



Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Focus Area Training

The PTSD postdoctoral fellowship focus area is designed in parallel with the VHA Mental Health Strategic Plan and in recognition of the anticipated need for psychologists trained to provide the highest quality of care to OEF/OIF/OND veterans with PTSD and post-deployment adjustment difficulties. As noted in the VHA Mental Health Strategic Plan, care for OEF/OIF/OND veterans is among the highest priorities in the VA's mental health care system. Among the VA's goals for this population are to promote screening and treatment for PTSD with the ultimate aim of preventing chronicity and lasting impairment. The PTSD focus area will offer two positions each year, with one to focus on the needs of women veterans with PTSD.

Since national standards defining competency in the treatment of PTSD do not currently exist, the specific skills to be developed in the PTSD focus area are derived from a review of several relevant and respected sources (for example, the National Center for PTSD [NCPTSD] website and the website of APA Division 56 Trauma Psychology) as well as from review of existing core competencies in PTSD postdoctoral fellowships such as the VAPAHCS MIRECC fellowship in PTSD. The seven skill areas specified are: 1) Core PTSD assessment modalities; 2) Assessment modalities pertaining to disorders commonly co-morbid with PTSD including TBI, substance use, depression, and anxiety disorders; 3) Empirically validated and supported treatments for PTSD, particularly Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure; 4) PTSD research and theory, especially that pertaining to military-related PTSD; 5) Military culture and diversity issues in the presentation and treatment of PTSD; 6) Assessment of therapeutic and programmatic effectiveness; and 7) Therapist self-care.

The Fellows' major, year-long rotation will occur in the VAPAHCS Men's Trauma Recovery Program or Women's Trauma Recovery Program. A primary Psychology Preceptor will be selected from these programs. Each Fellow and his/her preceptor will determine which training sites, additional rotations (such as in the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center, PTSD Clinical Team, and Women's Counseling Center), and research tasks the Fellow will pursue, based on an assessment of competencies the Fellow already has acquired and the competencies in which he/she has not yet developed. Additionally, decisions regarding supplementary rotations and the structure of the postdoctoral fellowship year will be based on the Fellow's particular interests, and emerging programs and identified needs as determined at the national VA Office of Mental Health Services level.

The treatment modalities utilized in the Men's and Women's Trauma Recovery Programs are empirically-supported whenever possible, and consist primarily of cognitive-behavioral group based treatments in the context of a therapeutic community. Among the current groups/interventions offered in the VAPAHCS Trauma Recovery Programs are: Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure (PE), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), CBT for Insomnia (CBT-I), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Seeking Safety, Problem Area Review/Motivational Enhancement, Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention, Moral Reconciliation Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR). In the provision of services to OEF/OIF/OND veterans with PTSD, Fellows will work with an interdisciplinary team in each setting that may include – in addition to psychology – nursing, social work, recreational therapy, readjustment counselors, art therapist, chaplain, and psychiatry, as well as, trainees in each of these areas. Additionally, the PTSD Fellows will work closely with the VA Palo Alto Military Liaisons and the TRP OEF/OIF/OND Case Manager.

Attaining competencies in the skill areas outlined above defines the fellowship program focus area goals and objectives. The PTSD Psychology Fellow will spend 50% time in clinical service, 30% time in research and/or program development/evaluation, and 20% time attending didactics and providing teaching and supervision. Fellows will be encouraged to define their research activity in terms of involvement in projects already underway at VAPAHCS. Recent research projects have included: An Evaluation of Cognitive Processing Therapy to Treat Veterans in a PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Program; Treatment Outcomes and the Process of Change for Patients Treated in a PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Program, Emotion Regulation in Combat-related PTSD, Telephone Case Monitoring for Veterans with PTSD, Mortality Among Treatment-Seeking Veterans and Community Controls, Autonomic Correlates of Sleep Treatment in PTSD, and PTSD, Sleep Disordered Breathing And Genetics: Effects On Cognition.

