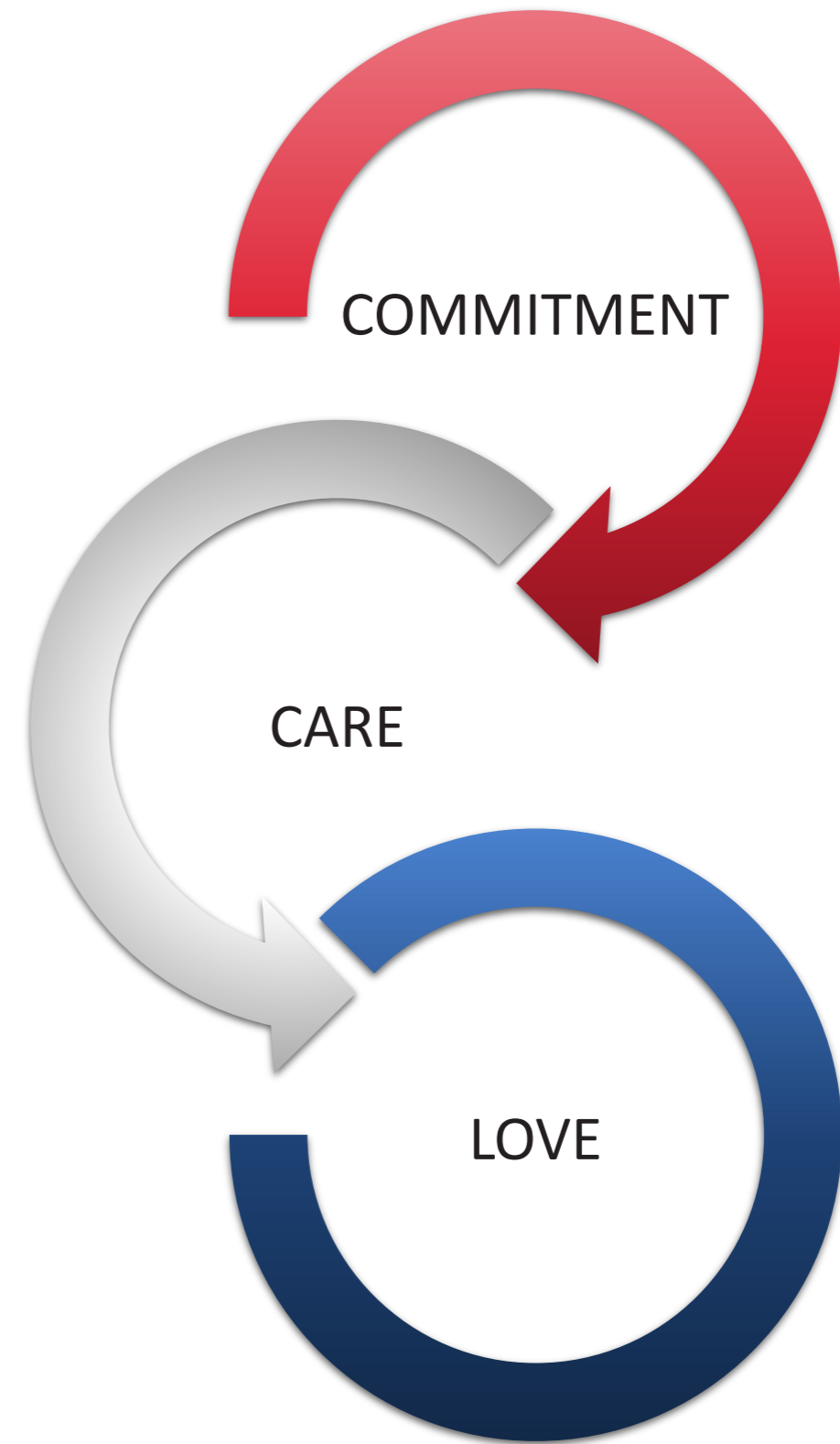
- 5. Around Service Dogs: Best Practices**



**Empowering Veterans
Through Service Dog Teams**

THE BASICS

- Daily commitment to working with the dog
- Provision of veterinary care and healthy food
- Unconditional love for the dog



Definition of Service Animals

- Dogs individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities.
- Tasks include guiding the blind, alerting the deaf, assisting wheelchair users, seizure alerting, medication reminders, calming PTSD during anxiety attacks, and other specific duties.
- Emphasize that service animals are working animals, not pets.

Additional Points

- Direct Relation to Disability
 - The task must directly relate to disability; emotional support animals excluded.
- Legal Context
 - State laws may have broader definitions.
- ADA mandates public access for service animals, balancing inclusivity with specific needs. Hospitals generally allow service animals, ensuring legal compliance.

