



DCoE In Action

January/February 2009

DCoE In Action To Become Monthly Newsletter Distribution Changing

Beginning with the March issue, *DCoE In Action* will switch from bi-monthly to monthly publication. In addition, to reduce costs and conserve resources, the newsletter is ending mail distribution and switching to electronic distribution.

DCoE In Action will continue to be available on the DCoE Web site at www.dcoe.health.mil. You can request e-mail delivery of the newsletter by e-mailing dcoemedia@tma.osd.mil.

By coming out twice as frequently, *DCoE In Action* will be able to report on more developments at DCoE in a timelier manner.

Outreach Center for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Opens

DCoE has opened a 24-hour outreach center to provide information and referrals to military service members, veterans, their families and others with questions about psychological health and traumatic brain injury.

The new center can be contacted around the clock, 365 days a year, by phone at **866-966-1020** and by e-mail at resources@dcoeoutreach.org. Calls are toll-free.

The outreach center can assist with everything from routine requests for information about psychological health and traumatic brain injury, to questions about symptoms a caller is having, to helping a caller find appropriate health care resources.

"We're providing 24/7 support to assist callers with questions regarding psychological health and traumatic brain injury," said Brig. Gen. Loree K. Sutton, M.D., director of DCoE. "Getting the best possible information and tools, hassle-free, will empower and strengthen warriors and their families to successfully manage what can be confusing and challenging circumstances."

"If we need to research a question,

we'll do the legwork and quickly reconnect with callers," Sutton added. "We welcome feedback on how we can better meet the needs of those we are so privileged to serve."

The DCoE Outreach Center is staffed by health consultants and nurses, most with master's degrees. In addition to answering questions, staffers refer callers to contact centers in other parts of the Department of Defense, other federal agencies, and outside organizations when appropriate. Other contact centers also refer callers to the DCoE Outreach Center.

In the future, the Outreach Center will get its own Web site and feature Web-based tools such as chats, discussion boards, and other social networking support.

The center serves members, leaders and healthcare providers of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard, Reserve, all other uniformed services, and veterans of all the services. The families of service members and of veterans are also served by the new center.

More information is available at www.dcoe.health.mil.



**DEFENSE CENTERS
OF EXCELLENCE**

For Psychological Health
& Traumatic Brain Injury

<http://www.dcoe.health.mil>

DCoE Marks One-Year Anniversary



Brig. Gen. Loree K. Sutton (left), director of the DoD Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, joins wounded warriors, including Spc. Freddy Meyers (far right), to break ground for the National Intrepid Center of Excellence at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. This event marked a DCoE highlight during its first year of operations.

DCoE recently held an open house at its office in Arlington, Va., to mark its first anniversary of working on behalf of military service members and their families.

Established in November 2007 as part of the Department of Defense (DoD), DCoE leads a collaborative global network to promote the resilience, recovery and reintegration of warriors and their families who face psychological health (PH) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) issues.

"During these past 12 months, DCoE has grown from an idea into a burgeoning organization devoted to fulfilling America's commitment to those service members

and their families who support and defend our nation's freedom," said Army Brig. Gen. Loree K. Sutton, M.D., director of DCoE. "We stand today as the open front door to DoD for all concerns relating to psychological health and traumatic brain injury - charged to bring next-generation solutions to today's challenges while supporting senior leaders in driving cultural transformation and sustaining excellence in all domains."

In the past year, DCoE has:

- **United four existing DoD centers of excellence focusing on PH and TBI issues.** The existing centers are: the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center; the Center for Deployment Psychology; the Deployment Health Clinical Center; and the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress.
- **Created two new centers of excellence.** One new center is the National Center for Telehealth and Technology, which works to increase access to care for warriors and their families and which has created afterdeployment.org, an online resource focused on posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other PH issues following deployment. The other is the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, which is currently under construction and is scheduled to open in late 2009. The new center will be an advanced facility dedicated to research, diagnosis and treatment of military personnel with TBI and PH issues.

- **Held important conferences on PH and TBI.** These included: a conference that connected health care providers and warriors to discuss ways to build a culture of resilience; a conference in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Institutes of Health to gain better understanding of the role of gender, race and other socio-economic factors in traumatic stress and TBI; provider training conducted by the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center; and monthly video teleconferences to share the most recent PH and TBI information, and provide training and education to health care providers in all the military services.
- **Furthered research on PH and TBI in several ways.** These included: obligating \$45 million in funding for further research on PH and TBI; bringing together top PH and TBI experts from across DoD, the VA and elsewhere to work at DCoE; and collaborating with research organizations to publish the first studies of human PTSD brain tissue that advanced the scientific understanding of the role that critical proteins play in individuals with PTSD.
- **Partnered with Sesame Workshop.** DCoE worked with the nonprofit educational organization behind "Sesame Street" to develop and distribute more than 250,000 DVD kits that help children of warriors deal with the stresses of having a parent deployed.

From the Director

Oppportunity knocks! 2009 is underway, and we have so many things planned this year... so many we are called to serve.... and time is of the essence.

Over the last year, we have built up our team and established operations to fulfill our mission. Now we are equipped to bring our activities up to maximum speed... and we are committed to providing our warriors and their loved ones with the care, treatment and support they need and deserve.

Shortly before he took office, President Barack Obama said: "We don't have to do our troops and veterans a favor. We have a sacred trust to repay one." These are words to live by!

Supporting our warriors and their families is a sacred trust and a peerless honor. We are proud to answer this call to ser-

vice... this call to duty. We are fulfilling an obligation to the men and women of the military and their families - because they accepted an obligation to our nation. Now it is our turn. We owe them no less, and we take up this duty with pride.

