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“Closing the efficacy-effectiveness gap”

Clinical News

Implementing Dialectical Behavior Therapy at the Gulf Coast VA

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and Hayward Roberts, LMSW

VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, Biloxi Division

This is the second of three article installments chronicling how Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is being implemented in three VISN 16 VA hospitals (Houston, Little Rock, and Biloxi). In the July 2007 *South Central MIRECC Communiqué*, the Houston DBT team provided the underlying rationale for implementation of this VISN-wide effort to develop effective treatments for suicidal and parasuicidal behavior exhibited by veterans. This effort, supported by our South Central MIRECC, centers around the development and utilization of DBT programs geared toward reducing completed suicides, suicide attempts, parasuicidal behaviors, and hospitalizations.

At the VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, we formed a multidisciplinary team to participate in the three part intensive DBT training described in last month's *Communiqué*. The Biloxi team consists of two psychologists (Cardin and Evans), a chaplain (Morris), and a clinical social worker (Roberts). The VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System is an expansive facility that has divisions in Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Our DBT team currently works out of the Biloxi Division MH Outpatient Clinic.

The three training segments included a two day workshop in Little Rock, AK, and two separate week-long intensive workshops in Northampton, MA. The first two segments of training were geared toward developing an understanding of DBT, its philosophical and theoretical underpinnings, methods and procedures, and required characteristics of a full-fledged DBT program. After the first two trainings, our Biloxi DBT team began conducting weekly peer support meetings, which is part of the requirement for a DBT program. In these initial meetings, we designed our program around several clinical needs. We decided to focus on suicidal and parasuicidal behavior of consumers who are currently experiencing difficulty with emotional dysregulation. The biosocial theory of borderline personality disorder (BPD) (Linehan, 1993) posits that it is primarily a disorder of the emotion regulation system. As DBT was originally designed for treatment of BPD, and because our clinic needed a versatile treatment that could be utilized for consumers with BPD as well as consumers diagnosed with PTSD, we used this overarching framework for referral criteria. We then attended several staff meetings to market our program as one that would assist those veterans who are experiencing difficulty with emotional dysregulation, anger outbursts, a history of violent acts, impulsivity, and affective instability.

Our social worker (Roberts) had formal training in DBT previously and worked in a clinic that practiced DBT exclusively. Based on his knowledge of, and experience with, conducting a DBT Skills Training Group, we were able to quickly establish our group. We began recruitment with veterans who were currently enrolled in the MH Outpatient Clinic. Those initial veterans carried varied diagnoses,

including BPD, PTSD, and Major Depression. We have been holding both group and individual DBT psychotherapy sessions since February 2007.

Since last's month's *Communiqué*, both the Houston and the Biloxi DBT teams have completed the third segment of DBT training. At that training, we presented our programs and received feedback from the trainers. We are busy incorporating that feedback into our program.

Future plans for the VA Gulf Coast DBT team include: research efforts, creation of a Skills Manual, continued provider education, continued collaborative efforts with VA DBT teams (Texas, Arkansas, New York, and Washington), and expansion to CBOCs. In addition, our DBT Team is currently establishing protocols for furthering our clinical footprint within our facility.

We wish to give a special thanks to the MIRECC for this opportunity to both grow as clinicians and be in a position to better serve our veterans.



Congratulations! Dr. Mattox is New RWJ Clinical Scholar

Rhonda Mattox, MD, a former MIRECC TRIPS Scholar, was recently accepted into the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The purpose of the Clinical Scholars Program is to foster the development of physicians in all areas of medicine who will lead the transformation of the nation's health care system. The Program prepares Scholars to conduct innovative research and work with communities, organizations, practitioners, and policy-makers on important health care issues. In addition to the UCLA program, there are Clinical Scholars Programs at Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Michigan. This year there were more than 80 applications for only a few coveted slots

Dr. Mattox completed her MD degree and her psychiatry residency at the University of Arkansas and is currently an NIMH post-doctoral fellow, mentored by Greer Sullivan, MD, MSPH. Dr. Mattox's application to the Clinical Scholars program was strengthened by her participation in the MIRECC. Not only was she a MIRECC TRIPS Scholar but she also received a 2005 South Central MIRECC Pilot Study Research Grant to conduct a qualitative study examining Christian faith-based religious leader's portrayal of mental illness in televised sermons on Christian broadcasting networks. She has also been active in locally initiated programs to help educate the National Guard and clergy about mental health problems in returning veterans.

Dr. Mattox's research interests involve the interface between mental health and faith and the role of clergy in help seeking behaviors. Her career goals are to reduce stigma associated with accessing formal mental health care, develop sustainable culturally competent evidence-based health care models that are congruent with patient preferences, and translate these practices into the community to eliminate mental health disparities.

Dr. Mattox will begin the two-year Clinical Scholars program in July 2008. She hopes to conduct her research for the Clinical Scholars Program in Arkansas. Greer Sullivan, MD, MSPH, Director of the South Central MIRECC is a former Clinical Scholar and is available to discuss applications to the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program with interested applicants.

Congratulations to Dr. Mattox!



2007 Psychopharmacology Update

Baylor College of Medicine and the South Central MIRECC will hold the **2007 Psychopharmacology Update** on Friday and Saturday, November 2-3, 2007, in Houston, TX. The complete program is forthcoming. This meeting is approved for CME.

Space is limited! To register, go to www.baylorcme.org/1377/ or call Baylor College of Medicine, Office of Continuing Medical Education at 713-798-8237 for a registration form. **South Central MIRECC Affiliates can have their registration fees covered by the MIRECC. To inquire about registering as a MIRECC Affiliate, contact Ms. Brenda Schubert at Brenda.schubert@med.va.gov. The deadline for registration is October 15, 2007.**

The Houstonian Hotel is located at 111 North Post Oak Lane, Houston, TX 77024. The special group rate is \$185 per night. For reservations, call 800-231-2759.

For more information, email the Baylor Office of Continuing Medical Education at cme@bcm.tmc.edu.



Evidence-Based Research Available from Cochrane Library

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Are you looking for evaluated evidence-based literature? The Cochrane Library is available to you 24/7 from the VISN 16 [Library Resources Web Page](#) – listed with the bibliographic databases. There are actually three separate files here: 1) the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 2) the Cochrane Register of Controlled Trials, and 3) Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE).

Each of these databases covers a slightly different subject range within the broad field of healthcare, but each provides evaluated references to articles or research reports. Full-text access to the Cochrane review is provided for items in the **Database of Systematic Reviews**. **DARE** provides summary reviews of systematic reviews, and the **Register of Controlled Trials** contains much unpublished material reported from ongoing trials.

For a thorough review of current research, your literature searches need to include these three databases, in addition to PubMed, PsycINFO, CINAHL, or other standard research databases.

For more information or for training in use of the Cochrane files, contact your librarian.

For a half hour of approved continuing education credit, see the brief Cochrane Library web tutorial on the VISN 16 Library Resources Web Page at <http://vaww.v16.med.va.gov/sites/Library/default.aspx>.

No Web-based Clinical Presentation in August

Deadline for Clinical Educator Grants is Aug 13

The deadline for submitting a **South Central MIRECC 2008 Clinical Educator grant** proposal is 4:00 PM CT, August 13, 2007. These grants are designed to encourage frontline clinicians and educators to develop innovative educational tools or programs that target under-served or hard-to-reach veterans and/or their families and address their mental health needs. These grants have been used to develop new educational tools, develop new educational programs, modify existing materials or put them in a new format, and evaluate existing commercial products.

Awards are up to \$7,000. VA personnel in VISNs 16 and 17 (up to 3 awards) who are affiliated or collaborating with local Mental Health staff are eligible to apply. Trainees are eligible to apply. See the attached application for more details.

Applications are reviewed by a committee. In most cases, applicants are asked to provide additional information or asked to modify their project and then submit a revised proposal. Funding announcements are expected by early December.

If you are even mildly interested in applying for a grant, please talk to any of the MIRECC personnel identified in the application. They would like to help you craft your idea into a fundable project.



Research Rounds on Treating Panic Disorder

The South Central MIRECC **Research Rounds** features **Ellen J. Teng, PhD**, on **“Treating Panic Disorder in Veterans with PTSD,” Monday, August 13 at 2:00 PM CT**. Dr. Teng is a clinical psychologist at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) and Assistant Professor at Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Teng is based in the Trauma Recovery Program at the MEDVAMC, where she works with veterans diagnosed with PTSD and other related anxiety disorders. Her primary research interests focus on the development of psychosocial treatments for anxiety disorders and investigating the role of emotion regulation in the etiology and maintenance of anxiety. She is also interested in examining cultural influences on the development of anxiety among ethnic minorities.

The purpose of the Research Rounds is to inform MIRECC investigators about each others’ research interests and expertise and solicit feedback about work in progress. This series employs a web-based conferencing technology that you can access from your desktop PC. Please contact Dr. Thomas Teasdale (Thomas-teasdale@ouhsc.edu) for information about how to access the system.

August Conference Calls 1-800-767-1750

- 6—Education Core, 2:00 PM CT, access code 16821#
- 9—PSR Group Call, noon PM CT, access code 85388#
- 13—Research Rounds, 2:00 PM CT, contact Thomas-teasdale@ouhsc.edu for access
- 14—Leadership Council, 3:30 PM CT, access code 19356#
- 15—Program Assistants, 2:00 PM CT, access code 43593#
- 23—National MIRECC Recovery Interest Group, noon CT, access code 22233#
- 28—Leadership Council, 3:30 PM CT, access code 19356#



The next issue of the *South Central MIRECC Communiqué* will be published September 4, 2007. Deadline for submission of items to the September newsletter is August 28. Urgent items may be submitted for publication in the *Communiqué Newsflash* at any time. Email items to the Editor, Michael R. Kauth, Ph.D., at Michael.Kauth@med.va.gov.

South Central MIRECC Internet site: www.va.gov/scmirecc

SC MIRECC intranet site: yaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc/mirecc.htm

National MIRECC Internet site: www.mirecc.va.gov