

Suicide Prevention Research in VA and DoD: An Overview and Status Report

Peter M. Gutierrez, Ph.D.
Co-Director



Military Officers Association of America
September 13, 2014
Boulder, CO

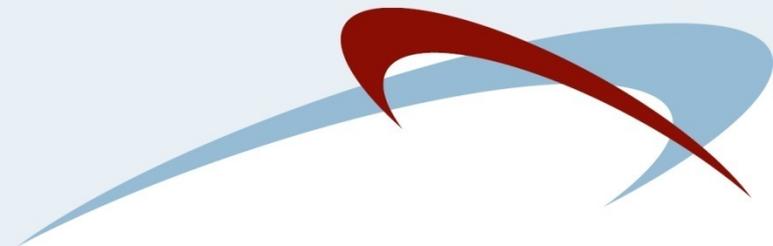
This work was in part supported by the Military Suicide Research Consortium (MSRC), funded through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. Opinions, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations are those of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by the MSRC or the Department of Defense.

Army and VA Suicide Rates

- In 2010 there were 147 Army suicides vs. 8440 (estimated) Veteran Suicides
 - 93% Army suicides male, 97% Veteran
 - 81% Army suicides White/Caucasian, 93% Veterans
 - 67% Army suicides 29 and younger, 69% Veteran 50 and older

Army and VA Non-lethal Events

- In 2011 there were 440 Army attempts vs. 12,309 Veterans
 - 76% Army male, 88% Veterans
 - 55% Army White/Caucasian, Veteran unknown
 - 78% Army 29 and younger, 51% Veterans 50 and older



Denver VA Stats 2013

- Crisis Line initiated rescues – 125
- Suicide attempts – 483
- Suicide deaths – 14

The Military Suicide Research Consortium

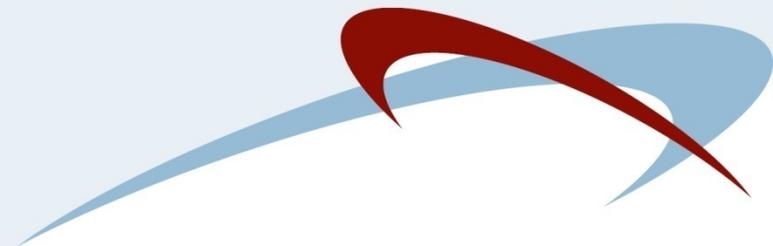
21 funded studies in under 6 months from proposal submission.

58 Research Program Members that are well established in military and/or suicide research.

Coherence of research results are increased and dissemination of results more rapid, in an efficient and relatively low-cost effort.

Designed to maximize research efforts at understanding and improving suicide risk screening and assessment, interventions, and population-level prevention programs.

No other research consortium exists with a mission to provide the scientific basis for addressing the problem of suicide within the military.

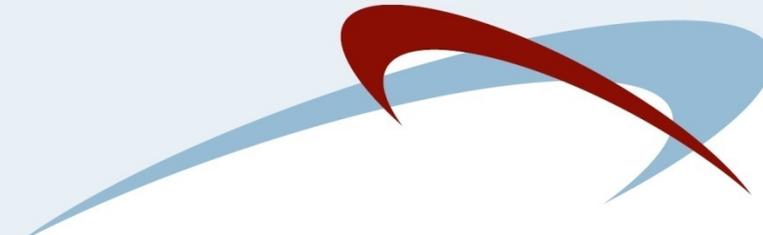


MSRC Goals

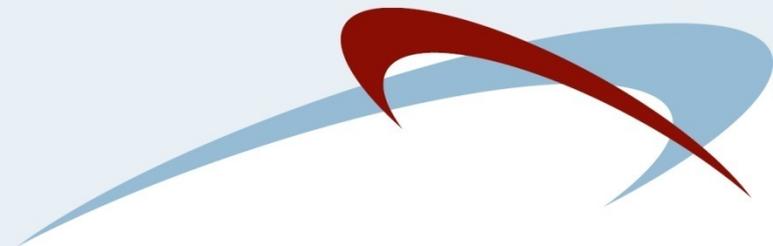
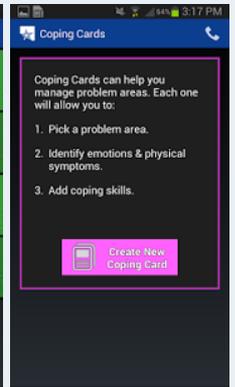
- Produce new scientific knowledge about suicidal behavior in the military
- Use high-quality research methods and analyses to address problems in policy and practice
- Disseminate knowledge, information, and findings
- Train future leaders in military suicide research

MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Julie Cerel, Ph.D.	<i>Suicide Bereavement in Military and their Families</i>	University of Kentucky	<p>Veterans & Civilians: Phases 1, 2, & 3: Random Digit-Dial</p> <p>Phase 4: Family survivors to active duty or Veteran suicide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment Complete: Phase 1: 1,736, 2&3: 105, 4: 24 47% of population knew someone who died by suicide Of Veterans, 25.4% report exposure to suicide and 48% were exposed to sudden traumatic death during their military service
Nigel Bush, Ph.D.	<i>Effectiveness of a VHB Smartphone App in Enhancing Veteran's Coping with Suicidal Ideation: A RCT</i>	<p>National Center for Telehealth & Technology (T2)</p> <p>University of Washington</p>	Veterans: VAMC Portland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot completed iOS and Android Beta versions available, with Clinical and User guides Manuscript in press 2 of 100 Veterans Enrolled

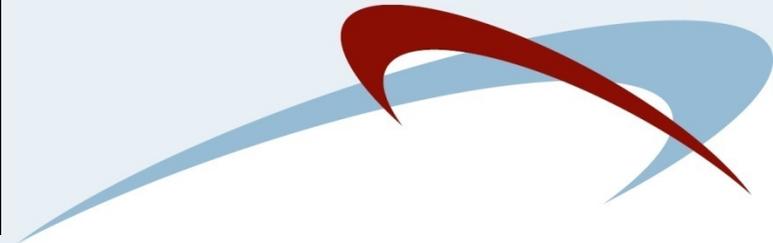


VIRTUAL HOPE BOX APP



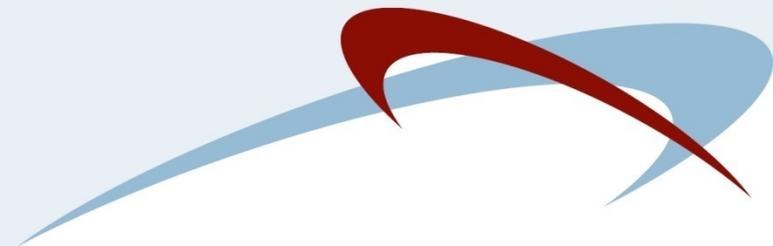
MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Katherine Comtois, Ph.D., MPH	<i>Military Continuity Project</i>	University of Washington	Active Duty: Fort Bragg Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base Twentynine Palms Marine Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 161 of 800 suicidal active duty Marines and Soldiers recruited Recruitment ongoing 12 month follow up assessments began in April 2014
N. Brad Schmidt, Ph.D.	<i>Development and Evaluation of a Brief, Suicide Prevention Intervention Reducing Anxiety and Mood Vulnerabilities</i>	Florida State University	Veterans & Civilians: Tallahassee, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot Completed 75% had past suicide ideation or attempt history Intervention reduced cognitive AS by 40% 52 of 300 Consented



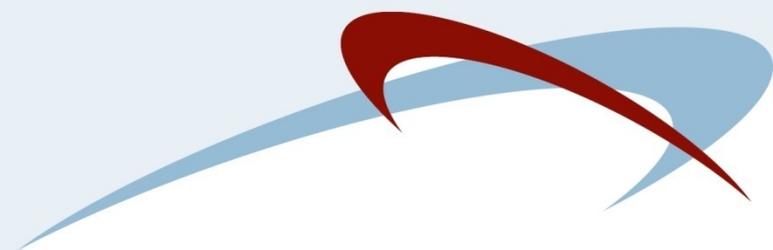
CAST INTERVENTION

- Roll out 2014
- Brief, computer-based anxiety intervention
- Manuscript in press



