

VHMAC-ST Meeting Minutes (15 Apr 2020)

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order of the Veterans' Healthy Minds Advisory Council- South Texas, at 1105 on 15 Apr 2020, via Skype video/tele conference.

Roll Call— Present or Excused: Carlos Acosta, David La Pointe, Estela Cantu-LaPointe, Karah Smith, Kesha Delasbour, Kevin Crozier, Larissa Martinez, Lisa Firmin, Michael Carrion, Betsy Davis. Not Present: Andrea Strong, Becky Smith, Christina Lynch, Christopher Vidaurre, Gingerlei Seda, Jill Palmer, Jose Gonzales, Michael O'Connell, Natasha Walden, Scott Rios, Austin Lawler, Richard Martinez, Wil Seda.

II. Approval/Review of Previous Minutes/Current Agenda

Council roll was called by Secretary, Kesha Delasbour.

Because a quorum was not present there was no motion to accept March 2020 Meeting. They will be motioned and accepted at our next meeting.

III. Old Business

VHMACST – Feedback. Feedback activities will be suspended at this time. Dr. Davis will determine if/when they will continue after COVID-19 issues are resolved.

VA Community MH & Wellness Summit – Dr. Davis will inform the Council if/when Summit actions resume.

VHMACST— Veteran Resilience and Recovery Operation. Recommendation is for institution of a domestic violence POC available 24/7, via email or crisis line. Council members David LaPointe and Karah Smith will meet with VA rep, Dr. Davis for further discussion. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Women Vet Sub-committee. Council member Lisa Firmin met with other council member sub-committee members on 6 Feb 2020. Sub-committee is proposing a national assessment for the upbuild of women's clinics, within VA hospitals, be conducted with feedback from local, state-wide, and national VSOs whose primary support is centered around women veterans. A memo to the national women's advisory committee will be sent detailing the proposal, and a synopsis of local efforts versus national efforts to substantiate the need for women's clinics in VA hospitals. **(OPEN)**

Outreach Events— Proposed. Council member Will Seda is the sub-committee lead for council outreach efforts. All outreach efforts, with the exception of contact by phone, are temporarily suspended until further notice due to COVID-19 pandemic concerns. All council members are advised to submit information regarding outreach opportunities during monthly council meetings, or via email to Chair, David LaPointe. **(OPEN)**

Mental Health First Aid Training— Guest Speaker. Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor, and council member, Larissa Martinez with Circle of Arms organization is offering a virtual training class for all council members. A minimum of five council members is required for the course to begin. The purpose of the training is to help “identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders”; Training is recommended for all veteran's service organizations and individuals. Council will request funding via VA to have all council members certified, however at this time council members are being asked to complete the training at own expense. No retroactive pay via VA funding will be made available to council members that opt to pay out-of-pocket to attend training. Council members may be sponsored for training costs. Other training options include training during a council meeting or off-site at a later designated time. Cost: \$40 for course material; 8-hr. course;

For more info, please contact a council officer or council member Larissa Martinez. Contact email: info@MentalHealthFirstAid.org; Site: www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org. (OPEN)

VHMACST—Table Cloth. Chairman submitted and funded the order for a secondary council tablecloth for outreach events. Delivery date, TBD. (OPEN)

VHMACST—Budget Request. An updated budget proposal from the council to the VA will be submitted to VA rep, Dr. Davis within the next seven days, from the date of this council meeting. There is currently no VA approved funding for food or beverage consumption. Please submit input for budget considerations for the next 12 months (e.g. website development, office supplies, advertising, outreach banner/tent/table/chairs, etc.). Restrictions exist for vendor selections. Final projected budget proposals will be submitted to VA rep, Dr. Betsy Davis. Current recommendation is to add Mental Health First Aid training for all council members to the budget request. (OPEN)

VHMACST— Member Photos. All council members are asked to submit a headshot photo for inclusion on the council website. Please submit photo to council Chair at the following: Email: davelp.lapointe@gmail.com. (OPEN)

Sexual Assault Awareness Month. April is sexual assault awareness month, nation-wide. Objective for the month is to promote awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence, educate and engage the public to address issues surrounding sexual abuse, and to provide prevention and treatment resources to individuals affected by sexual crimes and trauma. All STVHCS events have been cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic concerns. (OPEN)

Handouts. Refer to “miscellaneous” section below for info on VA Telehealth and My HealtheVet services. Council members are advised to submit recommendations for handout pamphlet ideas to council Chair for referral to VA rep, Dr. Davis. (OPEN)

2020 Collective. Council members are directed to check email for most recent updates regarding local events and involvement opportunities. (OPEN)

IV. New Business

VHMACST— South Texas Mental Health. Council members are asked to provide feedback regarding any issues or concerns about obtaining mental health care via VA mental health services. Feedback may be submitted to council officers for forwarding to council VA rep, Dr. Davis.

