



# VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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## Announcements

### Welcome to our new Associate Director for Research!



Dr. William E. Schlenger is the new leader of our Research Component. He is a psychologist with broad interests and background in health, mental health and substance abuse research. His best known work is on the epidemiology of PTSD. He is also deeply interested in improving our understanding of the relationships among mental health, substance abuse and other behavioral and health problems.

Dr. Schlenger has extensive experience with large-scale behavioral research studies conducted by multidisciplinary teams. In the 1980s he was a leader of the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment

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## Clinical Component Update

*Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC)*  
Harold Kudler, MD

Many of us in the field of deployment mental health spend a great deal of our time seeking to find and engage the military members and their families on whose behalf we work.

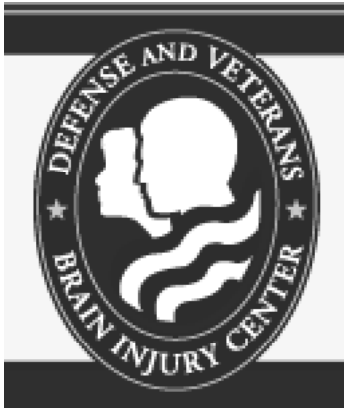


To my surprise, I found that this can sometimes be as simple as taking a walk on Sesame Street. As many of our readers know, Sesame Workshop (the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street) has produced Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC). This DVD series features their beloved Muppet, Elmo, his family and friends.

TLC is designed to help military members and their families cope with the stress of the deployment cycle. TLC I focused on parents and children missing one-another. TLC II is about how families can cope when a parent returns with visible or invisible injuries including depression and/or PTSD. Planning has begun for TLC III, which will deal with bereavement.



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## Outreach to DoD Providers

### 2nd Annual TBI Military Training Conference

September 25-26, 2008, Washington, DC

**Dr. Natalya Faynboym** presented "*Intimacy Issues Resulting from TBI, Polytrauma, Combat Stress*". The target audience was invited military health care providers who treat patients and care for families that experience traumatic brain injury. This includes, but is not limited to, primary care physicians, physician assistants, nurses, case managers, care coordinators, neurologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, behavioral health specialists, neuropsychologists, nurse educators, first responders and chaplains.



The Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, Inc.

## Announcements

### Welcome!

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Study. The results of this study have guided Federal policy related to veterans' mental health for the past two decades. More recently he has held senior leadership roles in the coordinating centers of eight major multi-site collaborative studies of psychosocial interventions aimed at treating or preventing mental health and/or substance abuse problems.

He currently leads a study of an internet-based self-help approach to cognitive behavioral therapy developed for use with combat-exposed troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The study is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. It is being conducted with Marines returning to Camp Lejeune.

Dr. Schlenger will continue to serve as adjunct faculty in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University Medical Center and in the Department of Psychology at North Carolina State University.

## Publications

Hurley RA, Taber KH. Imaging of Eating Disorders: Multiple Techniques to Demonstrate the Dynamic Brain. *J Neuropsychiatry Clin Neurosci* 2008 Summer; 20(3):252-260.

Kirby AC, Hertzberg BP, Collie CF, Yeatts B, Dennis MF, McDonald SD, Calhoun PS, Beckham JC. Smoking in help-seeking veterans with PTSD returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. *Addict Behav.* 2008 33(11):1448-53.

## Invited Lectures

**Dr. Robin Hurley (Associate Director, Education)** gave 3 presentations on neuropsychiatric topics at the Memphis VAMC October 5-6. These included "*Windows to the Brain: Neuropsychiatry of TBI*", the keynote address the Annual Medical Staff Meeting.



## Outreach to Community Providers

### What Primary Care Providers Need to Know About Mental Health Issues Facing Returning Service Members and Their Families

September 24, 2008 - Web Conference

**Dr. Harold Kudler (Associate Director, Clinical)** presented an overview of the range of normal and abnormal mental health responses among service members and their families before, during, and after mobilization, deployment, and redeployment. He also discussed the unique clinical aspects and medical needs of service members and their families. The target audience was primary care physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, psychiatrists, and other interested mental health providers.



## Clinical Component Update - Harold Kudler, MD (Associate MIRECC Director, Clinical)

### *Talk, Listen, Connect (TLC)*

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Right now a live USO production is touring military bases across America. My wife and I attended 2 of the 4 shows presented at Camp Lejeune in September (that's us in the very back wearing the white t-shirts). Our role was to greet families and hand out free Elmo toys to the children. As you can see from the picture, these shows were popular.

Each of the 4 shows was attended by 300 family members! What you can't see is that hundreds of families who live on base were not able to attend because there simply wasn't room for them. Family Support counselors based at Camp Lejeune tell me that over 1000 children with special needs live on base and thousands more military children of all descriptions live in the area.



As a MIRECC member, I was impressed that every family that came to the shows went home with a Sesame Street DVD that included TLC I, TLC II, and the companion booklet (listing mental health resources, among other information). This was an incredibly effective way to locate and engage one of the most important populations in post deployment mental health: the military family. I think it is safe to assume that the majority of these families have since watched these films. Those who have may have some new perspective on how their family might best cope with deployment and where they can connect with valuable assistance should they need it. VA is now in the process of distributing 200,000 TLC DVDs!

The Sesame Street website has more information and downloads: <http://archive.sesameworkshop.org/tlc/>



## Outreach to Community Providers

### Traumatic Brain Injury: Invisible Wounds of War

**Dr. Robin Hurley** (Associate Director, Education) and **Dr. Katherine Taber** (Assistant Director, Education) have collaborated with the CSSP and NC-AHEC to develop a series of workshops on TBI.



This training is designed to prepare professionals in the community who may treat military service members who have an undiagnosed brain injury. The purpose is to learn how to apply existing clinical skills to their work with military service members of Afghanistan and Iraq and their families. The target audience is psychiatrists, rehabilitation professionals, mental health professionals, family physicians, psychologists, social workers, counselors, case managers, psychiatric professionals, nurses, family therapists, clergy, substance abuse counselors, Speech Therapists, Physical Therapists and assistants, Occupational Therapists and assistants

The workshop will be offered at nine locations across North Carolina between October and June:

#### 2008

Greensboro - October 7  
Asheville - October 9  
Hickory - November 4  
Charlotte - November 5

#### 2009

Wilmington  
Rocky Mount  
Greenville  
Fayetteville  
Raleigh

## Book Chapters

Hurley RA, Fisher R, Taber KH. Clinical and functional neuroimaging. In: Bourgeois J, Young J, Hales RE, Yudofsky SC (eds). The American Psychiatric Press Part I Psychiatry Board Review Textbook. American Psychiatric Press 2008: 232-246.

## Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

### November 14

Margret Bell, PhD (Boston VAMC)

*"(Almost) Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Military Sexual Trauma"*

### December 12

No presentation

This series is presented by V-tel and audio conferences. We are having increasing participation from sites outside VISN 6, so our assigned numbers may change. The number that each VISN 6 site will use to dial in will be included in an email notification prior to each presentation.

If you wish to attend from a site outside of VISN 6, please contact Mary Peoples ([mary.peoples1@va.gov](mailto:mary.peoples1@va.gov); 704-638-9000 ext 2956) so she can make the necessary arrangements.