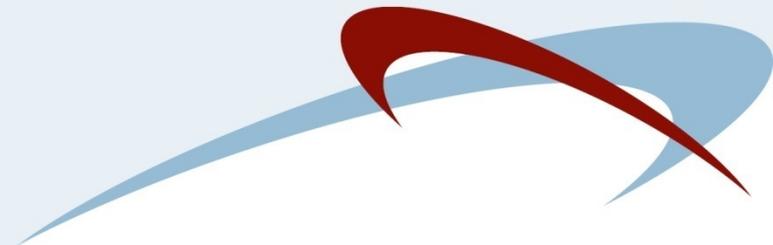
MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Craig Bryan, Psy.D., ABPP	<i>Brief Intervention for Short- Term Suicide Risk Reduction in Military Populations</i>	University of Utah National Center for Veterans Studies	Active Duty: Fort Carson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55 of 360 Soldiers enrolled and randomized into 1 of 3 conditions Preliminary data presented at conferences IRB closed the study due to sudden departure of site PI, decision is being appealed. Enrollment is suspended.
Lisa Brenner, Ph.D., ABPP	<i>Window to Hope: Treatment for Hopelessness among Veterans with TBI</i> <i>Pilot Study of an Active Control Problem-Solving Therapy Veterans with Moderate to Severe TBI</i>	VISN 19 MIRECC	Veterans: Denver VAMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 43 of 90 participants consented into RCT 6 of 24 Veterans enrolled for PST-SP feasibility trial Manuscript published on translation of <i>Window to Hope</i> intervention to Veteran population



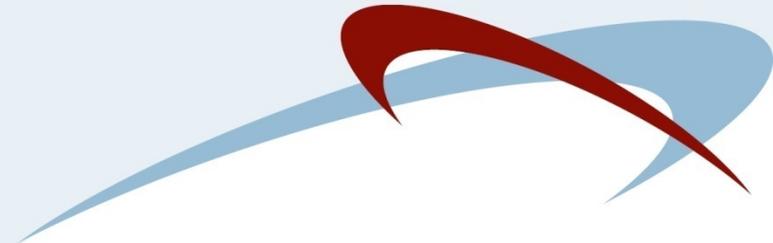
WINDOW TO HOPE (WTOH)

- **Published manuscript on translation of WtoH manual for US Veterans**
- Validate WtoH Intervention for suicide prevention in hopeless Veterans post-TBI
- Pilot data for Problem-Solving Therapy



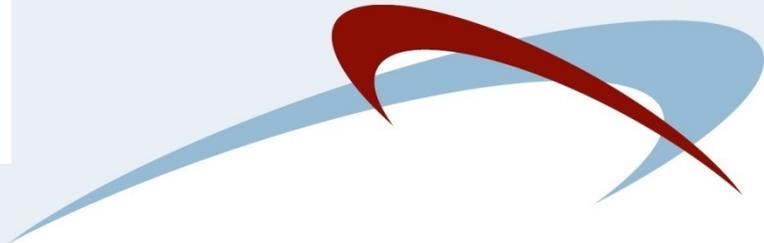
MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Rebecca Bernert, Ph.D.	<i>A Behavioral Sleep Intervention for Suicidal Behaviors in Military Veterans</i>	Stanford University	Veterans: VA Palo Alto Stanford University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 participants of 120 enrolled, completed treatment and in follow-up Expanded inclusion criteria
Peter M. Gutierrez, Ph.D. Thomas Joiner, Ph.D.	<i>Toward a Gold Standard for Suicide Assessment for Military Personnel</i>	VISN 19 MIRECC Florida State University	Active Duty: Fort Campbell Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP) Joint Base Andrews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 Baselines complete at NMCP Recruiting approved at Ft. Campbell and Andrews