As indicated previously, the PTSD Fellow's major, year-long rotation will occur in the VAPAHCS Trauma Recovery Programs. The Men's Trauma Recovery Program has a bed capacity of 40 and the Women's Trauma Recovery Program has a bed capacity of 10. Both programs serve a nationwide catchment area and treat all types of military trauma and complex cases with multiple medical and psychiatric co-morbidities, utilizing a range of interdisciplinary staff to do so. The programs are designed to be 60 to 90 days in length. In addition to veterans, these programs currently serve Active Duty Service Members, Reservists, and Guard.

Additional PTSD settings include the PTSD Clinical Team, which provides training and experience in empirically-supported treatments for PTSD (e.g., CPT, PE) in an outpatient setting; the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center (PRC) which allows the Fellow to have experience in working with patients with PTSD or trauma and stressor-related disorders, as well as, TBI and other injuries requiring physical rehabilitation; and the Women's Counseling Center (WCC), which allows the Fellow to work with female patients with trauma histories in an outpatient mental health setting. The Fellow will also have the opportunity to work with researchers in the National Center for PTSD Dissemination and Training Division on new or ongoing research (selected current projects noted in Specific Skills section). Additional clinical rotations are available as well.

The individualized **training plan** for the PTSD Fellow will be developed with the assistance of a Primary Preceptor who will help plan the fellow's overall program, ensure sufficient depth and breadth of experience and, plan which of the PTSD faculty will serve as supervisors during the fellowship year. The training plan will outline the content and length of the Fellow's various PTSD-related training experiences for the year. The aim is to ensure attainment of general clinical competencies, as well as, to provide experience in each of the focus area-specific competencies.

Reviewed by: Jaelyn Kraemer, Ph.D.; Emily Hugo, PsyD;
Trisha Vinatieri, Psy.D.

Dates: 8/9/2016; 7/25/16; 8/2/2016

Rotation Sites:

Men's Trauma Recovery Program (Buildings 351 and 352, MPD)

Supervisors: Robert Jenkins, Ph.D.

Jaclyn Kraemer, Ph.D.

Dorene Loew, Ph.D.

Andrea Perry, Ph.D.

- 1. Patient population:** Our program treats men with PTSD who have experienced a wide range of military-related traumatic experiences, including but not limited to war zone and combat-related trauma and military sexual trauma (MST). We see veterans and active-duty military personnel who served in Vietnam, Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan.
- 2. Psychology's role in the setting:** Program Attending, member of interdisciplinary treatment team, and clinical services provider.
- 3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting:** Psychiatrists, Nurses, Social Workers, OEF/OIF/OND Case Manager, Readjustment Counselor, Recreational Therapists, Chaplain, Art Therapist, military liaisons, and trainees from other disciplines.
- 4. Nature of clinical services delivered:** This rotation emphasizes evidence-based treatments such as Cognitive Processing Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Motivation Enhancement/Problem Area Review Group, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia, Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention, Moral Reconciliation Therapy, Seeking Safety, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy skills. Residential treatment occurs within a therapeutic community model via cognitive-behavioral group therapies, psychoeducational classes, treatment coordination, and medical/medication management.
- 5. Distinctions between Men's and Women's Trauma Recovery Programs:** Conceptually, the Men's and Women's programs are very similar; they share the same clinical mission to address military-related PTSD using cognitive-behavioral and process-oriented groups in the context of a residential milieu. However, the Women's Trauma Recovery Program currently treats a greater proportion of residents with Military Sexual Trauma and, conversely, the Men's Program treats a greater number of residents with combat-related trauma. Additionally, the women's program carries a smaller daily census and places a greater emphasis on gender-specific service delivery.
- 6. Fellow's role in the setting:** Each fellow will function as an important member of an interdisciplinary team and will assist with admissions, case conceptualizations, treatment planning, treatment coordination, discharges, and the provision of clinical services. Fellows' role in group therapy will be commensurate with comfort level and experience, with the opportunity to co-facilitate and individually lead therapy groups and psychoeducational classes. This setting encourages evidence-based treatments and applied research, and has a reputation for clinical innovation. Fellows will have the opportunity to provide individual supervision to psychology interns and trainees from other disciplines.
- 7. Amount/type of supervision:** At least one hour per week of individual supervision, and many opportunities for in-vivo supervision within the therapeutic community.
- 8. Didactics in the setting:** Regular in-service trainings on related topics by clinical staff and invited experts.
- 9. Pace:** Fellows will be expected to write brief group and treatment coordination process notes within 24 hours of providing these services. Fellows will assist with the completion of admissions, master treatment plans and updates, treatment team review notes, and discharge summaries.