The DCoE watchword for 2009 is "resilience." This means we will sustain excellence across the entire continuum of care as our warriors return home and begin the sometimes difficult task of resuming their lives beyond the battlefield.

The challenge can appear in many ways. For instance, post-traumatic stress disorder can come in many different forms. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) can respond to many types of therapies, education, and support. And support for psychological health is a broad-based effort that includes the family, the community, the military command structure - and the culture

we all live in, whether it's the military or civilian world!

In 2008, we built a base for an even broader launch of efforts in 2009. We stand as the open front door of DoD for psychological health and TBI. We're reaching out to make a difference in the lives of people who need our support... It's 2009, and the work goes forward, full-speed ahead!

Brig. Gen. Loree K. Sutton, M.D.
DCoE Director



Brig. Gen. Loree K. Sutton
Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) and Director, DCoE for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury

Study Sheds Light on Best Rehab Approaches for Brain Injury

Researchers from the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) - a DCoE component center - have published the results of a randomized clinical trial comparing different treatment approaches for those with traumatic brain injury.

The study, appearing in the December issue of the Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, compared two rehabilitation approaches: "cognitive didactic" versus "functional-experiential."

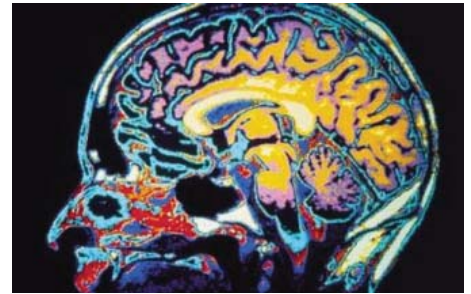
Although the findings suggest advantages to both methods, the cognitive approach resulted in better short-term gains in mental function and was more effective in helping younger patients return to work or school. The functional method led to higher rates of independent living among

older patients. Both methods had been validated in prior research but had never been tested head-to-head.

"Our results show long-term functional improvements in both groups," said lead author Rodney Vanderploeg, Ph.D., a research psychologist at the Tampa Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center and University of South Florida.

Vanderploeg said that one year after treatment about 6 in 10 study participants overall were employed and living independently. "This is remarkable," wrote Vanderploeg and colleagues, "given that none were capable of work or independent living at baseline" and 90 percent had brain injuries that were considered severe.

The study included 360 veterans or active-duty troops, mostly men, with moder-



ate to severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). Enrollment for the study ran from 1996 to May 2003, shortly after the onset of the war in Iraq. As such, most of the participants sustained their injuries not in combat but in vehicle crashes, falls or other incidents.

DCoE and VA Co-Host Suicide Prevention Conference



D CoE and the Department of Veterans Affairs hosted a suicide prevention conference Jan. 12-15 in San Antonio, Tex.

"Building Community Connections: Suicide Prevention in the 21st Century," brought together psychological health

experts, non-profit and community leaders, families who have lost loved ones due to suicide, mental health clinicians and other providers from around the nation. They shared research, best practices, innovative treatments and personal experiences to increase knowledge about ways to prevent suicide.

The keynote speaker was Army Maj. Gen. Mark Graham, commanding general at Fort Carson, Colo., who encouraged warriors facing psychological health issues to get needed help. One of Graham's sons committed suicide while serving as a ROTC cadet and another son was killed by a roadside bomb while serving in the U.S. Army in Iraq.

Eric Hipple, a former Detroit Lions football player, spoke about the impact of his 15-year old son's suicide in 2000. Hipple works to educate people about the dangers of depression.

There was also a presentation at the conference on the Army's Battlemind program, which trains soldiers to deal with deployment-related psychological health issues before, during and after deployments. Key components of Battlemind include self-con-



Army Maj. Gen. Mark Graham speaks to 750 military and civilian specialists during the 2009 Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs Annual Suicide Prevention Conference Jan. 12 in San Antonio. (Defense Department photo/Ben Fenske.) See video at http://www.dcoe.health.mil/media/DCoE_News/MajGen_Mark_Graham_discusses_suicide_prevention.aspx

fidence, taking calculated risks, handling future challenges, mental toughness, overcoming obstacles or setbacks, and maintaining positive thoughts during times of adversity and challenge.

In addition, the conference featured a demonstration and overview of Beyond the Front, the new virtual reality suicide prevention training tool from the Army. The issue of suicide and suicide prevention is extremely complicated and we will only be able to address it by bringing together all of the services, VA, medical providers and line leaders. It will take all of this to drive true cultural change to reduce suicide rates.



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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Tools You Can Use

We are collecting “tools you can use” to feature in each newsletter. A more complete and growing collection is available in our online, Team DCoE “toolkit” (Resources) — www.dcoe.health.mil

Resources for Warriors, Families, Military Leaders and Medical Professionals

- Facilities, services, and benefits: www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.com
- Medical and non-medical resources: www.nationalresourcedirectory.org
- Defense Centers of Excellence for PH and TBI: www.dcoe.health.mil
- Service-specific information and resources: www.militaryonesource.com
- After-deployment concerns: www.afterdeployment.org
- Armed Forces Foundation: www.armedforcesfoundation.org
- Deployment Health Clinical Center: www.pdhealth.mil



DCoE In Action is a publication of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE).

We are committed to delivering the most relevant, useful and timely news on psychological health and traumatic brain injury and, as such, ask for your input and feedback on how to best accomplish this and improve our newsletter. Please [send your input and feedback](#) to our editor at dcoemedia@tma.osd.mil.

Our mailing address is 1401 Wilson Blvd., Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22209. Phone: (877) 291-3263.

Please come visit us on the web at <http://www.dcoe.health.mil>.



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