Mental Health Month. May is mental health awareness month, nation-wide. Objective for the month is to promote awareness of mental health issues, break the stigma surrounding mental health conditions, and to eliminate barriers that hinder access of care for those with a mental health diagnosis and those in need of mental health services. STVHCS will be collaborating with local VSO Endeavors for mental health programming for the month. STVHCS VA Whole Health Program will also be making a webinar series available for viewing. STVHCS is seeking veterans willing to share their story of coping and resiliency during COVID-19. Contact a council officer if you are interested. A mental health awareness month flyer will be added to the council website. Two prominent concerns for veterans at this time is isolation and access to virtual resources.

STVHCS V.A. Medical Center (ALM)— Care for women vets with/during COVID-19. VA IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) Coordinator is the POC for outreach strategies to assist those in at-risk home situations. No further update. Contact info: (210) 732-1802 ext. 61876; Or, (210) 617-5300.

Events/Listing. All events are canceled or suspended until further notice due to COVID-19 pandemic concerns. Online/telecall events will be posted on listing and sent to your email.

VHMACST— Contact Cards. Cards are available for all council members. Contact Chair, David La Pointe to obtain cards as necessary. Last update is still current.

STVHCS V.A. Medical Center (ALM)— Inpatient Mental Health Education. VA rep, Dr. Davis have requested that all council members review the inpatient discharge flyer disseminated electronically to council officers to disperse to council.

VHMACST— Next Meeting. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, council meetings will be conducted via a videoconference and/or teleconference platform. Current recommendation is for use of the Skype telecommunication application, accessible from PC, tablet, and mobile device.

V. Next Meeting

20 May 2020; 1100; Location or format TBD (due to COVID-19 and tentative city-wide ordinance restrictions for the gathering of personnel).

VI. Adjournment

No motion was made by a council member to adjourn the meeting. No council member seconded. Meeting was not officially adjourned due to an expiration of the VA's conference line authorization code. At 1159, VA rep Dr. Davis sent an email to council officers confirming that a technical difficulty concluded the meeting abruptly.

VII. Miscellaneous

Conference line. Info for council meetings: 1-800-767-1750, code 60009#.

VHMACST— Feedback to VA Mental Health Dept. Council members are asked to report any issues or concerns with obtaining quality mental health care via VA mental health services in order to improve the quality of VA mental health services provided. Current issues highlighted include: VA customer service, procedural triggers within VA healthcare for veterans with MST/history of suicidal attempts and ideations.

VHMACST— Meetings. Council meetings will be conducted on Wednesdays at 1100, the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

VHMACST— Committees. Establishment of committees within the council have been determined for council website, communications, fundraising, membership, outreach, etc. All council members, with the exception of council officers are to submit feedback and individual committee designations to council Chair if assignment to a sub-committee have not been confirmed. Council Chair have set forth that all council members be assigned to an internal sub-committee position. Sub-committee designations were established as follows: Council member Will S.- functions #1 and #2, for education WRT the VA healthcare system; Council members Larissa M. and David L.- function #1, specifically WRT MH First Aid Training; Council members Will S. And Michael C.- function #1 for Outreach; Council members Lisa F., Kesha D., Gingerlei S., Natasha W., and David L.- function #2, for women veteran's needs; Council members Gingerlei S., David L., Kevin C., and Michael C., for VA psychologists' training WRT veteran's experiences with mental health.

Other— Guest Speakers. Dr. Betsy Davis will arrange for VA reps to present to the council on the following topics: MST for men, veteran's court, Veteran's Justice Outreach program (POC: Justin Childers), and VA programs for homeless veterans.