This rotation is an ideal training site for trainees interested in expanding and refining their clinical expertise in PTSD and other stress-related disorders. The Men's Trauma Recovery Program (MTRP) is affiliated with the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and is the first and longest-standing residential treatment program for men with PTSD. Many of our residents have experienced multiple traumatic events and have comorbid psychiatric diagnoses. The clinical complexity of our population and the program intensity ensure that trainees acquire solid skills in working with PTSD, in particular group therapy skills, as well as, the ability to function effectively on an interdisciplinary treatment team.

The program is structured as a therapeutic community wherein residents are taught basic coping, interpersonal, problem-solving, and affect management skills in group settings. They are provided psychoeducation regarding the various effects of PTSD and have the option to participate in Cognitive Processing Therapy where they learn to challenge beliefs associated with traumatic memories while managing the thoughts, feelings, and physiological symptoms this evokes. The program has established a reputation for innovation, wherein cutting edge therapies are thoughtfully applied and assessed. Trainees at the MTRP have the opportunity to:

- Learn to function as part of an experienced, interdisciplinary team in the treatment of complex PTSD.
- Learn to conceptualize the effects of trauma from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including cognitive-behavioral and systemic approaches.
- Become adept at working with men who present with characteristics of personality disorders.
- Become familiar with leading therapeutic technologies in the treatment of trauma, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT).
- Develop group therapy skills, as well as, milieu interventions.
- Develop PTSD assessment and report writing skills.
- Develop a greater understanding of treatment of comorbid diagnoses (e.g., substance use disorders, depression, other anxiety disorders, psychosis, and medical conditions).

Reviewed by: Jaclyn Kraemer, Ph.D.

Date: 8/9/2016

Women's Trauma Recovery Program (Building 350, MPD)

Supervisors: Hana Shin, Ph.D.

TBD

- 1. Patient population:** Women (veteran, reservist, active duty) with military-related PTSD and post-deployment readjustment issues. Our program treats women who have experienced a wide range of traumatic experiences, including war zone and combat-related trauma and military sexual trauma (MST). An increasing number of our patients are OIF/OEF/OND women, many of whom have experienced both MST and combat-related trauma.
- 2. Psychology's role in the setting:** Program Attending, member of interdisciplinary treatment team, clinical services provider.
- 3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting:** Psychiatrists, Nursing Staff, Social Workers, Clinical Specialists, OIF/OEF/OND case manager, and Recreational Therapists.
- 4. Nature of clinical services delivered:** This rotation emphasizes evidence-based treatments such as Cognitive Processing Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, STAIR, and Seeking Safety. Residential treatment occurs within a therapeutic community model via group therapies, psychoeducational classes, treatment coordination and medical/medication management.
- 5. Fellow's role in the setting:** Each fellow will function as an important member of an interdisciplinary team and will assist with case conceptualization, treatment planning, treatment coordination, and the provision of clinical services. Fellows' role in group therapy will be commensurate with comfort level and experience, with the opportunity to co-facilitate and individually lead therapy groups and psychoeducational classes. This setting encourages evidenced-based treatments and applied research, and has a reputation for clinical innovation. Fellows will have the opportunity to provide individual or group supervision to psychology interns and practicum students.

6. **Amount/type of supervision:** At least one hour per week of individual supervision, and many opportunities for in-vivo supervision within the therapeutic community (e.g., group therapy, milieu, team meetings). Group supervision is also possible depending on cohort size and interests.
7. **Didactics in the setting:** Weekly fellow seminar, Trauma Recovery Program in-service trainings (on related topics by clinical staff and invited experts), opportunities to attend trainings at the National Center for PTSD, HSR&D, MIRECC.
8. **Pace:** Fellows will be expected to write brief group and treatment coordination process notes within 24 hours of providing these services. Fellows will assist with the completion of admissions, master treatment plans and updates, treatment team review notes,, and discharge summaries.

