



*Promoting equity in engagement, access, and quality of mental health care for Veterans facing barriers to care, especially rural Veterans*

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www.mirecc.va.gov/visn16

# Communiqué

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### South Central MIRECC Anchor Sites:

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*Associate Director for Improving Clinical Care*

## Eye on a SC MIRECC Investigator:

**Lilian Dindo, Ph.D.**

**Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
Baylor College of Medicine**

Interviewed by Ashley McDaniel

In fall 2014, Dr. Lilian Dindo joined the SC MIRECC Houston, Texas anchor site as an affiliate investigator. This month we talk to Dr. Dindo about her background and work with SC MIRECC.

*Q. Tell us a bit about your background and when you joined SC MIRECC.*

I received my doctoral degree in clinical psychology from the University of Iowa in 2008. As a doctoral student in clinical psychology, I was exposed to evidence-based psychotherapies with a range of clinical populations. My clinical training was largely shaped by theories based within contextual cognitive behavioral approaches, or “third generation behavioral therapies.” These therapies, which include Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy, incorporate overt behavioral change efforts with acceptance and mindfulness-based strategies.

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## SC MIRECC Education Products

The SC MIRECC offers free educational products (pamphlets, videos, trainings programs, etc.) that cover a wide array of mental health topics, including anxiety, dementia, depression, evidence-based psychotherapy, families, gambling, insomnia, stigma, stress, substance abuse, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and wellness.

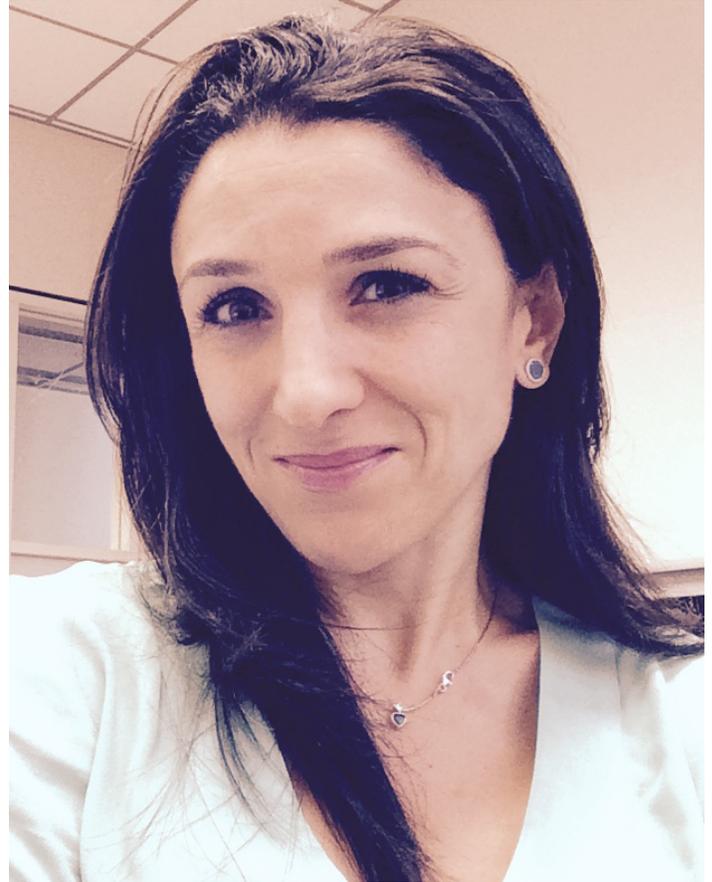
Most educational products can be downloaded from the SC MIRECC website (<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn16/clinicalEducationProducts.asp>). Products that cannot be downloaded can be ordered by emailing [VISN16SCMIRECCeducation@va.gov](mailto:VISN16SCMIRECCeducation@va.gov). You can also visit the National MIRECC website (<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/index.asp>) to download education products from MIRECCs across the country on topics such as

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## EYE (continued from page 1)

In my research training as a graduate student, I investigated relations between psychopathology, temperament, and physiological functioning. I used skin conductance response and cortisol to examine associations between physiological responses to various tasks and temperamental traits that predispose to psychopathology. My interest in the intricate link between psychological and physiological states developed further during my clinical internship at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Psychiatry. During a 6-month rotation at the Cancer Center, I developed and implemented a mindfulness-based group treatment for patients with cancer. In this new clinical context, I again observed the bidirectional interaction of physical and psychological states. In addition, I became acutely aware of the need for brief, effective interventions for medical patients who are significantly distressed as I observed that psychological distress and impairment create a formidable barrier to adhering to treatments involving repeated medical visits.