VHMACST—Website. Development is a work-in-progress. Please review and provide input for website content. Resource information for PTSD, veteran's crisis, suicide, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness

(NAMI) is accessible on the site. A tab for women veterans related resources will be added. Site can be accessed at <https://veteranshealthymindsadvisorycouncilsouthtexas.com>.

VHMACST—Facebook Page. A Facebook page has been created with appropriate content. Please review and submit feedback to council Chair, David LaPointe.

VHMACST—Twitter. Council profile may be accessed at the following handle: @VetMinds.

VHMACST— Business Cards. Cards are available for council members. Contact Chair, David La Pointe to obtain cards as necessary.

VHMACST— Contact Card Log. Chair, David La Pointe maintains a log of all contacts made with servicemembers, veterans, and family members of veterans for assistance. An updated copy of the log was disseminated to all council members present. For record-keeping, council members are advised to notify Chair, David La Pointe of contact made by council members on behalf of the council for support.

VMHACST— VA Outreach. VA Rep Dr. Betsy Davis will notify VA PCPs to inform veterans about the VHMACST. Council member Kevin Crozier will present VHMACST agenda during Veteran Fair committee meetings as a rep. for D.A.V.

VHMACST— Functions, Duties, and Responsibilities. The mission of the council is to establish a true partnership between the veterans and their families, VA mental health professionals, community partners, and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) in order to improve the quality of VA mental health services, to improve veteran and family understanding of those services, and to promote best use of those services. A handout was provided to all council members in attendance detailing all functions, duties, and responsibilities of the council. The council is required to have 50% of council members present at meetings in order to be operational. Contact Chair, David LaPointe for more information.

Veteran’s Crisis Line. 24/7 access; Contact 1-800-273-8255 option 1.

Urgent Care. Where and When You Need It. Individually review information about the Mission Act, which expands same-day services in primary care and mental health, as well as expands telehealth to veterans in their homes. Attachment previously provided to council members.

VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound. For veterans receiving a VA pension that also require assistance with performing daily activities, are bed-ridden due to an illness, reside in a nursing home due to mental or physical disability, have vision impairment, or are housebound due to a permanent disability. Required forms— VA Form 21-2680; VA Form 21-0779). For more info, contact your Primary Care Physician (PCP), the local Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) at Frank Tejada VA Outpatient Clinic (FTOC), or the local Disabled American Veterans (DAV) office; FTOC Contact line: (210) 699-5040; DAV Contact Line: (210) 699-5064. Benefit eligibility, application process, form, and a local Pension Management Center (PMC) can be viewed online at the following site:

<https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/>; local DAV office can be viewed online at the following site: <https://www.dav.org/veterans/find-your-local-office/>.

VA Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Assistance Program. VA Coordinator Glorive Cabino. The purpose of the program is to provide “comprehensive person-centered, recovery-oriented assistance” to veterans, family members, caregivers, and VA hospital employees that “use or experience” IPV. Program provides screening, assessment, and resources. For more info, contact: Ms. Cabino, (210) 993-3575; Women’s Health, (855-VA-WOMEN), womenshealth.va.gov; Mental Health, (800) 273-8255, mentalhealth.va.gov; National Center for PTSD, (802) 296-6300, ptsd.va.gov. Call 911 for all emergency situations requiring immediate assistance.

My Telehealth. "Meet with VA providers virtually and send important health data from the comfort of your home, using your computer or mobile device"; Remote patient monitoring; Video appointments/Talk to your doctor via VA Video Connect. Contact your primary care provider for more info. Site: www.telehealth.va.gov.

My HealthVet. Central VA hospital scheduling resource for expedited appointment processing and healthcare management. Site: www.myhealth.va.gov; Contact 1-877-327-0022; M-F; 0700-1900 (CT). **South Texas**

Veteran's Health Care System. Mental Health & Recovery Services: "We believe that recovery from mental health and substance use problems is possible and that treatment can be an important part of this process for many Veterans." Attachment previously provided to council members.

Vet Centers. Readjustment issues, counseling services, community outreach & education, individual and group counseling, marital, family & relationship counseling, bereavement counseling, anger management, spouse/significant other support groups, employment guidance & benefits referral, military sexual trauma and more! Attachment previously provided to council members. Contact nearest location for more info: San Antonio Northeast Vet Center, 9504 I-35 Frontage Rd. #214, contact number: (210) 650-0422; San Antonio Northwest Vet Center, 9910 W. Loop 1604 N #126, contact number: (210) 688-0606.