This rotation is an ideal training site for trainees interested in developing and expanding their clinical skills. A cornerstone of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System [Women's Mental Health Center](#), the Women's Trauma Recovery Program (WTRP) is the first and longest-standing residential treatment program for women with PTSD; many of our residents come to us from out-of-state. Most have experienced multiple traumatic events, including both military and childhood sexual trauma. The clinical complexity of our population and the program intensity ensures that trainees acquire solid skills in working with PTSD and co-occurring disorders, in particular EBTs and group therapy skills as well as the ability to function effectively on an interdisciplinary treatment team.

The program is structured as a therapeutic community wherein residents are taught basic coping, interpersonal, problem solving, and emotion regulation skills in group settings. They are provided psychoeducation regarding the various effects of PTSD, and are encouraged to challenge and modify problematic trauma-related beliefs and behaviors. The program has established a reputation for innovation, a program in which cutting edge therapies are thoughtfully applied and assessed. Trainees at the WTRP have the opportunity to:

- Learn to function as part of an experienced, interdisciplinary team in the treatment of complex PTSD.
- Learn to conceptualize the effects of trauma from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including cognitive-behavioral, dialectical behavioral and systemic approaches.
- Become adept at working with women who present with Personality Disorders or traits.
- Become familiar with leading therapeutic technologies in the treatment of trauma including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT).
- Become familiar with military culture and its impact on the process of clinical service provision.
- Develop knowledge of Military Sexual Trauma, its sequelae and treatment
- Develop group therapy skills, as well as milieu interventions.
- Develop PTSD assessment and report writing skills.
- Develop a greater understanding of treatment of co-occurring disorders (e.g., substance use disorders, depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, psychosis and medical conditions).

Reviewed by: Jennifer Alvarez, Ph.D.
Date: 7/21/15

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Mini-Rotation)
Available at both the Men's and Women's Trauma Recovery Programs
Supervisors: Robyn Walser, Ph.D.
Veronica Reis, Ph.D.
Pearl McGee-Vincent, Psy.D.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is an empirically supported intervention, and an EBP for depression, chronic pain and other disorders. It is a behaviorally-based intervention designed to address avoidance of internal experiences such as negative thoughts, emotions and sensations while also focusing on making powerful life enhancing choices that are consistent with personal values. ACT demonstrates the role that language plays in human suffering and specifically undermines this role with experiential exercises, mindfulness practice, use of metaphor and focus on defining values. ACT is principle based and focused on process implementation. As well, it has a number of manuals that can be applied with a number of populations. The mini-rotation is typically offered to interns in the Trauma Recovery Programs and available to other interns as supported by individual rotations (e.g., BMed, Inpatient Psychiatry, Women's Health Center, MHC). The mini-rotation will provide a combination of didactic and supervised clinical experience in the use of ACT with PTSD patients in the Men's and Women's Trauma Recovery Programs, and with patients from the Mental Health Clinic (Menlo Park). Additionally, other target populations can be included depending on interest and availability (e.g. primary care, behavioral medicine, women's health, etc.).

1. **Amount/type of supervision:** At least 1.5 hours per week of group supervision with individual supervision as needed. Opportunities to be observed and recorded are available.
2. **Didactics in the setting:** Participation in the ACT mini-rotation includes reading and reviewing articles, chapters and books specific to ACT and the underlying theory.
3. **Mini immersion:** During the 2nd half of the training year, participation in a 2-day Introduction to ACT workshop that is more experiential in nature to assist with learning ACT concepts.
4. **Small Project:** Each supervisee will be asked to create an educational product related to ACT. This can include client exercises, therapist exercises, review of literature (determined by supervisor and supervisee depending on interests).

Reviewed by: Robyn Walser, Ph.D., and Veronica Reis,
Ph.D.

Date: 7/10/15 (VR)

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT)

Supervisor: Emily Hugo, Psy.D.

Julie Dimmitt, Ph.D.