In order to integrate my pre-doctoral clinical and research experiences, I directed my interest to treatment interventions during a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Iowa Depression and Clinical Research Center. There, I became involved in a National Institutes of Health-funded, randomized controlled trial comparing the efficacy of interpersonal psychotherapy, sertraline, and placebo in post-partum depression. Following this post-doctoral fellowship, which provided a solid basis for me in clinical trials research, I joined the University of Iowa Psychiatry faculty in September 2009. In July 2010, I was awarded an institutional career development grant, during which I launched a pilot study of a 1-day ACT intervention for patients with comorbid depression and migraine. The institutional career development award transitioned into a National Institute of Mental Health career development award (K23); the K23 has allowed me to carry out a follow-up study to the 1-day treatment for migraine and depression, and to further my training in clinical trials methodology and the study of the active ingredients of treatment. The results of this 1-day ACT intervention have been positive and as a result, we have now tested a similar 1-day ACT intervention in distressed patients with cardiovascular disease and another study is underway in distressed patients who are undergoing orthopedic surgery.



*Lilian Dindo, Ph.D.*

Last year, a fellow colleague working at the DeBakey VA Medical Center put me in touch with Dr. Mark Kunik and I learned about the mission, goals, and resources of SC MIRECC. My emphasis on delivering innovative treatments for patients with health problems was a strong fit with the mission of SC MIRECC. I am excited that I will be able to collaborate with faculty and staff from across various disciplines here at SC MIRECC and Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D).

*Q. What person or experience has had the most influence on your career?*

I believe that my training in ACT has had the most influence on my career. This model of behavior change is applicable to human beings in general, not just those that fit certain diagnostic criteria. The goal of ACT is to enhance psychological flexibility in the face of life's challenges and ACT offers tools to enhance that psychological flexibility. In ACT, we are encouraged to clarify what matters to us most, to commit to behaviors that are consistent with

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## continued from page 2

what matters even though it may be difficult, and to take a stance of openness and compassion towards our internal experiences, such as emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations. I have found that patients are vitalized by this approach of thinking about, and moving towards, what matters most to them and by taking a stance of openness towards their difficult internal experiences. Thus, learning about these skills, practicing them, and teaching them to patients has enhanced both my professional and personal life.

*Q. What areas of research are you interested in?*

I am interested in designing innovative and pragmatic psychotherapeutic interventions that can improve the mental health and functioning of patients suffering from chronic health problems – with a particular focus on acceptance and commitment therapy as the treatment approach. My hope is that, by designing time-efficient and effective interventions, they may be readily deployed into clinical practice settings. I am also interested in identifying the psychological mechanisms of action in effective treatments. That is, I hope to gain a greater understanding of what aspects of the treatment approach being implemented are in fact leading to positive outcomes.

*Q. What studies are you currently conducting?*

The name of my clinical research lab is ACT on Health as my work is broadly focused on implementing ACT interventions in health populations. I brought a career development award with me from the University of Iowa. The research component of that grant involves recruiting patients who suffer from co-occurring migraines and depression and the goal is to examine the impact of a 1-day group Acceptance and Commitment Training + Migraine Education (ACT-ME) intervention compared to Migraine Education Only (MEO) on depression, quality of life, and migraine frequency and severity. I hope to expand my work at HSR&D to other chronic medical conditions, including other pain conditions and cardiovascular disease, as well as implementing interventions preventively for patients who may be at risk for developing chronic problems (e.g., those who exhibit distress prior to surgery or who are facing significant or life-threatening medical treatment).

*Q. How can people get in touch with you if they have questions about your work?*

I can be reached at (713) 440-4637 or [lilian.dindo@bcm.edu](mailto:lilian.dindo@bcm.edu). ♦

## ATTRIBUTION: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MIRECC RESEARCH SUPPORT/EMPLOYMENT

SC MIRECC researchers and educators have a responsibility to ensure SC MIRECC receives proper credit for SC MIRECC-supported studies or projects in articles, presentations, interviews, and other professional activities in which the results of those projects are publicized or recognized. All investigators should credit SC MIRECC if they receive either direct or indirect SC MIRECC support. For example, "This work was supported in part by the VA South Central (VISN 16) Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center." If you receive salary support from SC MIRECC, you should list SC MIRECC as an affiliation.

# CBOC Mental Health Rounds

*Sponsored by the South Central MIRECC*

VA mental health providers are invited to attend the next CBOC Mental Health Rounds session titled “**Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): Beyond the Basics**” on Wednesday, January 14 at 8:00-9:00 a.m. CT and Thursday, January 15 at 11:00-12:00 p.m. CT. This Microsoft Lync session will be presented by Megan Press, M.D. At the conclusion of this educational program, learners will be able to:

1. Understand the impact of ADHD in patients and communities and the importance of treatment;
2. Review the diagnostic criteria for ADHD in adults and how the criteria changed from DSM IV to DSM5;
3. Review medications available for the treatment of adult ADHD; and
4. Discuss the evidence for non-pharmacologic treatment of ADHD in adults

Call 1-800-767-1750 and use access code 37009# to participate. Email Ashley.McDaniel@va.gov or call (501) 257-1223 for registration and continuing education credit information.