United Heroes League. "Provides equipment, camps, pro sports tickets, financial assistance and special experiences for current service members and honorably discharged veterans who have been deployed to a combat zone and their children under 18 years old. All military branches are included and may apply."

Homeless/At-risk of Becoming Homeless Veteran's Help. National Call Center— 24/7 access to counseling and information on available health care programs; Contact: 877-424-3838.

NRD.gov—National Resource Directory. An online resource "that connects wounded warriors, service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers to programs and services that support them" and "provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration" for the outlined population. **Veteran's Discounts.** Please submit information for organizations that provide discounts for services to veterans to council Chair, David LaPointe. A compilation listing will be developed and managed by the council.

VIII. Minutes

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Kesha Delasbour.

Minutes will be approved by Chair, Dr. David La Pointe.

What to Expect Next



What to expect from your VA team:

- 2-4 scheduled appointments in the first 30 days for support

Due to current COVID-19 precautions, you may be contacted to transfer these appointments to Telehealth or phone. See back of page for info on telehealth.

- Follow up phone calls for missed appointments.
- Appointments will be with a provider to review medications & with your Mental Health Treatment Coordinator.

Transitions can be a difficult time.

Consider the following:

- Adjustments to medications can take time. Keep your treatment team informed how you are doing.
- Set a daily schedule for yourself that includes connecting with others through phone or video chat.
- Feelings of disappointment, self-doubt, loneliness can be normal. Reach out to your MHTC if you are struggling with these feelings.

Resources available:

South Texas VA
7400 Merton Minter
San Antonio, TX 78229
210-617-5300

Make the Connection
www.maketheconnection.net

Vets4Warriors
www.vets4warriors.com
1-855-858-8255

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Family Resources:

Coaching Into Care
www.va.gov/coachingintocare
1-888-823-7458

NAMI Groups Online
www.nami-sat.org
www.supportgroupscentral.com/namitexas



Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net
or text to **838255**

Staying Connected during COVID-19

VA Video Connect (VVC) Telehealth

mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect

If your VA provider recommends using VVC for follow-up appointments and you have a smartphone, tablet, or computer to use with internet/data access, here are your next steps:

1. Give an up-to-date email address and phone number to your VA provider or clerk to set up the appointment.
2. If using iPhone or iPad, download the free VA Video Connect app. If using a computer, laptop, or other Android phone/tablet, you do not need this app.
3. Optional: do a test call of your equipment at the “Video To Home Test” box at the bottom of STX VA Homepage: www.southtexas.va.gov/ 
4. At the time of your appointment, click the link from your email and follow directions to connect to the appointment.

MyHealthVet

www.myhealth.va.gov/

Create an account with free upgrade to “Premium” (verify ID) for access to secure message your providers, see appointments, request medication refills, and more.

VA Wellness & Coping Apps

mobile.va.gov/appstore/veterans

Download and try out VA Apps that can be helpful, including ones for managing pain, improving sleep, refilling prescriptions, and improving your mood.

STX VA Telecare Nursing Line

(210) 949-3994 or 1-888-686-6350 (outside of 210 area code)

www.southtexas.va.gov/patients/telecare.asp

Telephone medical advice to Veterans of South Texas Veterans Health Care System. Call a TeleCare nurse if you have symptoms, questions, or need advice about any health problem.

VA Primary Care Clinic

Make sure you have the phone number for your VA Primary Care clinic, listed here:

<https://www.southtexas.va.gov/locations/index.asp> . If you have flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath, call your provider before you come in.

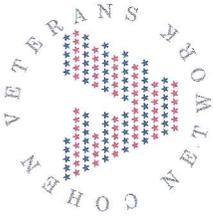
South Texas VA News

Keep up-to-date at www.southtexas.va.gov/emergency/index.asp or follow on Twitter or Facebook @SanAntonioVAMC

Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) this is a 24/7 line and offers access to all the local resources.

Please be aware of this resource for yourselves and any other veterans or veteran family members.

