

Recovery Workforce Summit: 2015 Annual Conference

VA PSR Fellowship Poster Descriptions



Supporting Survivors of Relationship Violence with Serious Mental Illness

Presenter: Annie Peacock, MSW, LCSWA, Durham VAMC

Relationship violence is a problem that affects over 12 million individuals in the United States. Of these survivors, those with serious mental illness (SMI) often struggle to receive effective, comprehensive services. This project seeks to address this gap in services by providing comprehensive, recovery-oriented interventions for mental health clinicians working with survivors experiencing SMI. The project will explore unique challenges faced by survivors with SMI as well as modifications that clinicians can make to relationship violence interventions to better serve survivors with SMI.

Using the Session Rating Scale and Outcome Rating Scale to Facilitate the Therapeutic Alliance and Treatment Progress in Cognitive Processing Therapy: A Case Study

Presenter: Arash Farshid, Ph.D., Central Arkansas VAHCS

Extant research has shown that eliciting client feedback in therapy can facilitate the therapeutic alliance and treatment outcome. This is particularly relevant to treating clients with PTSD given that many develop significant problems with personal safety and trust as a result of their traumatic experiences, which can impact the therapeutic relationship and treatment progress. The present case study used relevant feedback measures to enhance the assessment of the therapeutic alliance and treatment progress in treating a client with combat-related PTSD. Using client feedback represents a recovery-oriented approach to treatment given its collaborative and dual-expert role emphases.

Assessing Team Functioning in Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services

Presenter: Katie Crain, MSW, LCSWA, Durham VAMC

Effective teamwork is a core competency of interprofessional collaborative practice. Research has shown a link between well-functioning teams, patient satisfaction ratings, and successful implementation of patient-centered care. This poster discusses the importance of evaluating team functioning in psychosocial rehabilitation services. The Team Development Measure (TDM) is presented as a low-burden quantitative tool for assessing the health of a team. The TDM has been established as a psychometrically credible method of evaluating team functioning in four domains: cohesiveness, communication, roles and goals, and team primacy. Results of administering the TDM to psychosocial rehabilitation teams are discussed.

Cognitive Differentiation (CD) in Integrated Psychological Therapy (IPT) for Individuals with Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders.

Presenters: Yuliana E. Gallegos Rodriguez, Ph.D., Kelly L. Anderson, Ph.D., Fiza Singh, M.D., VA San Diego HCS

Integrated psychological therapy (IPT) is a multimodal, cognitive therapy aimed at improving general functioning including information processing and social interactions of individuals with schizophrenia. Cognitive Differentiation (CD) is one of three modules included in IPT. This study investigated whether CD is associated with improvements in neuro-cognition in Veterans with schizophrenia spectrum disorders. Participants were assessed using measures of working memory, executive functioning, attention, and processing speed, at baseline and conclusion of the 8-session treatment. Results of pre- to post-group measures will be examined using ANOVA. Results and future directions will be discussed.

Problem Solving Skills Training for Veterans in a Psychiatric Inpatient Setting

Presenters: Hong Ngo, Ph.D., & Meaghan Leddy, Ph.D., VA Connecticut HCS, West Haven

Problem-solving skills therapy (PST) provides life skills training that emphasizes achieving life goals and strengths. As part of a quality improvement project focused on providing recovery-oriented care to Veterans within an inpatient setting and improving the quality of group therapy and overall mental health services, a PST group was developed and implemented in an inpatient psychiatric setting. PST group members were given a brief

questionnaire assessing feasibility and acceptability along with qualitative feedback on the PST group experience. Factors that contribute to goal-oriented and recovery-focused groups were identified.

Communal Healing: A Chaplain Perspective on Recovery in a Communal Context

Presenter: Jean Adler Stean, MDiv, Durham VAMC

Chaplains are in a unique position to represent religious and spiritual communities for patients. While the recovery model is built on focusing on individual needs of patients, chaplains explore how our communal context matters for care. This space of collective spiritual and social wisdom bears healing from both individual and collective wounds. Healing becomes not just an individual focus and goal, but an understanding and healing of our pains and sufferings as part of a greater, collective suffering and healing. This project explores case studies relevant to chaplains' focus on communal context and healing, and how mental illness bears witness to the underlying social and spiritual realities of our world.

How does Emotion Regulation Impact Symptom Severity in Schizophrenia?

Presenter: Jonathan Smith, Psy.D., Central Arkansas VAHCS

Difficulties in emotion regulation (ER) predict differences in social functioning when comparing individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia to healthy controls. However, the observed differences in ER may be mediated by co-morbid mood disorder symptoms. Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the relationship between factors of ER and the symptoms of schizophrenia, while controlling for symptoms of anxiety and depression. Results suggested increased difficulty with emotional clarity made the largest contribution to the severity of positive symptoms after controlling for co-morbid mood symptoms. Enhancing emotional clarity in treatment may empower individuals in recovery to advocate more clearly about unmet needs.

Heroes and Addiction

Presenter: Katie Liermann, LMSW, Central Arkansas VAHCS

This poster will display a summary of a Substance Use Disorder treatment program with three lesson series on heroes, and the program's relevance to addiction. This will include the curriculum, including the specific Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) exercises used, and ways to modify the curriculum for usage in different programs or populations. The recovery principles inherent to the topic will be presented with specifics on how recovery was communicated in each lesson. Antidotes describing what worked and did not work will be included.

