

# Mental Health Integration for Chaplain Services

## (MHICS)

### Description and Course Overviews

The Mental Health Integration for Chaplain Services (MHICS) program is a one-year training that aims to better equip chaplains in the provision of care to Veterans and Service members with mental health problems. The MHICS training is comprised of three 12-week courses. Each course is comprised of five distance modules and one face-to-face training. Distance modules typically include three 50-60-minute video didactics, readings, and a regularly scheduled 90-minute small-group consultation call using video conferencing. Each distance module can be completed at any time during a two-week span (we request completing work prior to the consultation call in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week), with modules taking an estimated time of 8-12 hours each to complete. While the majority of the MHICS training is accomplished through distance learning modalities, each of the three courses also includes a 2.5-day face-to-face training intensive.

Participants in the MHICS training should be prepared to devote a combined average of at least one to one-and-a-half days per two week period during the distance learning portions of MHICS. Additionally, participants should be prepared to attend all three of the 2.5-day training intensives. Over the course of the full year, approximately 10-15% of participants' professional effort should be devoted to this training program.

While the majority of the MHICS training is completed via distance education, a number of assignments and activities are integrated throughout to enhance learning and interactivity. Distance modules include elements that stress application of learning in both clinical and operational contexts. For example, modules include interactive video engagement questions, surveys, threaded discussions, and consultation calls to make the learning as experiential as possible. All participants present actual cases during their small-group consultation calls as part of learning how to incorporate different evidence-based modalities into their chaplain care – in particular, Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT), Problem-Solving Training (PST), and Motivational Interviewing (MI).

MHICS presenters include top experts from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and academic settings. Presenters represent such programs as the National Center for PTSD, the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, national VA and DoD suicide prevention offices, and many others. Some of the presenters include: Steve Hayes, Jonathan Shay, Keith Meador, Richard Tedeschi, Kent Drescher, Ken Pargament, George Fitchett, Rajeev Ramchand, Shelly Rambo, George Handzo, Robyn Walser, Kelly Wilson, Patricia Resick, John Fairbank, John Williams Jr., William Nash, Arthur Nezu, Christine Nezu, Jason Nieuwsma, Bill Cantrell, Roy Stein, Keith Ethridge, Mark Bates, Elizabeth Stanley, Warren Kinghorn, Jeff Levin, Ellen Idler, John Forbes, John Ralph, John Yeaw, Lowell Kronick, Shelia O'Mara, Jeff Rhodes, Jeni Cook, Onna Van Orden, Nathan Galbreath, and Melissa Foynes.

An overview of the three MHICS courses is provided below. Although substantial changes are not anticipated, course material remains subject to revision. Please e-mail any questions or comments to the Mental Health and Chaplaincy program at: [MH-C@va.gov](mailto:MH-C@va.gov).

**Course #1**  
**Innovations in Care: Mental Health and Chaplaincy**  
**May 1 – July 14, 2017**

This first course involves a face-to-face kickoff that introduces chaplains to the MHICS program, followed by five modules that examine historical and contemporary possibilities for integrating spiritual and psychotherapeutic approaches to care, lay the groundwork for integrating these approaches, and introduce three evidence-based modalities that can synergize with spiritual care: Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT); Motivational Interviewing (MI); and Problem-Solving Training (PST).

- ❖ **Face-to-face training intensive (2.5 days): May 3-5, 2017**
  - ❖ *Day 1: Developing the framework*
  - ❖ *Day 2: Integrating chaplaincy and mental health care*
  - ❖ *Day 3: Emerging possibilities for pastoral and psychological care (half day)*
  
- ❖ **Module 1: Pastoral care and approaches to psychotherapy (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 1.1: History of psychotherapy & pastoral care*
  - ❖ *Unit 1.2: Defining "evidence-based" in psychotherapy*
  - ❖ *Unit 1.3: Overview of contemporary psychotherapies*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 2: Spiritual care and innovations (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 2.1: Spiritual practices and contemporary psychotherapy*
  - ❖ *Unit 2.2: Mindfulness*
  - ❖ *Unit 2.3: Possibilities for spiritual care in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 3: Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT; 2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 3.1: Introduction to ACT: The perils of language*
  - ❖ *Unit 3.2: The practice of ACT: Facilitating the process of change*
  - ❖ *Unit 3.3: Applications of ACT within chaplaincy*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 4: Motivational Interviewing Training (MI; 2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 4.1: Motivational Interviewing: An introduction*
  - ❖ *Unit 4.2: Motivational Interviewing: Fundamental skills*
  - ❖ *Unit 4.3: Motivational Interviewing: Considerations and techniques*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 5: Problem-Solving Training (PST; 2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 5.1: Problem Solving Training: An introduction*
  - ❖ *Unit 5.2: Problem Solving Training: Treatment components and tools*
  - ❖ *Unit 5.3: Problem Solving Training: Applications for chaplaincy*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*

\*Course content is subject to change.\*

## **Course #2**

### **Signs and Symptoms in Mental Health and Chaplaincy**

#### **September 5 – November 17, 2017**

The second MHICS course provides five modules of intensive training on mental health problems that are prevalent and/or are of particular importance within Veteran and Service member populations. Chaplains will be provided with a broad overview of approaches to and contexts for mental health care. Following this, the course will present information on the etiology and treatment of mood disorders, substance abuse, serious mental illness, suicide, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and moral injury. Consultation calls in this course focus on the application of ACT in chaplaincy care.

- ❖ **Face-to-face training intensive (2.5 days): September 6-8, 2017**
  - ❖ *Day 1: Applied ACT/PST/MI training*
  - ❖ *Day 2: Applied ACT/PST/MI training*
  - ❖ *Day 3: Applied ACT/PST/MI training (half day)*
  
- ❖ **Module 1: Mental health essentials (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 1.1: Mental health providers & settings*
  - ❖ *Unit 1.2: Mental health diagnoses*
  - ❖ *Unit 1.3: Pharmacotherapy*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 2: Mood disorders, substance abuse, and serious mental illness (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 2.1: Depression & mood disorders*
  - ❖ *Unit 2.2: Substance use disorders*
  - ❖ *Unit 2.3: Serious Mental Illness (SMI)*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 3: Suicide (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 3.1: Suicide in military and Veteran populations*
  - ❖ *Unit 3.2: Suicide prevention*
  - ❖ *Unit 3.3: Religion, spirituality, and suicide*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 4: Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD); 2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 4.1: Overview & evolution of PTSD*
  - ❖ *Unit 4.2: Evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD*
  - ❖ *Unit 4.3: Military Sexual Trauma (MST)*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 5: Moral injury (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 5.1: Moral Injury Part I*
  - ❖ *Unit 5.2: Moral Injury Part II*
  - ❖ *Unit 5.3: Providing care for moral injury*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*

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## **Course #3**

### **Contemporary Conversations in Mental Health and Chaplaincy**

**January 8 – March 23, 2018**

The third MHICS course contains modules that focus on current topics of relevance at the intersection of chaplaincy, spirituality, and mental health care. The course overviews linkages between spirituality and mental health, covers standards of practice within chaplaincy, examines the complexities and necessity of care for the care provider and command, and looks at areas of current pastoral concerns in the care of Veterans and Service members. Finally, the course concludes by considering the topics of spirituality, suffering, and resilience. Consultation calls in this course focus on the application of PST and MI in chaplaincy care.

- ❖ **Module 1: Spirituality and linkages to mental health (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *PST & MI training refresher*
  - ❖ *Unit 1.1: Examining the relationship between spirituality & health: Promises & pitfalls*
  - ❖ *Unit 1.2: Research growth and trends in spirituality and health*
  - ❖ *Unit 1.3: Spiritual care in a time of therapeutic technique*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 2: Chaplaincy standards of practice (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 2.1: Toward a research-informed chaplaincy*
  - ❖ *Unit 2.2: Spiritual assessment*
  - ❖ *Unit 3.3: Documentation of chaplaincy care*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 3: Care for the care provider (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 3.1: Stress response and self-care*
  - ❖ *Unit 3.2: Care for the care providers and command*
  - ❖ *Unit 3.3: ACT for the care provider*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 4: Current pastoral concerns (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 4.1: Post-deployment adjustment and spirituality among recent Veterans*
  - ❖ *Unit 4.2: Marriage and family issues for Veterans and Service members*
  - ❖ *Unit 4.3: Advanced topics in selected populations*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Module 5: Spirituality, suffering, and resilience (2 weeks)**
  - ❖ *Unit 5.1: A theological rethinking of trauma*
  - ❖ *Unit 5.2: Resilience*
  - ❖ *Unit 5.3: Human flourishing*
  - ❖ *Consultation call*
  
- ❖ **Face-to-face training intensive (2.5 days): March 21-23, 2018**
  - ❖ *Day 1: MHICS application*
  - ❖ *Day 2: Sustainability*
  - ❖ *Day 3: Course evaluation and graduation (half day)*

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