



VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health



Editors: Katherine H. Taber, PhD
Robin A. Hurley, MD

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MIRECC Leadership

MIRECC Director

Gregory McCarthy, PhD
gregory.mccarthy@duke.edu

Co-Director - Education

Robin A. Hurley, MD
robin.hurley@med.va.gov

Assistant Co-Director - Education

Katherine H. Taber, PhD
katherine.taber@med.va.gov

Co-Director - Clinical

Harold Kudler, MD
Harold.Kudler@med.va.gov

Assistant Co-Director - Clinical

Kristy Straits-Troster, PhD
Kristy.Straits-Troster2@med.va.gov

Co-Director - Evaluation

Marian Butterfield, MD, MPH
mimi@duke.edu

Associate Director - Evaluation

Director, Special Fellowship in Advanced Psychiatry

Richard Weiner, MD, PhD
Richard.Weiner@med.va.gov

Director, Special Fellowship in Advanced Psychology

Patrick Calhoun, PhD
Patrick.Calhoun2@med.va.gov

Associate Director - Genetics

Jean C. Beckham, PhD
Jean.Beckham@med.va.gov

Associate Director - Interventions

Christine Marx, MD
marx0001@mc.duke.edu

Associate Director - Neuroscience

Scott D. Moore, MD, PhD
Scott.Moore2@med.va.gov

Associate Director - Neuroimaging

Rajendra A. Morey, MD
morey@biac.duke.edu

Associate Director - Neurocognitive

Larry A. Tupler, PhD
ltupler@duke.edu

VISN 6 Leadership

VISN 6 Director

Daniel F. Hoffmann, FACHE

Director - Mental Health Service Line

Stephen L. Lemons, EdD

To Participate in Studies at Our Approved Research Sites Contact:

Durham VA

Robbie Biddix
mireccstudies@va.gov
919-286-0411 ext 6430

Hampton VA

Carla Williams
carla.williams2@va.gov
757-722-9961 ext 2999

Salisbury VA

Mary Ellena
mary.ellena2@va.gov
704-638-9000 ext 2956

New Clinical Initiatives

The Clinical component has some new and exciting projects underway.

DoD/VA Family Transition Program

This new project is designed to import best practices from military treatment facilities related to medical family assistance into VA medical centers. It is being funded by a grant from the DAV Charitable Trust.

There are both joys and challenges when a veteran comes home from a combat zone. An injured veteran may be deeply concerned about many issues. They may worry about being disfigured, about their ability to perform tasks that once were easy, about whether they can fit back into the family. Family members also have concerns that are central to the readjustment process. Strong family support is a very important factor in the post deployment health of the veteran. Thus it is vital to help the family with any readjustment challenges. Military hospitals do a great deal to meet family needs. Help and support is provided starting with their arrival at the Medical Center and continues throughout their stay. Support includes teaching and sharing of coping skills to create communities of care to help families succeed.

In the VA, our Seamless Transition programs have been effective in meeting the direct medical needs of new combat veterans. Our success in meeting the needs of their families is more limited and challenging. The Family Transition Program is aimed at bolstering the family support aspect of seamless transition in order to assure that family issues are addressed with the same consistency as are other aspects of continuous care. The idea for it grew out of conversations between Dr. Harold Kudler (CoDirector of the Clinical component), Dr. Michael Wagner (Walter Reed Army Hospital, Family Assistance Program) and COL William O'Brien (Navy Pentagon, Injured Marines and Sailors Initiative).

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Upcoming Events

Methods For Fostering Combat Veterans' Engagement In Mental Health Treatment

March 14 & 15, 2006

W.G. 'Bill' Hefner VAMC, Salisbury NC

Registration deadline: February 15, 2006

This face-to-face conference is designed to provide participants with an update on how to motivate veterans to seek treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD). Also, it will teach participants techniques of effective treatment using the Motivational Enhancement Interviewing model, which will enhance the quality of their work. Participants will return to their work site and use the information presented to improve the outcomes of care to the veteran with PTSD. The target audience includes Physicians, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, and Social Workers. Up to 12 hours of CME is available

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DoD/VA Family Transition Program

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The multidisciplinary planning committee for the Family Transition Program met February 6th to create the program for a regional conference. This conference will bring together staff teams from 4 or 5 VA medical centers in the Washington, D.C. vicinity. They will meet with staff from Walter Reed and Bethesda to learn how family assistance works at military treatment facilities. In addition, they will explore new ways to incorporate veterans' families in treatment planning and care coordination post-deployment.

National Guard Liaison to Facilitate Coordination of Care

As of December 2005 144,193 National Guard and Reserve personnel had been mobilized. This approaches the 188,000 National Guard troops mobilized during the Korean War. These soldiers play an essential role in our national security. They make up 44% of all Army Combat Divisions and 50% of Army Infantry Battalions. The MIRECC is developing liaisons with North Carolina National Guard leadership to improve coordination of care for returning veterans and their families. The North Carolina State Joint Forces Headquarters is located near the Durham MIRECC offices in Raleigh, NC. There are nearly 100 Armories located throughout the state. The Clinical and Education components of the MIRECC have partnered to develop regionally tailored materials for veterans and their families dealing with readjustment issues. This project will eventually extend to VISN 6 sites working with National Guard in Virginia and West Virginia.

Community Outreach

Harold Kudler MD (Durham VAMC) was interviewed on December 12, 2005 by National Public Radio reporter Rusty Jacobs for a Morning Edition segment entitled "*The Span of War: Marines Refit Barracks to House the Wounded*". The focus was on the efforts at Camp Lejuene, North Carolina, to assist wounded Marines returning from Iraq by setting up a barracks fitted with ramps and grab bars, giving the injured a chance to stay in the flow of military life as they recuperate.