**Upcoming CBOC Mental Health Rounds**  
**Second Wednesdays**  
**(8:00-9:00 am CT)**  
**and**  
**Thursdays**  
**(11:00-12:00 am CT)**  
**Monthly**  
**(800) 767-1750; 37009#**

February 11 & 12, 2015  
*CBT and Chronic Pain*

March 11 & 12, 2015  
*Geriatric Addiction*

April 8 & 9, 2015  
*Brief CBT*



## Other Resources and Continuing Education

We regularly post details for resources, training and continuing education opportunities from across the VA and the community on the Mental Health Practice, Research and Education Portal (MH PREP) SharePoint. The MH PREP is accessible from a VA computer at <https://vaww.visn16.portal.va.gov/SiteDirectory/mhp/default.aspx>. Find resources on the home page and a training calendar on the education page. Visit the SharePoint for details. Recent posts include:

- On Demand: Mental Health Evaluation in PCMH: What do you really need to do?
- The Report on Integrating Mental Health Into PACT (IMHIP) in the VA
- SAMHSA Suicide Prevention App Launches in January 2015

## CEG (continued from page 1)

social skills training for serious mental illness, suicide prevention, and depression. We hope you will visit our website to discover if any of our products can benefit you.

## Featured Clinical Education Products

### Get Moving and Get Well Manual

This manual is for Veterans living with psychotic disorders, major depression, bipolar disorder, and severe PTSD who have difficulty identifying and making use of opportunities for physical activity. The program focuses on wellness rather than weight management. The program is delivered in 60-minute classes scheduled twice a week for 12 weeks. Participants engage in walking, dancing, and stretching activities. A 12-week follow-up cycle of the class is focused on community integration.

### LifeGuard, Operation: Coming Home

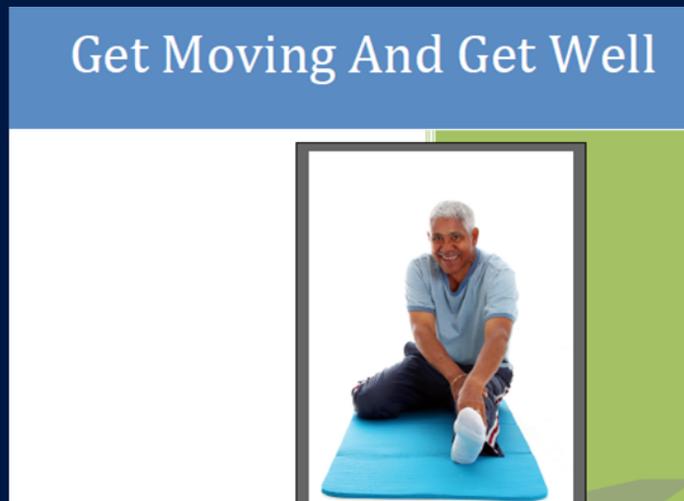
This website is dedicated to helping returning Veterans reintegrate into their communities and families. VA LifeGuard gives Veterans and their family members an opportunity to experience five skills that help them respond to their thoughts, feelings, and memories that occur on a daily basis.

### Living With Purpose: A Guide for Getting More Out Of Each Day

This patient workbook is designed to complement formal treatment for depression. The workbook employs a Behavioral Activation approach to get Veterans more active and more involved in pleasurable activities. Includes a provider brochure.

### Working With Couples Training Modules

These modules provide an overview of essential content and skills for treating Veterans and their partners or spouses who struggle with communication problems, anger and conflict, mental illness, trauma, and reintegration into the family after deployment. This training targets VA clinicians but may be helpful to non-VA providers who work with Veterans. Additional training and supervision are required to become competent in providing couples therapy. ♦



## New VA Training for Veterans: Anger and Irritability Management Skills

This online course is based on training that was developed specifically for Veterans and has been successfully used by Veterans and Servicemembers around the world. This course offers a wide range of practical skills and tools for Veterans to manage anger and develop self-control over their thoughts and actions. The training consists of eight interactive modules that take approximately 30-60 minutes per module to complete. Visit <http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/> for more information or to take the course. ♦

The screenshot shows the VA AIMS website interface. At the top, a navigation menu includes 'Veteran Training' and 'Courses Online', with 'Anger & Irritability Management Skills' selected. The main header features the AIMS logo and the course title 'Anger and Irritability Management Skills'. Below the header is a large image of a man shouting from a car window, with a quote: 'Punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger. ~Buddha'. A 'START THE COURSE' button is prominently displayed. A 'QUICK LINKS' sidebar on the left includes options like 'Hospital Locator', 'Health Programs', and 'Protect Your Health'. Below the course description is a 'Meet the Veterans' section with a grid of 14 small portraits of veterans.

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