

BRIEFINGS

The latest news and updates from the Mid-Atlantic MIRECC



Directors Update



The attack on Ukraine has impacted many of our Nation's Veterans, including those who served in combat and experienced war-related stress and trauma in Iraq and Afghanistan. Providers throughout VA are working to support our Veterans and their families who are experiencing distress in this time of uncertainty. In the Mid-Atlantic MIRECC we are honored to support our Veterans' mental health and resilience through research spanning the range of translational science.

Our basic research includes studies of animal models of traumatic brain injury and mental illness, as well as genetics and genomics research. We are conducting clinical trials of treatments for several mental health problems that affect Veterans, and we are evaluating the implementation of local, regional and national programs for Veterans.

Current projects include:

- Research and training on moral injury care and a new moral injury consultation program;
- Development of novel therapeutic interventions for chronic pain and commonly co-occurring mental health problems;
- Innovative application of new extended reality (XR) immersive technologies to train the next generation of VA providers and address Veterans' mental health needs.

The Mid-Atlantic MIRECC exists to understand and address the mental health needs of Iraq- and Afghanistan-era Veterans and their families. We work to inform VA's efforts to equip Veterans with the knowledge and skills to support optimal psychosocial functioning and wellbeing throughout their lives, especially in times such as these.

John A. Fairbank, PhD.

Director, Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC

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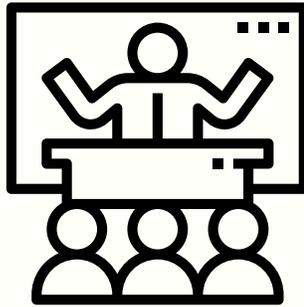
VISN LEADERSHIP
STEPHANIE YOUNG
ACTING DIRECTOR, VISN 6

FOCUS ON THE VISN



PHOTO BY MARTIN R. SMITH
 People in the picture (left-to-right) are Jared Rowland, PhD; Sarah Martindale, PhD; Cameron Crawford, MS; and Keysha Rule, MA

IN THE NEWS



Martindale S. Rowland J. (February 8, 2022). Teasing out the effects of blasts on mental health. Researchers probe blast effects independent of those tied to brain injuries, PTSD. Interview with Mike Richman, VA Research Communications. [Learn more](#)



Dr. James Bjork was awarded an Interprofessional Polytrauma and Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation Research Fellowship to support Dr. David Garavito, JD, PhD who graduated from Cornell an expert on decision-making in health. Dr. Garavito started in October and is studying decision-making abnormalities in TBI and substance abuse. Dr. Bjork is affiliated with the Richmond VAMC.

Dr. Seamus M. Bhatt-Mackin received a Fellowship by the American Group Psychotherapy Society. Dr. Bhatt-Mackin is affiliated with the Durham VAMC and Duke University Medical Center.



WEBINARS

Prazosin for posttraumatic headache randomized controlled trial in Veterans and active-duty service members. Webinar available on TMS. (March 16, 2022).

EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION

Invited Lectures & Presentations



- Bhatt-Mackin, S.** (December, 2021). From replication through grief to adaptation: shifting group therapy to the online format during this pandemic. Presented to the Carolinas Group Psychotherapy Society. (Virtual)
- López-Ojeda W.** (January 27, 2022). Blood supply and circulatory system of the CNS. WFSM, MI-Neuroscience Module, Winston-Salem Campus.
- López-Ojeda W.** (February 1, 2022). Neuroscience concepts of hearing and balance. WFSM, MI-Neuroscience Module, Winston-Salem Campus.

- López-Ojeda W.** (February 10, 2022). Extended reality in neurosciences: Insights on clinical care, medical education, and training. MIRECC's Educations Director's meeting. (Virtual)
- Martindale S., Rowland J.** (March 22, 2022). Mild TBI Diagnosis and Management Strategies for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, blast TBI, and Changes to brain Functional Connectome. [Learn more](#)
- Nieuwsma, J.A.** (January 27, 2022). Moral injury: From combat to COVID-19. Invited keynote delivered for Bowls Chapel Lecture Series, Memorial Hermann Health System, Houston, TX (virtual)

Conference Participation/Research Presentations

- Jackson, G, Smigelsky M., Meador K., Anderson S., Trimm V., Vega R.J., Henderson B., Nieuwsma J.** (December, 2021). Refining implementation of complex clinical practices addressing VA clinical priorities: A Dynamic Diffusion Network to address moral injury and suicide. Academy Health/NIH 14th Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation. Washington, DC (virtual due to pandemic).
- Martindale S., Rowland J.** (March 22, 2022). Long-term impact of military-relevant brain injury Consortium (LIMBIC). Prospective Longitudinal Study. Salisbury PLS Enrollment Site completed the baseline assessment visit for the 2000th participant within the Prospective Longitudinal Study – Long-Term Impact of Military-Relevant Brain Injury Consortium Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (limbic-cenc.org)
- Miskey, Holly M., Cysique Lucette** (February 2-4, 2022). Drs. Miskey and Cysique successfully planned and co-chaired the 50th Annual Meeting of the International Neuropsychological Society (INS), The theme of the meeting was "Cultivating a New Ethos."

