

## Focus on the VISN

**National Service** An interview with **Dr. Robin Hurley** (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) has just been posted on **VAntage Point**, the official blog of the US Department of Veteran Affairs!

Dr. Hurley shares some of her thoughts on the tremendous impact that VA partnerships with US medical schools have had on health care for Veterans and medicine in general.

Dr. Hurley coordinates and oversees training and education programs of VA residents and students at the Salisbury VA Medical Center. She has been strengthening the VA's affiliation with the Wake Forest School of Medicine in nearby Winston-Salem for some time, commenting *"I knew the relationship could be special."*

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<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/24544/dr-robin-hurley-on-va-wake-forest-affiliation/>

## Research Project Update

## Abstinence Reinforcement Therapy (ART) for Homeless Veteran Smokers

Recently, **Dr. Beckham** (MIRECC Co-Associate Director, Research) and her study team hosted a Consumer, Family and Expert Provider Advisory Board meeting. The purpose was to support her VA RR&D Merit Review funded study evaluating the efficacy of an innovative smoking cessation treatment program for Veterans experiencing unstable housing. The advisory board members met to review study progress in the first year, brainstorm about study recruitment, and provide feedback to the study team about study procedures.

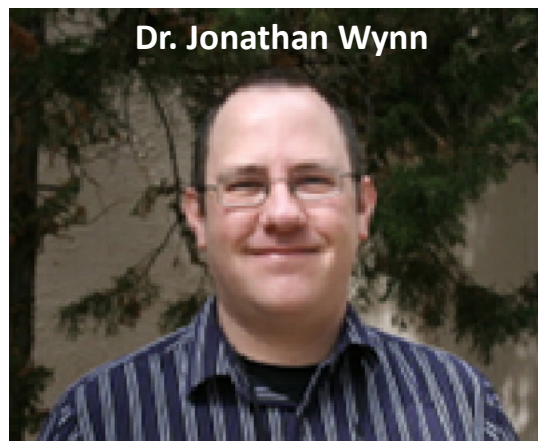
### Consumer, Family, and Expert Panel Advisory Board



The advisory board was led by Dr. Kimberly Green. The board includes homeless Veterans who had participated in similar research projects, a family member of a homeless Veteran, and a social worker from the Durham VA's Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program. Drs. Michael Green and Jonathan Wynn, both clinician-researchers from the Greater Los Angeles VA Medical Center's Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP) for Enhancing Community Integration for Homeless Veterans, also serve on the advisory board. The board will continue to meet annually over the course of Dr. Beckham's Merit Review.



**Dr. Michael Green**



**Dr. Jonathan Wynn**

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 2, 7, 8

## Invited Lectures

**Dr. Timothy Brearly** (MIRECC Fellow, Salisbury site) and **Dr. Robert Shura** (MIRECC Faculty, Salisbury site) co-presented *Malingering and Response Bias* as part of the Salisbury VAMC Mental Health Service Line Predoctoral Internship Training Program.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 2, 7, 8

**Dr. Robin A. Hurley** (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) presented *Neuropsychiatry of TBI and its Co-morbidities* to the Richmond Polytrauma Fellowship on November 18, 2015, via V-tel.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 2, 7, 8

**Dr. Jason Nieuwsma** (Associate Director, Engaging Chaplains in Mental Health Care) presented *Mental Health - Chaplaincy Integration*, a full-day workshop, at the invitation of the U.S. Army Atlantic Region Medical Command, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, Fort Belvoir, VA.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 2, 8

**Dr. Robert Shura** (MIRECC Faculty, Salisbury site) presented *Traumatic Brain Injury and MMPI-2-RF Interpretation* as part of the Salisbury VAMC Mental Health Service Line Predoctoral Internship Training Program. **Dr. Shura** also presented *Assessment of Malingering and Response Bias* as part of the Salisbury VAMC Psychology Brown Bag series.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 2, 7, 8

**Dr. Courtney Slough** (MIRECC Fellow, Salisbury site) made two presentations during the Emerge From the Crowd: How to Become a Standout Residency Candidate workshop held in conjunction with the ACCP conference in October. **Dr. Slough** was the Roundtable Discussion Leader for *Resident Roundtables* and a Reviewer for *Curriculum Vitae Writing*.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategy 8