Suicide Risk in Veterans with Co-Occurring PTSD and Psychotic Symptoms: Implications for Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Presenters: Jaclyn Leith, Ph.D. & Eric Elbogen, Ph.D., Central Arkansas VAMCS

Suicidality poses a key barrier to psychosocial rehabilitation and has been shown to be higher among Veterans with psychiatric disabilities. To our knowledge, suicide risk in Veterans with co-occurring posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and psychotic symptoms has not been examined. Data collected from Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans showed that those with co-occurring PTSD and psychotic symptoms had twice the risk of suicide compared to those with PTSD alone, controlling for demographic, military, and clinical covariates. Findings support individualizing rehabilitation efforts to account for different combinations of PTSD and psychotic symptoms, as unaddressed suicidality could markedly impede Veterans' achievement of recovery goals.

VetWheels: Building Bikes, Building Skills, Building Community

Presenter: Mark Smith, OTR/L, VA Connecticut HCS, West Haven

VetWheels is a program in which Veterans with serious mental illness learn bicycle repair, maintenance, and safety in a small group setting as they rebuild a used bicycle to keep for personal use. Veterans participate in 8 weeks of hands-on bike repair classes facilitated by a volunteer bicycle mechanic. The program aims to use meaningful activity to teach vocational and social skills, increase self-esteem through skill mastery, develop a sense of community around shared interests, foster personal growth and development, increase independence through access to low-cost transportation, and promote health and wellness through physical activity.

Exploring the Utility of Foreign Language Instruction to Enhance Clinical and Recovery Outcomes

Presenters: Hans Oh, M.S.W., Ed.M., Yuliana E. Gallegos Rodriguez, Ph.D. & Fiza Singh, M.D.,
Central Arkansas VAHCS

Engaging in a leisure activity –such as learning a new language –is not only an outcome of recovery, but potentially a means of achieving recovery. Studies have corroborated this notion, showing individuals who participate in leisure activities or are bilingual exhibit increased attention, perceptiveness, and executive processing as well as delayed cognitive decline. We developed a Spanish language course that incorporates elements of evidence-based treatments, and offered this course to Veterans with psychotic disorders. We will present the development of the curriculum, the feasibility of delivery, and qualitative feedback. We expect that the intervention will enhance social skills, social cognition and memory, and improve community function.

Can You Hear Me Now?

Presenters: Whitney Pierce, PsyD, RN and Katherine McKelvey, MSW, Central Arkansas VAHCS

Given that the majority of the Veteran population is male, female consumers often verbalize apprehension about seeking mental health services in the VA. In an attempt to bridge the gap between the Women's Health Clinic and mental health services at Little Rock, presenters developed, recruited, and implemented a female Social Skills Training group that focuses on the four basic social skills and assertiveness skills. This group is held in the Women's Health Clinic as opposed to the Mental Health Clinic, in an effort to reduce stigma, address barriers to care, and to promote the recovery model in integrated care systems.

Approaching Systems Change: a Growing Understanding

Presenter: Serena Furnari, MSW, Durham VAMC

Recovery oriented services were introduced into an established therapeutic model. The complexity of implementing systems change was examined. Certain components make systems change more likely to succeed. Clinicians encountered challenges and successes in a VA Women's Health Clinic while working to generate a deeper understanding of recovery and rehabilitation. Adding new treatment options to the Women's Health Clinic's already existing treatment approach has been challenging. In looking toward future efforts, a transformative approach to change is one with the highest likelihood for success.

Fidelity of Motivational Interviewing Among Peer Specialists

Presenters: Nicole Shea, MSW, Krystal Smith, MSW, Eileen Tam, Psy.D., VA Connecticut HCS, West Haven

The benefit of training peer specialists on motivational interviewing (MI) will be evaluated by assessing their fidelity to the MI model in sessions with clients. Client-rated and researcher-rated fidelity measures will be used. Peer specialists will be offered a two-day MI training as part of a clinical initiative. Sessions between peer specialists and their clients will be audio-taped before the MI training and after the training, monthly, for two months. Audiotapes will then be rated by the research team using established fidelity measures. Clients will be asked to complete a self-report measure of the peer specialists' adherence to the MI model as well. Results will be discussed.

Breaking the Silence: Exploring the Impact of Stigma and the Strategies to Challenge It

Presenters: DiAnn Tokars, PhD, Kristin Kennedy, MSW, Ryan Gardner, LCSW, VA Palo Alto HCS

Stigmatizing beliefs and stereotypes about mental health are common in our society and negatively impact individuals seeking mental health support. Providers and members of society are exposed to stigmatizing messages and are susceptible to internalizing them, which influences attitudes and clinical practice. Informed by current research findings, the poster aims to identify the impact of and strategies to challenge mental health stigma and empower participants to take action. The presenters will describe an experiential exercise in which they offer strategies to combat stigma that reflect the PSR principles of instilling hope, shared-decision making, and using a strengths-based and person-centered approach.

Mental Health Service Delivery: The Integration of Recovery Principles

Presenters: Cynthia King, Psy.D., Jinxin Zhang, Psy.D., Rachel Walter, LCSW, Aaron Michelson, Ph.D.
Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VAMC, Bedford MA

An important component of VA healthcare's commitment to recovery-oriented mental health services is ongoing program evaluation. Information gathered is critical for refining and improving services. The Recovery Self-

Assessment (RSA) measure was used to evaluate the recovery orientation of five non-CARF accredited mental health programs at the Bedford VA. Surveys were completed by Veteran consumers and mental health professionals in these programs, and survey data were collected and analyzed. Indications of program strengths and weaknesses emerged in regards to several recovery domains. Implications for program improvement are discussed.