Dr. Kudler was interviewed in December by Gregg Zoroya, a military correspondent for USA Today. Topics included understanding the needs of these new veterans and the VA's efforts to provide psychological treatment and support as needed, including the new VISN 6 MIRECC focused on post deployment mental health.

Publications

Taber KH, Hurley RA, Black KJ. Imaging of Cerebral Blood Flow Imaging of the Brain: 50 Years Experience. *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* 2005; 17(4):441-446.

New Projects

Drs. Robin Hurley and Katherine Taber (CoDirector and Assistant CoDirector of the Education component) have started collaborative discussions with the National Chaplain Center. They are exploring ways for the two Centers to work together to better serve our veterans. It is planned that speakers from the MIRECC present during the National Chaplain Center's Grand Rounds to enhance chaplain education related to post deployment mental health issues. In return, speakers from the Chaplain service will give a "Best Practices" presentation on an innovative outreach program at the Tampa VA.

Outreach - All Are Welcome!

Bringing Our Soldiers All The Way Home: How To Help Combat Veterans Accept Mental Health Services

Monday March 13, 2006 at 1:00 pm
Salisbury VA Medical Center
Social Room, Building 6

Dr. Ron Murphy will address the issues involved in engaging veterans with post-deployment stress into mental health treatment. He will describe various types of post-deployment adjustment problems, including PTSD, experienced by veterans of all wars. He will discuss barriers to mental health treatment engagement, including veterans' own roadblocks to help-seeking as well as healthcare providers' missteps, which prevent returnees with warzone-related stress from accepting the help they need. Finally, Dr. Murphy will review therapeutic techniques derived from clinical experience and research that will help foster veterans' engagement in treatment.

For more information: [Mary Ellena](mailto:MaryEllena@va.gov)
MIRECC Program Support Assistant
mary.ellena2@va.gov

Invited Lectures

Drs. Harold Kudler and Kristy Straits-Troster presented "*Joint VA-DoD Strategies in the Service of New Combat Veterans*", as part of a workshop coordinated by the Citizen Soldier Support Program. The workshop "*Building Community Support for Our Citizen Soldiers and Their Families: Focus on Mental Health Issues*", provided information from DoD, VA, and community providers as part of the North Carolina Council of Community Programs Conference November 30-December 2, Pinehurst, NC.

Drs. Robin A. Hurley and Katherine H. Taber presented at two pre-meeting workshops held in conjunction with the American Neuropsychiatric Association Annual Meeting, February 18-19, La Jolla, CA. They presented "*Functional Anatomy and Imaging of the Cerebellum*" as part of the workshop "*The Cerebellum: Moving Beyond the Motor System*" and "*Amnesia: Fact and Fiction*" as part of the workshop "*The Core Elements of Classic Behavioral Neurology*".

Methods For Fostering Combat Veterans' Engagement in Mental Health Treatment (continued from page 1)

to participants. The workshop is funded by a MIRECC Clinical Education grant, so it is free of charge. Upon completion of this conference, participants will be able to:

- ★ List two barriers to engaging veterans in PTSD treatment that are due to the veteran behavioral and/or personality characteristics.
- ★ Identify two barriers to engaging veterans in PTSD treatment that are due to the therapist not understanding key elements in the therapeutic relationship.
- ★ Discuss key factors in two theories of motivation enhancement, the "Stages of Change" model and the "Motivational Enhancement Interviewing" model.
- ★ Describe three ways resistance can be manifested in PTSD treatment.
- ★ Discuss how resistances to PTSD treatment can be overcome in a therapeutic manner.
- ★ Identify the rationale for the Motivation Enhancement group.
- ★ Describe how to establish a Motivation Enhancement group in a clinical setting by using the protocol.
- ★ Demonstrate appropriate clinical responses for common problems encountered in running Motivation Enhancement groups.
- ★ Discuss how race, gender, and class affect clinical considerations in Motivation Enhancement groups.

For more information: [Mary Ellena](mailto:mary.ellena2@va.gov)
MIRECC Program Support Assistant
mary.ellena2@va.gov

Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

March 3

Dr. Benjamin T Griffeth (Salem VA)
Armed Forces Prevention of Traumatic Stress

April 7

Martha Chick, LCSW (Hampton VA)
Designing Patient Education Materials for Post-Deployment Mental Health

May 5

Dr. James R Wickham (Salem VA)
Anxiety Disorder and PTSD

June 2

Dr. Ryan Dehaas (Salisbury VA)
Substance Abuse and Anxiety

This series is presented by V-tel and telephone conferences. Web-casting will become available in the near future. If any of you have suggestions or ideas for lectures or for the series process, please feel free to contact Dr. Robin Hurley or Dr. Katherine Taber with your feedback.

Below are the [V-tel phone numbers](#) to dial to participate in the series for the calendar year 2006. Dial in at starts at 11:45 am Eastern Time.

VISN 6 Office	304 262-3950	Hampton 5th Floor	304 262-3930
Asheville	304 262-3952	Richmond	304 262-3951
Beckley	304 260-4839	Salem	304 262-3942
Durham	304 262-3924	Salisbury	304 262-3948
Fayetteville	304 262-3928	CBOC Jacksonville	304-260-4809

There are ten audio lines scheduled. For [audio lines only](#) call: 800-767-1750 and inform the operator that you are calling in for the "V6 PD Mental Health Problems"