## Education Project Update *Impulse Control in PTSD Treatment*

**Dr. John Lynch** (MIRECC Faculty, Richmond site) lead the team that was awarded a MIRECC Clinical Education Grant in 2011 to support dissemination of a PTSD treatment model that emphasizes functional and adaptive coping skills. As a result of that proposal, the *PTSD Recovery Program* treatment manuals (patient and therapist editions) were developed and distributed, including posting on our website. This program has been very well received and has been implemented in several VA facilities since then. Users report positive results, and Dr. Lynch has submitted the program to the new VHA Promising Practices Consortium. An upcoming article in the *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* (November 2015) will discuss outcome statistics demonstrating improvements on an adaptive behavior checklist developed by Dr. Lynch, the PCL-M, the MAPS, and a self-efficacy scale. The 3rd editions of both manuals are now available on our website. [www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6)

**Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 2, 7, 8**

## Education Project Update *Self-Management Materials for Sleep Disturbance in Recently Deployed Veterans*

**Dr. Christy Ulmer** (MIRECC Faculty, Durham site) lead the team that was awarded a MIRECC Clinical Education Grant in 2011 to support translation of an evidence-based cognitive-behavioral treatment for insomnia (CBTI) into a self-management workbook format. The team is now in the final stage of refining the workbook and working on developing a national pilot test prior to official release.



**Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 2, 7, 8**

## Education Project Update *Mental Health Innovations Updates from VA's Specialized Mental Health Centers*

The December 2015 edition of this national newsletter is now available on the MIRECC website at: [www.mirecc.va.gov/newsletter/current.asp](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/newsletter/current.asp)

### **Employment Assistance for Veterans: The Impact of Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

**Research:** *Early Intervention for Vocational Problems May Help Prevent Homelessness*

**Education:** *Training Materials Being Developed to Support Self-Employment Program for Veterans*

**Clinical:** *Implementation Efforts Assist in Getting Veterans with Schizophrenia Back to Work*

**Blueprint for Excellence Strategy 8**

## New Leadership Activities

**Dr. Treven Pickett** (MIRECC Faculty & Richmond Site Fellowship Co-Director) has been appointed to serve on the *Committee on Disability Issues in Psychology* by the American Psychological Association's Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest.

**Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 8**

**Dr. Robert Shura** (MIRECC Faculty, Salisbury site) has been appointed to serve on the *Committee for Research* of the American Neuropsychiatric Association.

**Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 7, 8**

## VHA Promising Practices Consortium

The consortium is a new platform established by Dr. David Shulkin, the Under Secretary for Health, where anyone in VHA can share successful operational, clinical, and programmatic practices, and learn from others' experiences in key strategic areas that align with his priorities.

<https://www.vapulse.net/community/under-secretary-for-health/promising-practices-consortium>

**Dr. Mira Brancu** (MIRECC Deputy Director) submitted *Home-Based Mental Health Evaluation (HOME)* on November 23, 2015.

**Dr. John Lynch** (MIRECC Faculty, Richmond site) submitted *Measurement practices in group treatment for veterans with combat PTSD* on November 30, 2015.



# Conferences

## ABCT 49th Annual Convention

ABCT Chicago November 12-15, 2015

Improving Dissemination by Promoting  
Empirically Supported Principles of  
Psychopathology and Change

**Kelley ML, Harding HG, Lam N, Miller M.** *Modeling Risk for Partner Violence among OEF/OIF/OND Veteran-Partner Dyads.* Poster

**Nieuwsma JA, Buck PJ, Jackson GL, Lane ME, Meador KG.** *Utilization of cognitive behavioral therapeutic principles by chaplains in health care and military settings.* Poster

**O'Farrell TJ, Schumm J, Kar H, Gnys M, Glynn S, Klostermann K.** *Dissemination of behavioral couples therapy for substance use disorders.* In W. Kim Halford (Chair), *Dissemination of couple therapy and education: International perspectives.*