- 1. Patient population:** Men and women with PTSD, many of whom have additional comorbid diagnoses. Traumatic experiences may include events from combat, training incidents, military sexual trauma, childhood, and civilian experiences.
- 2. Psychology's role in the setting:** To provide individual and group psychotherapy using evidence-based treatments for PTSD.
- 3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting:** Psychology interns and postdoctoral fellows, psychiatry residents, social workers, art therapists, and psychiatrists. Psychologists also work closely with the Mental Health Clinic staff, coordinating care with mental health treatment coordinators, nursing staff, and psychiatrists.
- 4. Nature of clinical services delivered:** The PCT places an emphasis on empirically-supported treatments for PTSD, but integrates treatment interventions from a variety of modalities. There are opportunities to provide individual psychotherapy (e.g., Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Skill-Building/CBT, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) and group psychotherapy (e.g., Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Relationships (STAIR), PTSD Education, Seeking Safety, Anger Management). Fellows will also work in collaboration with MHC and Substance Abuse Program staff.
- 5. Fellow's role in the setting:** Fellows will have the opportunity to provide individual and group psychotherapies. Fellows are also involved in the triage, assessment, and treatment planning of PCT patients. Participation in team meetings and didactic trainings is also part of this rotation. Fellows may have the opportunity to provide individual or group supervision to psychology interns and practicum students.
- 6. Amount/type of supervision:** At least one hour of individual supervision will be provided and fellows will participate in one hour of group supervision with other psychology trainees. Fellows will also attend PCT team meetings. Supervision will include tape review, role play, and presentation of case conceptualization. The supervisors work from an integrated developmental perspective, examining behavioral, CBT, interpersonal, and systemic factors.
- 7. Pace:** The PCT clinic has a steady workload with a significant amount of direct clinical care. Because of the nature of trauma-focused therapy, the work can be emotionally intense. Expectations around number of assessments, individual clients, and groups per week will be set collaboratively at the start of the rotation. Fellows will be expected to write individual, group, and assessment notes in a timely and professional manner. Given the emotional intensity of some of the psychotherapies provided (e.g., prolonged exposure) there is also a strong emphasis on self-care.

This rotation is a great fit for anyone who is interested in gaining initial or additional expertise in the outpatient treatment of PTSD. The PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) rotation aims to build foundational knowledge of PTSD, as well as an understanding of the triaging, assessment, case conceptualization, treatment coordination, and multidisciplinary treatment of veterans with PTSD. Skills are fostered by the provision of opportunities to conduct thorough PTSD assessments; to conduct individual psychotherapy; to co-lead psychotherapy groups/classes; to participate in team meetings and didactic presentations; to take part in individual and group supervision; and to function as an integral part of a multidisciplinary mental health clinic. Additionally, you will be exposed to numerous evidence-based treatments, including Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Seeking Safety, CBT for PTSD, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

Reviewed by: Emily Hugo, Psy.D.

Date: 7/25/2016

Women's Counseling Center (Building 350, MPD)

Supervisor: Trisha Vinatieri, Psy.D.