Service Animal Regulations and Considerations

- Inquiries and Exclusions
- Allergies and Fear
- Removal of Service Animals
- Food Establishments
- Equal Treatment and Fees
- Responsibilities of Staff

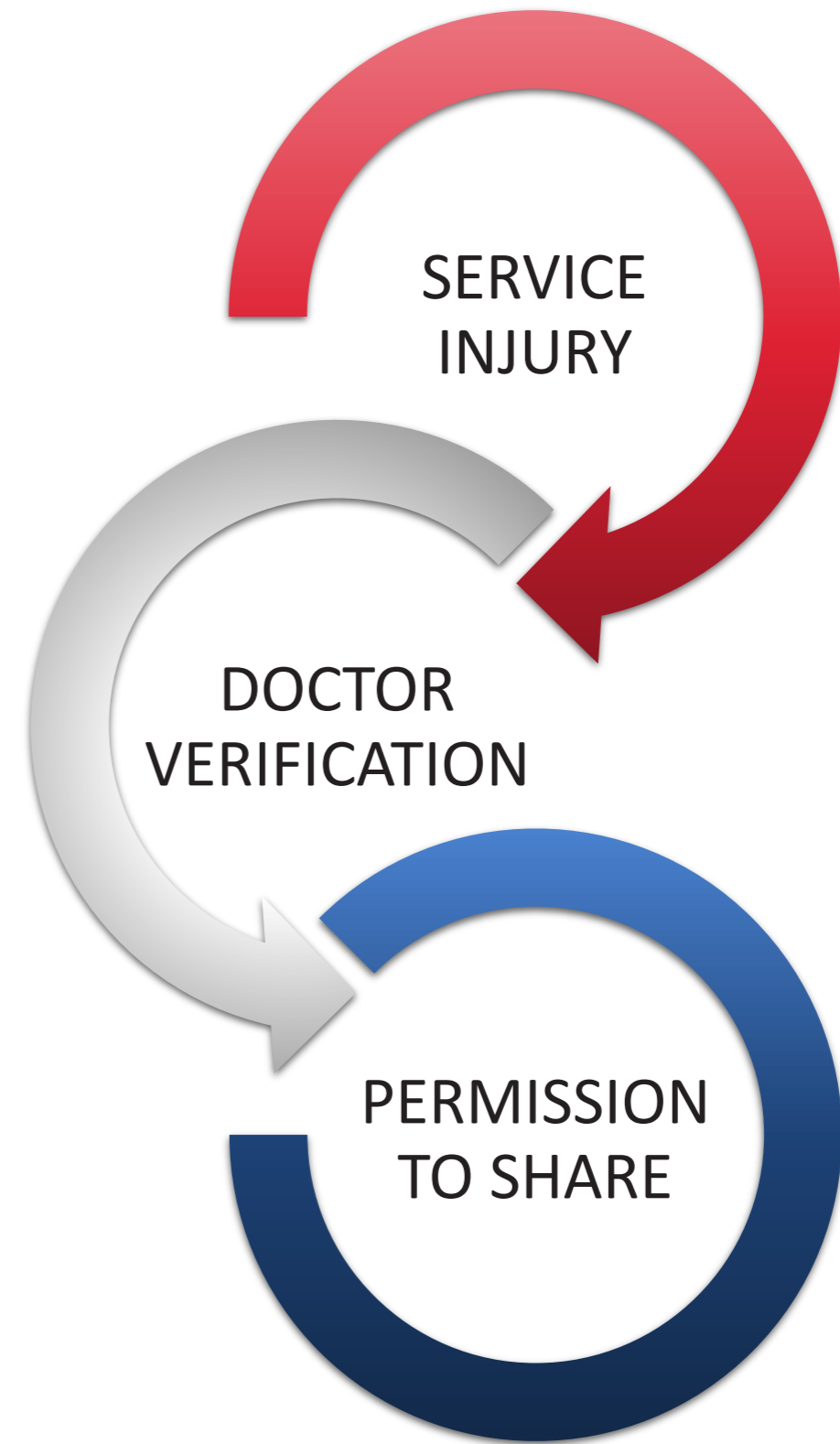




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STEPS TO SERVICE DOG TEAM

- Letter from therapist/clinician confirming treatment
- Release of Information (ROI) form for communication with VA therapists
- Continued collaboration with VA clinician/therapist
- DD-214 discharge papers with Honorable Discharge
- 50% or above service-connected disability rating, including PTSD, MST, and/or TBI diagnosis



CAUTIONARY

**CHECK STATE LAWS AND POLICIES
TO COMPLETE ALL
REQUIREMENTS**

HOW TO

DO

- APPROACH OWNER FIRST
- GIVE SOME SPACE
- GIVE RIGHT OF WAY
- RESPECT THE TEAM

DON'T

- DON'T TOUCH
- DON'T OFFER FOOD
- DON'T ASK PERSONAL
QUESTIONS
- DON'T ASSUME OFF DUTY

BEST PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES

**Respect
Extensive
Training**

**Approach
the team,
not the
dog**

**Ask before
touching**

**Respect
Working
Environment**

**No Food
Offerings**

Veterinary Health Insurance Benefit

- **VA VHIB for Service Dogs**
- **Eligibility Criteria**
- **Insurance Coverage Details**
- **Application Process**
- **Travel Support**
- **Equipment Provision**





DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS