



VA Social Skills Training (VA SST) for Serious Mental Illness

Regional Master Trainer Program

The VA SST program is training Regional Master Trainers (RMTs) across all Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). In turn, these Regional Master Trainers will serve as expert SST trainers and consultants for their particular VISN. They will serve as VISN experts in SST, providing training, consultation, and serving as a liaison among clinicians within their VISNs and VA SST staff.

Potential RMTs should be licensed mental health clinicians who excel in SST delivery, champion SST's overall cause, and most importantly have ample time, energy, and support to serve in this role.

While the VA SST program has laid out some concrete expectations, some were purposely left flexible. The end goal is to ensure that trainees learn how to demonstrate fidelity to the SST model.

Expectations for RMTs:

- Complete Social Skills Training TMS Webcourse (if have not previously done so) and submit Certificate of Completion to VA SST Program Coordinator, Rebecca Pasillas, Ph.D. at RebeccaMelissa.Pasillas@va.gov
- Participate in 2-day Train the Trainer face-to-face workshop led by VA SST staff. Travel to the Train the Trainer training is paid for by OMHSP. For 6 months after the Train the Trainer workshop, trainers attend a weekly consultation call of a national trainer to learn more about the consultation process.
- Within 12 months of attending the Train the Trainer workshop, new RMTs perform a 1-day SST experiential training and 6 months of consultation for VISN staff. Preferably, staff will be from a PRRC or RRTP setting.
- Once trained, newly trained RMTs are to announce themselves as SST VISN Regional Master Trainers to VISN Leadership, Local Facility Leadership, and the VISN's Local Evidence Based Psychotherapy Coordinators. Regional trainers are expected to provide a minimum of one VISN-wide face-to-face 1-day experiential training per year, and may provide more than one training per year, as appropriate, to meet the needs of the VISN.
- SST RMTs should be considered an asset to the VISN, as the ability to offer Regional trainings allows the VISN to dictate the frequency of training based on local needs, allows a greater number of local mental health providers (e.g., psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, nurses, etc.) to gain competence in SST, and increases Veteran access to SST treatment.

- For each face-to-face 1-day experiential training conducted, the Trainer will also spend approximately 1-2 hours per week engaged in planning/administrative activities for the 90 days prior to the training. RMTs are expected to work with MH leadership, EBP coordinators, training program coordinators, EES, VA SST Program staff and other regional SST trainers in the VISN to assess training needs, advocate, plan, and execute workshops
- Following the yearly 1-day SST Experiential Training, SST RMTs then conduct consultation with four or more of the training participants for 6 months. For each consultation group consisting of 4 participants, the Regional Master Trainer is to commit 5 hours/week for the duration of the 6-month consultation period. Regional Master Trainers are expected to conduct the following activities during these 5 hours/week:
 - Review and rate rating audio recordings of training participants' individual and group SST sessions.
 - Provide feedback on SST sessions and other important data in the SST online EBP portal
 - Lead a one-hour weekly group consultation meeting with training participants. These are generally conducted via videoconference or telephone. These meetings may be conducted in person if the training participants are local to the SST Regional Master Trainer.
 - Complete trainee reports and other documentation requested by VA SST Program
 - Participate in all administrative SST program requirements including program evaluation, data tracking, audiotape destruction procedures, and EES and VA SST Program collaboration and communication.
- In addition to conducting Regional trainings and consultation, RMTs attend a one-hour videoconference with the SST training team each month. RMTs are expected to attend these calls at least 75% of the time each fiscal year. If not attending a particular call, the expectation is that the Regional Master Trainer will review the call agenda and related materials to be sure to keep updated regarding VA SST training program developments
- Please note that local facilities are responsible for providing funding for travel to Regional trainings. For Regional trainings, VISNs may decide whether they would rather have the Regional Master Trainer travel to the local area for training, or for training participants to travel to a training site within the VISN.
- Ultimately, it will be up to the Regional Master Trainer plus VISN and local leadership to determine realistic long-term expectations (i.e. scope of future trainings) and therefore any future time commitments are to be determined.

**If you are interested in the Regional Master Trainer program, please contact
Rebecca M. Pasillas, VA SST Program Coordinator, at
RebeccaMelissa.Pasillas@va.gov**

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