## Symposium

**JA Nieuwsma (Chair) & W Tenhula (Discussant)** - *Disseminating evidence-based psychotherapies and principles to diverse provider groups across the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense.*

**DeMarce JM, Gnys M, Kar H, Raffa SD, Karlin BE.** *National dissemination of cognitive behavioral therapy for substance use disorders in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system: Veteran outcomes.*

**Drapkin ML, Manual JL, Wilbourne PL, Kar H, Gnys M.** *National dissemination of motivational enhancement therapy in the Veterans Healthcare Administration: Training program design, initial outcomes, and lessons learned.*

**Nieuwsma JA, King HA, Jackson GL, Cantrell WC, Rhodes JE, Bates MJ, Meador, KG.** *Training Military and VA Chaplains in the Use of Evidence-Based Psychotherapeutic Principles and Practices.*

**Lind MJ, Brown E, Farrell-Carnahan L, Brown R, Hawn S, McDonald S, Pickett T, Danielson CK, Thomas S, Amstadter AB.** *Sleep disturbances in combat-exposed veterans: Associations with PTSD, personality, and coping.* Poster

**Miskey HM, McDonald SD, Shura RD, Pickett TC, Yoash-Gantz RE, Rowland JA.** *Performance Validity, but not PTSD, is Associated with Cognitive Performance in Iraq and Afghanistan War Era Veterans.* Poster

**Sheth D, Hawn SE, Hummel K, Brown RC, McDonald S, Pickett T, Danielson C K, Thomas S, Amstadter AB.** *Relationship between resilience, posttraumatic stress disorder, and alcohol consumption in OEF/OIF Veterans.* Poster

## Symposium

**J Currier (Chair) & JA Nieuwsma (Discussant)** - *Moral injury, spirituality, and military trauma: Probing into the clinical implications of treating morally injured patients.*

**Nieuwsma JA, Buck PJ, King HA, Jackson GL, Cantrell WC, Meador KG.** *On the front line addressing moral injury: A survey of VA/DoD chaplains and implications for mental health collaboration.*



**ISTSS** International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

**ISTSS 31st Annual Meeting**

**Back to Basics:**  
Integrating Clinical and Scientific Knowledge to Advance the Field of Trauma  
November 5 -7, 2015  
Pre-Meeting Institutes, November 4  
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

**Brown E, Lind MJ, Brown R, Berenz E, Hawn S, Pickett T, McDonald S, Danielson C, Thomas S, Amstadter A.** *Protective factors against PTSD in OEF/OIF Veterans exposed to combat trauma.* Poster

**Brown RC, Mortensen J, Hawn S, McDonald S, Pickett T, Danielson CK, Thomas S, Amstadter AB.** *The Nomological Network of a Behavioral Distress Tolerance Task in Trauma-Exposed Combat Veterans.* Paper

**Chowdhury N, Lind M, Hawn S, Brown R, McDonald S, Pickett T, Danielson CK, Thomas S, Amstadter AB, Berenz EC.** *Negative trauma cognitions and PTSD symptom severity in OIF/OEF combat veterans.* Poster

**Hawn SE, Chowdhury N, Kevorkian S, Sheth D, Brown RC, McDonald S, Pickett T, Danielson CK, Thomas S, Amstadter AB.** *Examination into the moderating effects of impulsivity and risk taking propensity on the relationship between PTSD and Alcohol in OEF/OIF/OND Veterans.* Poster



**Emerge from the Crowd:**  
How to Become a Standout Residency Candidate

Hilton San Francisco Union Square  
San Francisco, California  
October 17, 2015

**C Slough (Roundtable discussion leader)** *Resident roundtables*

**C Slough (Reviewer)** - *Curriculum vitae writing*

held in conjunction with the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP)  
2015 Global Conference on Clinical Pharmacy