- 1. Patient population:** The Women's Counseling Center (WCC) is an outpatient mental health program for women veterans at the Menlo Park Division of VAPAHCS. Women veterans are the fastest growing patient population within the VA. They have unique mental health needs, but have traditionally been underserved. This multidisciplinary program provides a range of services with the goal of increasing access to care and enhancing the mental health services provided to women veterans at this facility. Women veterans seen at WCC present with a diverse range of mental health problems and personality disorder characteristics. Many are likely to have significant trauma histories that have not been adequately addressed, or that may have been exacerbated as a result of their minority status in the military. As a result, the treatment of PTSD is a major focus (see below).
- 2. Psychology's role in the setting:** Psychologists function as part of an interdisciplinary team to provide treatment planning, intake evaluations and psychometric assessments, individual and group psychotherapy and active consultation in women's mental health to providers within the VA system. Students will work as part of a team whose goal is provide gender-sensitive care, including coordinated care with other health care programs to enable every woman to best address her specific needs (e.g. women with trauma histories seeking residential services for addiction).
- 3. Other professionals and trainees in the setting:** This is an interdisciplinary setting with professionals from medicine, psychiatry, nursing, social work, recreational therapy and chaplaincy. This setting also includes psychiatry residents, psychology fellows, psychology practicum students and social work interns.
- 4. Nature of clinical services delivered:** Services include mental health promotion (e.g., transition assistance from military to civilian life, stress management, violence prevention), and evidenced-based treatment for conditions unique or prevalent among women veterans such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD in a building dedicated to women's mental health care. Treatments offered consist of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy as well as specialized treatment for PTSD and related issues (e.g., Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure Therapy, Anger Management, and Seeking Safety). Psychometric assessment, which can include structured clinical interviews for PTSD (i.e., CAPS) are routinely administered to patients new to treatment. Treatment modalities include individual, and group therapy, as well as telephone-based services for women who have difficulty accessing care (e.g., rural populations, mothers of young children).
- 5. Fellow's role in the setting:** Fellows function as part of an interdisciplinary team to provide clinical services. The fellow will be responsible for managing their own client schedule, determining appropriate treatment strategies (with the assistance of the supervisor), and actively consulting with other providers within the VA system. Clinical research opportunities are also available in the areas of stress and trauma. These opportunities are ideal for interns interested in formulating research questions based on their clinical experiences in this rotation (i.e., application of the scientist-practitioner model), or mapping onto an existing project as part of their training. Fellows also have the opportunity to provide individual supervision to psychology interns and practicum students.
- 6. Amount/type of supervision:** Supervision includes individual, face-to-face supervision on a weekly basis, live observation and group supervision. Additional meetings with the supervisor are scheduled as-needed.
- 7. Didactics:** Participation in the Clinical Training Program developed by the NC-PTSD Education Division and Clinical Laboratory, participation in periodic NC-PTSD trainings group supervision trainings, as well as the new monthly Women's Mental Health Teleconference series.
- 8. Pace:** This is a busy outpatient mental health clinic with opportunity to participate in a wide range of clinical services. Fellows will work with the supervisor on an individualized training plan at the start of their rotation that will help guide the pace of their work. In general, fellows are expected to conduct two psychodiagnostic interview per month, and carry a small caseload of individual therapy patients. Fellows also have the option of co-leading current psychotherapy groups or initiating a new group based on clinical need and interests. Therapy notes are expected within 24 hours of providing services.

The Women's Mental Health rotation is an ideal opportunity for trainees interested in the provision of mental health services to the rapidly increasing number of women veterans now being served by the VA. Many of these women have trauma histories and serving them requires an understanding of the impact of trauma on women's lives as well as a specialized skill set to treat the related psychiatric disorders.

Fellows will have the opportunity to:

- Participate in a new and important center for women veterans
- Conduct mental health assessments and interventions sensitive to women's issues
- Learn and implement evidenced-based therapies such as CPT, PE, DBT, CBT, and ACT
- Participate in evaluation/outcome research

Reviewed by: Trisha Vinatieri, Psy.D.

Date: 8/2/2016



**National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
Dissemination and Training Division (Building 324, MPD)**

Supervisors:

Marcel Bonn-Miller, Ph.D., Director, Substance and Anxiety Intervention Laboratory
Eve Carlson, Ph.D.
Marylene Cloitre, Ph.D.
Kent Drescher, Ph.D.
Afsoon Eftekhari, Ph.D.
Rachel Kimerling, Ph.D., Director, Military Sexual Trauma Support Team
Eric Kuhn, Ph.D.
Craig Rosen, Ph.D., Director, NCPTSD Dissemination and Training Division
Josef Ruzek, Ph.D., Director, NCPTSD Dissemination and Training Division
Quyen Tiet, Ph.D.
Robyn Walser, Ph.D.
Shannon Wiltsey Stirman, Ph.D.
Steve Woodward, Ph.D., Director, PTSD Sleep Laboratory
Lindsey Zimmerman, Ph.D.

