



Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)

VA's Women's Mental Health Efforts

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VA WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH: CONTINUUM OF GENDER-SENSITIVE AND TRAUMA SENSITIVE CARE



- Women are increasingly using VA health and mental health services
- In FY17, 44% of women Veterans who used VA accessed mental health services
- VA offers a full continuum of mental health services for women
 - General outpatient
 - Specialty services
 - Evidence-based therapies
 - Inpatient and residential options (mixed-gender and women-only)
- VA offers universal screening for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) which is sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment during military service
- Every VA facility has a MST Coordinator and offers free MST-related health care – evidence of trauma is not required
- Rates among women Veterans are increasing for both reporting MST experience (28%) and receiving MST-related treatment (79%)



VA WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH: MONTHLY TELECONFERENCE SERIES



- Women's Mental Health Monthly Teleconference Series
 - Focuses on unique mental health needs of women Veterans
 - On average, ~300 participants monthly
 - Sample training topics:
 - Multidisciplinary Treatment Team Training for Eating Disorders
 - Mental Health During the Menopause Transition
 - Suicide Prevention among Women Veterans
- Women's Mental Health Prescriber Teleconference Series
 - Launched FY17, ~250 participants monthly during first year
 - Content geared towards prescribers, also of interest to non-prescribers
 - New for FY18: alternate didactic sessions with case conferences
 - Sample Training Topics:
 - Antidepressants and Anxiolytics during Pregnancy and Postpartum
 - Pharmacotherapy for Sleep Disorders in Women
 - Pharmacotherapy for Complex PTSD and Borderline Personality Disorder



VA WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH: MULTIDISCIPLINARY EATING DISORDER TREATMENT TEAM TRAINING



- Women's Mental Health and Women's Health Services developed a novel training consistent with the Joint Commission's new 2016 standards on outpatient treatment of eating disorders
- Participants learn to provide specialized care as part of a multidisciplinary team, that includes Enhanced Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT-E) for eating disorders, medication management, primary care, and dietitian services
- The 8-week, 24-hour training is delivered live, is entirely web-based, and allows for live interaction between trainers and team members at multiple sites
- Regular case consultation is available monthly for 1 year, and on an as-needed basis
- 10 teams trained in FY17; goal is for all 18 VA Networks to have at least 1 team in place by end of FY18



VA WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH: STAIR AND STAIR PARENTING TRAINING PROGRAMS



- STAIR (Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation) teaches skills for managing strong emotions and building healthy interpersonal relationships
 - Areas of functioning that can be disrupted in women with histories of severe interpersonal trauma, such as sexual assault
 - Women's Mental Health created an 8-hour (2 hours/week for 4 weeks) web-based didactic and case consultation STAIR workshop
 - Since FY14, over 200 VA clinicians have been trained through this initiative, representing every VA medical center
- Parenting STAIR is a parent-specific adaptation for those who have completed STAIR therapy and continue to have trauma-related reactions that negatively impact parenting/parent-child relationships
 - VA is currently pilot testing a 4-hour (2 hours/week 1 week) live, web-based, Parenting STAIR workshop with biweekly case consultation for VA mental health providers.