# Publications

## Book Chapters

**Marx CE, Naylor JC, Kilts JD, Dunn CE, Tupler L, Szabo ST, Capehart BP, Morey RA, Shampine LJ, Acheson SK.** (2016). *Neurosteroids and Traumatic Brain Injury: Translating Biomarkers to Therapeutics; Overview and Pilot Investigations in Iraq and Afghanistan Era Veterans.* In Laskowitz D, Grant G (Eds.), *Translational Research in Traumatic Brain Injury.* Boca Raton (FL): CRC Press/Taylor and Francis Group, 2016. Chapter 7: 145-162. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK326734/?report=classic>

## Reports

**Nieuwsma JA, King HA, Cantrell WC, Jackson GL, Bates MJ, Rhodes JE, Wright L, Bidassie B, White B, Davis RC, Ethridge K, Roddenberry V, O'Mara S, Gatewood S, Irvine RJ, Meador KG.** *Improving patient-centered care via integration of chaplains with mental health care: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) / Department of Defense (DoD) Joint Incentive Fund project final report* (2015). Durham, NC: Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health and Chaplaincy Program.

[http://www.mirecc.va.gov/mentalhealthandchaplaincy/Docs\\_and\\_Images/Chaplains\\_MH\\_JIF\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/mentalhealthandchaplaincy/Docs_and_Images/Chaplains_MH_JIF_Final_Report.pdf)

## Invited Articles

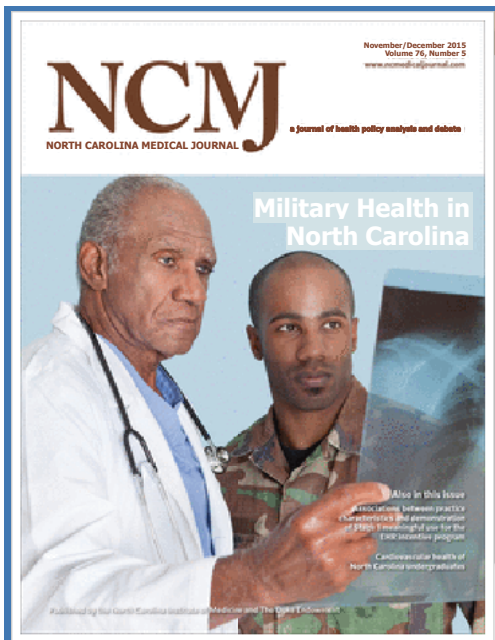
Policy Forum - Invited Commentary

**Pickett T, Rothman D, Crawford EF, Brancu E, Fairbank JA, Kudler HS.** *Mental health among military personnel and veterans.* *North Carolina Medical Journal.* 2015, 76(5), 299-306.

This commentary describes the prevalence of mental health problems affecting military service members and veterans in North Carolina and the rest of the nation, with a special emphasis on those who served in the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Approximately 1.9 million of these veterans have become eligible for Veterans Affairs health care since 2002, and an estimated 1.16 million veterans have registered for this care.

Policy Forum - Invited Sidebar

**Nieuwsma JA.** *Moral Injury: An Intersection for Psychological and Spiritual Care.* *North Carolina Medical Journal.* 2015, 76(5), 300-301.



## Journal Articles

**Nieuwsma JA, Walser RD, Farnsworth JK, Drescher KD, Meador KG, Nash W.** *Possibilities within acceptance and commitment therapy for approaching moral injury.* *Current Psychiatry Reviews.* 2015, 11: 193-206.

**Schry A, Hibberd R, Wagner HR, Turchik J A, Kimbrel NA, Wong M, Elbogen EE, Strauss JL, VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Workgroup, Brancu M.** *Functional correlates of military sexual assault in male veterans.* *Psychological Services.* 2015, 12(4): 384 - 393.

**Schry AR, Rissling MB, Gentes EL, Beckham JC, Kudler HS, Straits-Troster K, Calhoun PS.** *The Relationship between Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms and Physical Health in A Survey of U.S. Iraq and Afghanistan Era Veterans.* *Psychosomatics.* 2015, 56(6): 674-684.

**Spoont MR, Williams JW Jr, Kehle-Forbes S, Nieuwsma JA, Mann-Wrobel MC, Gross R.** *The rational clinical examination: Does this patient have posttraumatic stress disorder?* *JAMA.* 2015, 314: 510-510.