- 1. Patient population:** Vietnam veterans comprise the majority of VA PTSD patients nationwide, but projects also include Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, veterans exposed to military sexual trauma, and veterans of WWII, Korea, and the first Gulf War. Research has been conducted on hospital patients with traumatic injuries and family members of gravely injured hospital patients.
- 2. Psychology's role:** NCPTSD educators, many of whom are psychologists, play a nationwide leadership role in disseminating state-of-the-art treatments for PTSD, including two national VA initiatives to train clinicians in evidence-based treatments, a mentoring program for heads of PTSD clinics, and video and web-based trainings for clinicians and web-based educational materials for trauma survivors. NCPTSD researchers, most of whom are psychologists conduct evaluations of VA mental health services, clinical intervention trials, implementation science, assessment development studies, biological research, and neuroimaging studies.
- 3. Other professionals and trainees:** Psychiatry, Psychology and Research Fellows, Psychology Interns, Psychology Practicum Students.
- 4. Nature of clinical services delivered:** Limited clinical services are delivered as part of specific research trials.
- 5. Fellow's role:** The training needs and interests of the fellow define the mix of dissemination and research activities. Fellows interested in dissemination work with National Center education staff to develop PTSD-related educational products and services with potential for wide dissemination, or to take on a significant role in an ongoing implementation science or dissemination project. Fellows interested in research work with a mentor to develop and implement a research project related to one of NCPTSD's ongoing studies or archival datasets. Research fellows are expected to develop a report of their project that is suitable for presentation at a scientific conference and/or publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Fellows may also have an opportunity to participate in delivery of interventions in ongoing clinical trials.
- 6. Amount/type of supervision:** One or two mentors are assigned to each fellow. Supervision will be as needed, typically involving several face-to-face meetings per week.

7. Pace: The goal of completing a research project or education project from conception to write up within six months requires skillful time management. Rotation supervisors help the fellow develop a rotation plan.

The National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder ([NCPTSD](#)) is a congressionally mandated consortium whose goal is to advance understanding of trauma and its consequences. The Dissemination and Training Division at the Palo Alto VAPAHCS, Menlo Park Division is one of seven National Center divisions located at five sites. The others are located in Boston (Behavioral Science Division and Women's Health Sciences Division), Honolulu (Pacific Islands Division), West Haven (Evaluation Division and Clinical Neurosciences Division) and White River Junction, Vermont (Executive Division).

Fellows may participate in ongoing research choosing from a variety of research opportunities. These include ongoing studies to evaluate VA policies related to screening, detection and treatment of PTSD, military sexual trauma, and other deployment-related health conditions, clinical trials of psychosocial interventions, psychometric instrument development, novel assessment methods development, laboratory and ambulatory psychophysiological studies, laboratory and ambulatory sleep studies, neuroimaging, longitudinal studies of the course of PTSD, and systems of care for recent trauma survivors. Cognitive, affective, psychobiologic and spiritual domains of PTSD are under investigation, as are related health service delivery issues.

Fellows may participate in a broad range of dissemination and training initiatives. Current dissemination/implementation activities of the Education Division include two nationwide initiatives to train VA clinicians in Prolonged Exposure and in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, development of video and web-based training materials for VA and military clinicians, patient education and self-help materials for military personnel and civilians exposed to trauma, and training military chaplains and mental health staff in PTSD care.

Trainees at the National Center for PTSD have the opportunity to:

- Learn to conceptualize the after-effects of trauma from a variety of theoretical perspectives— primarily cognitive-behavioral, biological, and spiritual;
- Gain an understanding of factors that influence implementation of best care practices for PTSD in a national treatment system;
- Learn about effective means of disseminating and training clinicians in PTSD treatments.
- Gain further exposure to PTSD clinical research; and/or,
- Gain experience in evaluating quality of care for PTSD.

The National Center for PTSD has strong collaborative relationships with several other clinical and research programs at the Palo Alto VA, including the Men's Trauma Recovery Program, the Women's Trauma Recovery Program, the Sierra-Pacific Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC), the Center for Innovation to Implementation (Ci2i), the Program Evaluation and Resource Center (PERC), and the Health Economics Research Center (HERC).

Reviewed by: Lindsey Zimmerman, Ph.D.

Date: 8/27/15