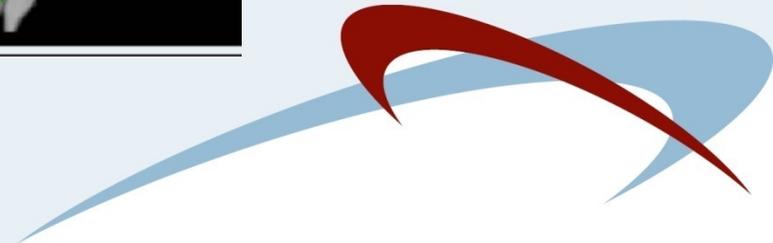
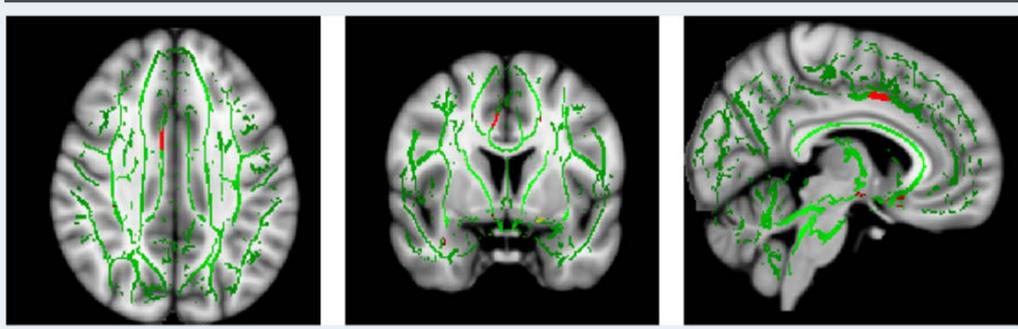
MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Lori Johnson, Ph.D. David Jobes, Ph.D.	<i>Suicide Risk Assessments within Suicide-Specific Group Therapy Treatment for Veterans</i>	Robley Rex VAMC	Veterans: Robley Rex VAMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surpassed initial goal of 114 participants, increased goal to 200 128 consented to date Manuscript under review
Michael Anestis, Ph.D.	<i>Identifying Factors Associated with Future Self-Directed Violence within a Sample of Mississippi National Guard Personnel</i>	University of Southern Mississippi	Mississippi National Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Baselines with 511 of 1,000 Soldiers 6 month follow ups will start mid-May Presenting at several conferences



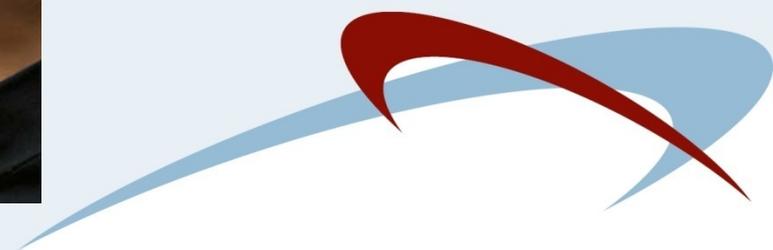
MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Matthew Nock, Ph.D.	<i>New Approaches to the Measurement of Suicide-Related Cognition</i>	Harvard University Boston VAMC	Veterans: Boston VAMC Harvard University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 of 100 Enrolled at Boston VA site 43 of 100 Enrolled at Harvard University site Conducting follow up assessments
Deborah Yurgelun-Todd, Ph.D.	<i>Neuroimaging Correlates of Suicide</i>	University of Utah Brain Institute Salt Lake City VAMC	Veterans: SLC VAMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 of 80 Veterans Enrolled \$3M leveraged from State of Utah for neuroimaging scanner



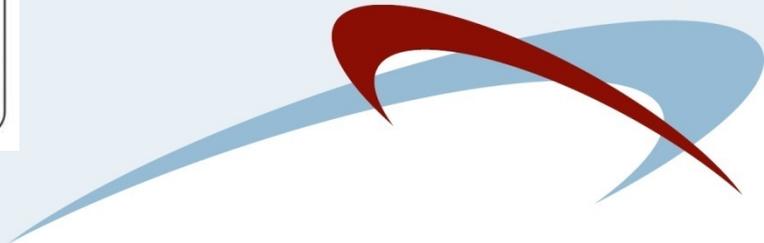
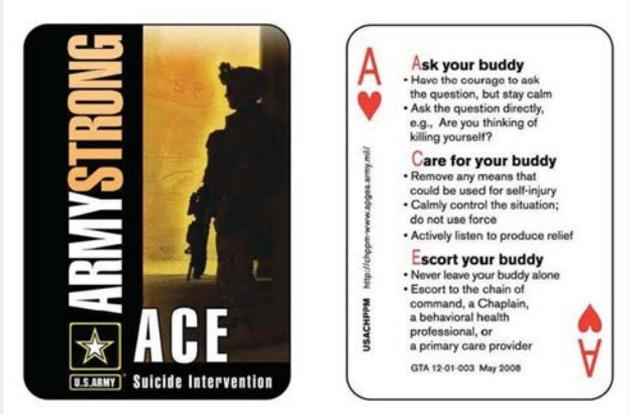
MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Jesse Cogle, Ph.D.	<i>Controlled Evaluation of a Computerized Anger-Reduction Treatment for Suicide Prevention</i>	Florida State University	Veterans & Civilians: Tallahassee, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72 of 140 Enrolled Began 3-month follow ups, will start 6-month follow up next quarter
Bridget Matarazzo, Psy.D.	<i>Home-Based Mental Health Evaluation (HOME) to Assist Suicidal Veterans with the Transition from Inpatient to Outpatient Settings</i>	VISN 19 MIRECC	Veterans: Denver VAMC Portland VAMC Philadelphia VAMC Houston VAMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained all staff for multi-site project Full regulatory approval for two sites, pending at additional sites



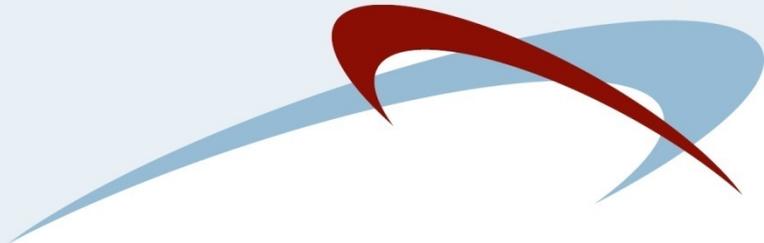
MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Courtney Bagge, Ph.D. Ken Conner, Psy.D.	<i>Warning Signs for Suicide Attempts</i>	University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) University of Rochester	Veterans & Civilians: San Diego, Seattle, and Arkansas VAMCs Center of Excellence UMMC Univ. of Rochester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtaining regulatory approvals UMMC enrolled prior to HRPO approval, reconsenting 11 subjects
Melissa Amick, Ph.D. Beeta Homaifar, Ph.D.	<i>A Novel Approach to Identifying Behavioral and Neural Markers of Active Suicidal Ideation: Effects of Cognitive & Emotional Stress on Working Memory</i>	Boston VAMC VISN 19 MIRECC	Veterans: Boston VAMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory approvals obtained 7 of 90 Recruited



MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

Principal Investigator	Study	Site	Population	Current Progress
Jill Holm-Denoma, Ph.D. Tracy Witte, Ph.D.	<i>A Taxometric Investigation of Suicide</i>	University of Denver Auburn University	MSRC Funded Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained regulatory approvals Reviewing MSRC studies' protocols
James McNulty, Ph.D.	<i>Using Evaluative Conditioning to Improve Marriage</i>	Florida State University	Veterans & Civilians: Tallahassee, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved by IRB, under review by HRPO



Conclusions

- Suicide is a significant problem in active duty, particularly soldiers, and Veterans
- VA and DoD are spending unprecedented amount on research
- Large amount of research underway
- Findings disseminated rapidly

Questions?

Peter M. Gutierrez, Ph.D.

peter.gutierrez@va.gov

www.msrc.fsu.edu