**Stevens FL, Pickett TC, Wilder Schaaf KP, Taylor BC, Gravely A, Van Houtven CH, Friedemann-Sánchez G, Griffin JM.** *The Relationship between Training and Mental Health among Caregivers of Individuals with Polytrauma.* *Behavioural Neurology.* 2015; Article ID 18941. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2015/185941>

# Resources for Veterans & Families

The VA's Specialized Mental Health Centers have launched a new website:

[http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/self\\_help.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/self_help.asp)



## Resources to Empower Veterans Mental Health

Self-help materials can provide valuable education and support for Veterans who may be facing mental health challenges, their friends, and family members. There are a wide variety of self-help materials available and it can sometimes be difficult to select the most useful. VA has assembled a list of reviewer-recommended materials that may be helpful in finding the right option for you. For help in finding these materials, please click the "How to Use" tab.



## Online Life Skills Training for Veterans

There are several free and anonymous on-line education and life coaching programs that use interactive exercises and video demonstrations to teach skills for overcoming life challenges.

<http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/>

### *AIMS: Anger & Irritability Management Skills*

This course offers a wide range of practical skills and tools to manage your anger and develop self-control over your thoughts and actions.

### *Moving Forward: Stress vs Performance*

An educational and life coaching program that teaches Problem Solving skills to help you better handle life's challenges

### *PTSD Coach Online*

PTSD Coach Online is for anyone who needs help with upsetting feelings. Trauma survivors, their families, or anyone coping with stress can benefit.

### *Parenting: Positive Communication*

This course provides parents with tools that strengthen parenting skills and helps them reconnect with their children.

## NC4VETS Resource Guide

The purpose of this comprehensive resource guide is to assist and educate Veterans in learning about state and federal Veteran benefits. Topic areas include services, employment, healthcare, education, housing and personal services.

<http://www.nc4vets.com/blog/resource-guide>

This resource guide was produced by the North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs in partnership with the Governor's Working Group on Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families. <http://www.veteransfocus.org>



## CBOC Mental Health Rounds

Each CBOC MH Rounds presentation is now offered twice a month:

### *Driving and Dementia*

Wednesday January 13 from 9-10 am ET & Thursday January 14 from 12-1 pm ET

Remember to register in TMS **in advance** to attend and receive credit. If you require assistance contact EES Program Manager - Tim.Walsh2@va.gov or Education Tech - Jessica.Denno@va.gov

## Online Military Culture Training for Community Providers

<http://deploymentpsych.org/military-culture>

It's important that all who care for Veterans have a basic understanding of military culture. In the interest of the highest quality, most compassionate health care for our Nation's Veterans, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense launched an online course available at no cost to all Veteran care providers.

### *Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals*

This course stems from research, surveys and hundreds of hours of interviews with Service members and Veterans. It is designed as a comprehensive training in military culture for seasoned practitioners as well as for those less familiar with military populations. The interactive course includes a self-assessment to help providers better understand the biases they may unknowingly have that may be impacting the care they are providing to Veterans and their families. It also includes a variety of vignettes and candid video testimonials to highlight the meaning of military cultural competence.

## *Treating the Invisible Wounds of War*

This workshop series was developed by MIRECC faculty in collaboration with Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP) and North Carolina Area Health Education Center (NC AHEC). The web-based versions of the courses are all free at: <http://www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier>

Click on **New Users** to register. You will then see the available courses listed:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 - <i>Treating the Invisible Wounds of War (TTIWW)</i><br>english & spanish editions | 5 - <i>TTIWW - Recognizing the Signs of mTBI during<br/>Routine Eye Examinations</i> |
| 2 - <i>TTIWW - A Primary Care Approach</i>  | 6 - <i>TTIWW - Understanding Military Family Issues</i>                              |
| 3 - <i>TTIWW - Employee Assistance in the Civilian Workforce</i>                      | 7 - <i>TTIWW - Taking a Military History: Four<br/>Critical Questions</i>            |
| 4 - <i>TTIWW - Issues of Women Returning from Combat</i>                              |  |





[www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6)

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