Poster Presentations

- López-Ojeda W., Hurley R.** (March 17, 2022). Cranial nerve zero (CN 0): A silent influence of fear, anxiety, mood, and reproduction. [ANPA 32nd Annual Meeting.](#) (Virtual).





Publications

Scientific Articles:

Bjork J. (in press). Suicidal ideation and clinical-related suicide risk in Veterans referred for ADHD evaluation at a VA Medical Center. Psychological Services.

Bottomley J., Smigelsky M. (in press). Bereavement in the aftermath of suicide, overdose, and sudden-natural death: Evaluating a new measure of needs. Assessment.

Bouchard E., Delin Sun, Emily L. Dennis, Mary R. Newsome, Seth G. Disner, Jeremy Elman, Annelise Silva, Carmen Velez, Andrei Irimia, Nicholas D. Davenport, Scott R. Sponheim, Carol E. Franz, William S. Kremen, Michael J. Coleman, M. Wright Williams, Elbert Geuze, Inga K. Koerte, Martha E. Shenton, Maheen M. Adamson, Raul Coimbra, Gerald Grant, Lori Shutter, Mark S. George, Ross D. Zafonte, Thomas W. McAllister, Murray B. Stein, Paul M. Thompson, Elisabeth A. Wilde, David F. Tate, Aristeidis Sotiras, Rajendra A. Morey. (in press). Age-dependent white Matter disruptions after military traumatic brain injury: Multivariate analysis results from ENIGMA brain injury. Human Brain Mapping.

López-Ojeda W., Hurley R. Cranial nerve zero (CN0): Multiple names and often discounted, yet clinically significant. (in press). Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences.

Martindale S., Anna S. Ord, Lakeysha G. Rule, Jared A. Rowland. (2021). Effects of blast exposure on psychiatric and health symptoms in combat Veterans. Journal of Psychiatric Research. 143(11) 189-194. Epub. [Learn more](#)

Monsour E., Wil Lieberman-Cribbin, Christopher Timmins, Emanuela Taioli, Rebecca M. Schwartz, Samantha Schneider, Anna Laucis, Rajendra A. Morey. (2022). The impact of climate change on the prevalence of mental illness symptoms. Journal of Affective Disorders. Volume 300, 430-440. [Learn more](#)

Nieuwsma, J., O'Brien E., Xu H., Smigelsky M., VISN 6 MIRECC Workgroup, HERO Research Program, & Meador, K. (in press). Patterns of potential moral injury in post-9/11 combat Veterans and COVID-19 healthcare workers. Journal of General Internal Medicine.

Nieuwsma J., Smigelsky M, Grosseohme D., Meador, K. (in press). Moral injury care: Practices and collaboration [Special issue]. Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy.

Shura R., Richard K., Martindale S., Brearly T., Taber K., Canu W. (2022). Internalizing and externalizing comorbidity and symptom burden in a VA ADHD specialty evaluation clinic. Psychiatry Research, 309. [Learn more](#)

Sun D., Gopalkumar Rakesh, Emily Clarke-Rubright, Mark Logue, John Wall, Emily Dennis, Erin N. O'Leary, Chadi Abdallah, Elpiniki Andrew, Lee Baugh, Jessica Bomyea, Steven Bruce, Richard Bryant, Kyle Choi, Judith Daniels, Nicholas Davenport, Richard Davidson, Michael DeBellis, Terri deRoos-Cassini, Seth Disner, Negar Fani, Kelene Fercho, Jacklynn Fitzgerald, Gina Forster, Jessie Frijling, Elbert Geuze, Hassaan Gomaa, Evan Gordon, Daniel Grupe, Ilan Harpaz-Rotem, Courtney Haswell, Julia Herzog, Davia Hofmann, Bobak Hosseini, Anna Hudson, Jonathan Ipser, Neda Jahanshad, Tanja Jovanovic, Milissa Kaufman, Anthony King, Saskia Koch, Inga Koerte, Mayuresh Korgaonkar, John Krystal, Christine Larson, Lauren Lebois, Ifat Levy, Gen Li, Vincent Magnotta, Antje Manthey, Geoffrey May, Katie McLaughlin, Sven Mueller, Laura Nawijn, Steven Nelson, Yuval Neria, Jack Nitschke, Miranda Olf, Elizabeth Olson, Matthew Peverill, K. Luan Phan, Faisal Rashid, Kerry Ressler, Isabelle Rosso, Kelly Sambrook, Christian Schmahl, Martha Shenton, Anika Sierk, Jeffrey Simons, Raluca Simons, Scott Sponheim, Murray Stein, Dan Stein, Jennifer Stevens, Thomas Straube, Benjamin Suarez-Jimenez, Marijo Tamburrino, Sophia Thomopoulos, Nic van der Wee, Xin Wang, Hong Xie, Tian Chen, Andrew Cotton, Lauren Salminen, Steven van der Werff, Theo van Erp, Sanne van Rooij, Mirjam van Zuiden, Tim Varkevisser, Dick Veltman, Robert Vermeiren, Henrik Walter, Li Wang, Ye Zhu, Xi Zhu, Paul Thompson, Rajendra A Morey. (in press). Remodeling of the cortical structural connectome in posttraumatic stress disorder: Results from the ENIGMA-PGC PTSD Consortium. Biological Psychiatry CNI.

