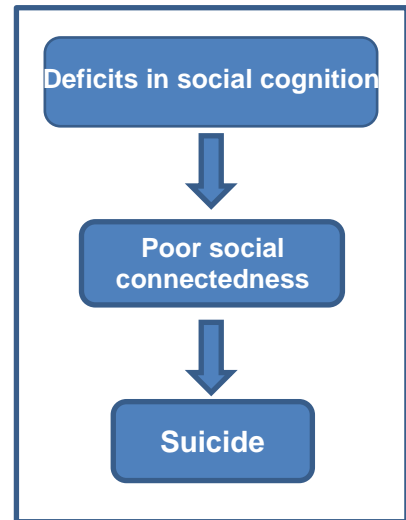




PROJECT SERVE: Observation and Assessment of Social Interaction and Suicide (OASIS)

Rates of Veteran suicides are alarmingly high, and pose a significant public health problem. A recent presidential order indicated that research targeting suicide prevention for veterans is an integral part of the National Research Action Plan (NRAP). The NRAP specifically calls for research on the social factors in suicide risk. To this end, Project SERVE: OASIS aims investigate the role of social cognition as a risk factor for suicidal ideation.

Social cognition is the set of basic skills that underlie social interaction. This includes the ability to recognize emotion (emotion perception), interpret social cues (social perception), understand the mental states of others (theory of mind), and explain positive and negative social events in one's life (attributional bias). Current research indicates that individuals with a variety of mental health disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and autism, struggle with social cognition. Deficits in social cognition predict low perceived social support and poor social connectedness, which are known risk factors for suicide.



Project SERVE: OASIS conducted interviews with 151 Veterans to examine the link between social cognitive deficits and suicidal ideation and attempts. Veterans were asked questions about their mental health, experiences with suicide, social cognition, and social support.

Data from Project SERVE: OASIS are currently being analyzed. Findings from this study will inform future suicide prevention projects.

For more information, contact:

Bryann B. DeBeer, Ph.D.

Bryann.DeBeer@va.gov

VISN 17 Center of Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans