PREVENTING SUICIDE IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY: RESEARCH CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5 September 2012
European Symposium of Suicide & Suicidal Behavior

Peter M. Gutierrez, Ph.D., VISN 19 MIRECC, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Thomas Joiner, Ph.D., Florida State University, COL Carl Castro, Ph.D., United States Army

Disclaimer: This work was in part supported by the Department of Defense (Award Numbers: W81XWH-10-2-0178; W81XWH-10-2-0181) and the VISN 19 Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC), but does not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, or the United States Government.
Suicide Continuum of Care Determines Research Approach

**Research Needs**
Translation and Implementation, Dissemination
Continuing Education and Reinforcement for Soldiers, Leaders and Service Providers

**Basic Science / Neurobiological Mechanisms**
- 3 studies, $52.1M
- 1 study, $3M

**Epidemiology / Army STARRS**
- 1 study, $1.1M
- 1 study

**Screening / Intervention**
- Validation of Screening Measures
  - Pre-/Post-Deployment
  - Unit-Level Screening

**Assessment**
- Clinical Practice Guidelines
  - Effective Medications
  - Cognitive & Behavioral Interventions

**Treatment**
- Recovery Protocols
  - Evidenced-based System of Care Models
  - RTD Standards

**Recovery and Return to Duty**
- Postvention Care for Service Members and Families
  - Rescreening
  - Unit Support

**Solutions / Capabilities**
- Total Active: 24 studies, $110M

* Funded by Military Suicide Research Consortium ($17M)
MSRC Mission

- 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 Common Data Elements

- Collected from 11 validated and reliable measures
- 57 items across key suicide-related domains
  - Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors
  - Suicidal Intent
  - Insomnia
  - Anxiety
  - Alcohol Use
  - Depression
  - Hopelessness
  - Interpersonal Needs
  - PTSD
  - Traumatic Brain Injury
- Approximately 3,323 active duty, Veteran, and civilian participants
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle Investigator</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigel Bush, Ph.D.</td>
<td><em>Usability and Utility of a Virtual Hope Box (VHB) for Reducing Suicidal Ideation</em></td>
<td>National Center for Telehealth &amp; Technology University of Washington</td>
<td>Phase 1: Usability Testing Active Duty Joint Base Lewis McChord Phase 2: Pilot Veterans VAMC Portland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine Comtois, Ph.D., MPH</td>
<td><em>Military Continuity Project</em></td>
<td>University of Washington, Department of Psychiatry</td>
<td>Active Duty Fort Bragg Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Air Station New River Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

### SCREENING AND RISK ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle Investigator</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter M. Gutierrez, Ph.D. Thomas Joiner, Ph.D.</td>
<td><strong>Toward a Gold Standard Suicide Assessment</strong></td>
<td>VISN 19 MIRECC Florida State University</td>
<td>Active Duty Fort Campbell Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Joint Base Andrews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Johnson, Ph.D. David Jobes, Ph.D.</td>
<td><strong>Suicide Risk Assessments within Suicide-Specific Group Therapy Treatment for Veterans: A Pilot Study</strong></td>
<td>Robley Rex VAMC</td>
<td>Veterans Robley Rex VAMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Allen, MD Theresa Hernandez, Ph.D.</td>
<td><strong>The Psychophysiology of Suicidal States: Temperamental and Physiologic Suicide Risk Assessment Measures and Their Relation to Self-Reported Ideation and Subsequent Behavior</strong></td>
<td>VISN 19 MIRECC</td>
<td>Veterans Denver VAMC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle Investigator</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Bernert, Ph.D.</td>
<td><em>A Behavioral Sleep Intervention for Suicidal Behaviors in Military Veterans: A Randomized Controlled Study</em></td>
<td>Stanford University, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>Veterans VA Palo Alto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Bryan, Psy.D., ABPP</td>
<td><em>Brief Intervention for Short-Term Suicide Risk Reduction in Military Populations</em></td>
<td>University of Utah National Center for Veterans Studies</td>
<td>Active Duty Fort Carson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Brad Schmidt, Ph.D.</td>
<td><em>Development and Evaluation of a Brief, Suicide Prevention Intervention Reducing Anxiety Sensitivity</em></td>
<td>Florida State University</td>
<td>Veterans Tallahassee, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Brenner, Ph.D., ABPP</td>
<td><em>Window to Hope: Evaluating a Psychological Treatment for Hopelessness among Veterans with TBI</em></td>
<td>VISN 19 MIRECC</td>
<td>Veterans Denver VAMC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**MSRC FUNDED RESEARCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle Investigator</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julie Cerel, Ph.D.</td>
<td><em>Suicide Bereavement in Military and their Families</em></td>
<td>University of Kentucky</td>
<td>Phases 1, 2, &amp; 3: Veterans Lexington VAMC Phase 4: Adult children, parents, and spouse survivors to active duty or Veteran suicide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MSRC

To learn more about the Military Suicide Research Consortium and research opportunities please visit www.msrc.fsu.edu

Thank you

Peter M. Gutierrez, Ph.D.
Peter.Gutierrez@va.gov
1-303-329-4408 ext. 301