Waller L., Susanne Erk, Elena Pozzi, Yara J. Toenders, Courtney C. Haswell, Mark Büttner, Paul M. Thompson, Lianne Schmaal, Rajendra A. Morey, Henrik Walter, Ilya M. Veer. (in press). ENIGMA HALPipe: Interactive, reproducible, and efficient analysis for resting-state and task-based fMRI data. Human Brain Mapping.



RESOURCES FOR VETERANS & FAMILIES

Visit [Self-help resources](#) to obtain education and support information for Veterans, friends and family members who may be facing mental health challenges. VA specialists have assembled a short list of reviewer's recommended materials that may be helpful in finding the most appropriate information for you. We have a new education pamphlet on Moral Injury (MI), click [here](#).

Please click on each resource topic for more information.

- [General Mental Health](#)
- [Depression & Anxiety](#)
- [PTSD](#)
- [Substance Use Disorder \(SUD\)](#)

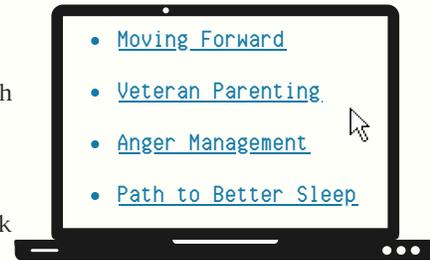


For additional help, click "[How to Use](#)."



There are several free and anonymous on-line education and life coaching programs that use interactive exercises and video

demonstrations to teach skills for overcoming life challenges. For more information, click [here](#).



DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

The DMVA Resource Guide is produced and published by the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assist and educate Veterans in learning about state and federal veteran benefits.

The 2020/2021 editions is now available. View or Download by clicking [here](#).



PROVIDER EDUCATION

UPCOMING WEBINARS FOR NATIONAL CBOC MENTAL HEALTH GRAND ROUNDS

Depression and Pain: Implications for Concurrent Treatment of Symptoms in Veterans

Presented by: **Dr. Joshua Hamer, PhD**

Dates: Wednesday, April 13, 2022, 8:00 - 9:00 am CT and Thursday, April 14, 2022, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm CT (repeat)

Click [here](#) to register

Check the website for previous webinars in this series available for credit in TMS.

For direct links to upcoming webinars, click [here](#).



VA HSR&D Cyberseminars

MIRECC PRESENTS WEBINAR:

Addressing Mental Health Needs of Aging Veterans in Rural Communities

Presented by: **Dr. Bret Hicken, PhD, MSPH**

Date: Wednesday, April 20th, 2022 at 12 p.m. PST (3 p.m. EST)

Register through [VA EES TMS](#) then attend LIVE at

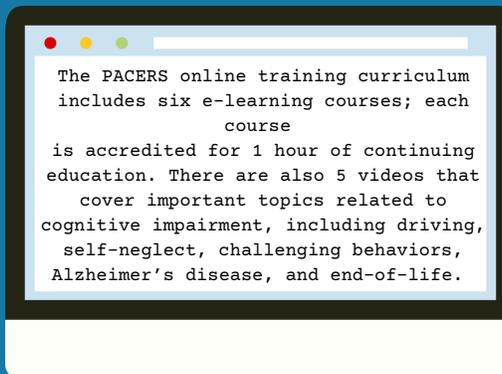
<http://va-eeec-ees.adobeconnect.com/mireccpresents/>

Access the MIRECC Presents webinar series calendar for upcoming events online at

<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/vsn20/Education/webinars-mirecc-presents.asp>



PACERS is an education program for health care staff who care for Veterans with cognitive disorders and their caregivers. While this program targets rural health care staff, providers working in any setting can benefit from this information.



The PACERS online training curriculum includes six e-learning courses; each course is accredited for 1 hour of continuing education. There are also 5 videos that cover important topics related to cognitive impairment, including driving, self-neglect, challenging behaviors, Alzheimer's disease, and end-of-life.

VA Providers: Take courses using TMS links

Non-VA Providers: Use TRAIN links

Course 1: Driving and Dementia—Hanging up the Keys.

Course 2: How to Deliver the Diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease. **Course 3:** How to Have an End of Life Discussion.

Course 4: How to Identify Self-Neglect.

Course 5: Addressing Decision Making and Safety in Dementia.

[VISIT PACERS](#) for links to each course.



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U.S. Department
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BRIEFINGS

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MIRECC

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Next Issue: June 2022