ENDEAVORS[®]



The Steven A. Cohen
Military Family Clinic
at Endeavors

VIRTUAL PARENTING ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Every Tuesday
(May 12-Jul 28)
6-8pm (CST)

Join this FREE 12-week parenting enrichment program,
Operation Parent Strong, to learn and develop helpful techniques:

- Reduce family stress
- Prepare for school achievement
- Build strong, healthy relationships
- Provide positive change for problem behaviors

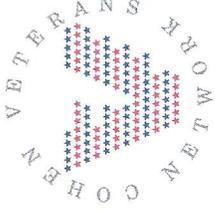
FOR QUESTIONS & TO REGISTER,
CONTACT LAURA VEGA:

210-208-5700 x5705 or lvega@endeavors.org



United Way of San Antonio
and Bexar County





The Steven A. Cohen
Military Family Clinic
at Endeavors



VIRTUAL EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Tuesday, April 28
12-2pm (CST)

Join us as we prepare you for employment by explaining:

- Types of resumes
- How to target your resume to a job opportunity
- Tips on creating a successful LinkedIn profile
 - Job searching strategies
- How to prepare for a virtual career fair

Facilitator:

Laurie Pimentel-Johnson
South Texas District Outreach Coordinator
Texas Veterans Commission

REGISTER BY VISITING:
bit.ly/mfcvirtualet

Questions? Contact Andrew Santos at asantos@endeavors.org.

davelp.lapointe@gmail.com

Subject: Find What Tools Work Best for You

Subject: Find What Tools Work Best for You

From: National Center for PTSD <veteranshealth@public.govdelivery.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2020 9:03 AM

To: davelp.lapointe@gmail.com

Subject: Find What Tools Work Best for You

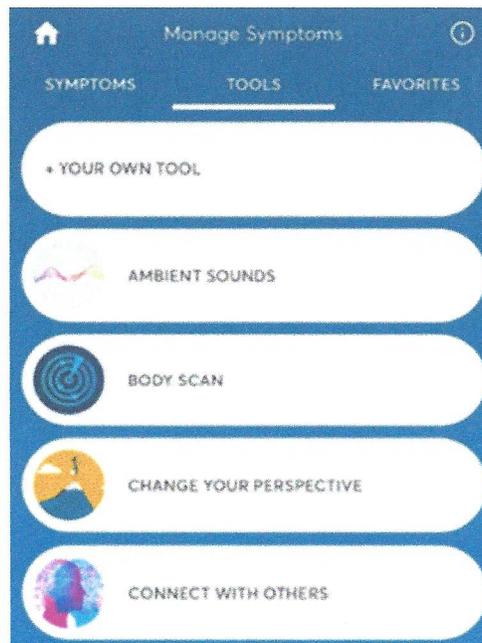
[View as a webpage / Share](#)

Welcome to the National Center for PTSD

News Relevant to the Issues of Trauma and PTSD



From personalized photo albums and music playlists, to relaxation exercises, the PTSD Coach app has the tools to help address your needs.



Have you ever considered scheduling a specific time in your day to think

about all the issues that are on your mind? This "worry time," which aims to help you gain control over your own thoughts, is just one of the tools that the [PTSD Coach app](#) has that helps you manage symptoms of PTSD.

Other tools include creating a nighttime routine to help sleep come more easily, deep breathing exercises, soothing audio from a custom playlist and more. [Download the PTSD Coach app](#) to explore all these tools.

[Discover New Tools](#)

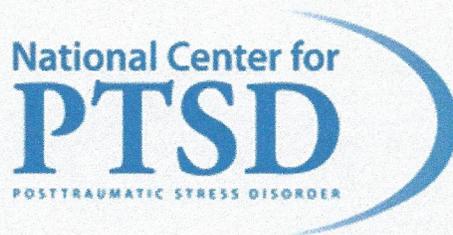
This app is also available in Spanish. You can personalize the app through your profile and choose your preferred language.

Stay Connected - Subscribe Here

Be sure to forward this update to others so they can [subscribe](#). We send one update per month to keep you informed of the latest PTSD developments.

Thank you,

The Staff of VA's National Center for PTSD



Produced by VA's National Center for PTSD - Executive Division

Email: ncptsd@va.gov | Visit our Website: www.ptsd.va.gov

*Links will take you outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs website to a non-government site. VA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of these linked websites.

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VA



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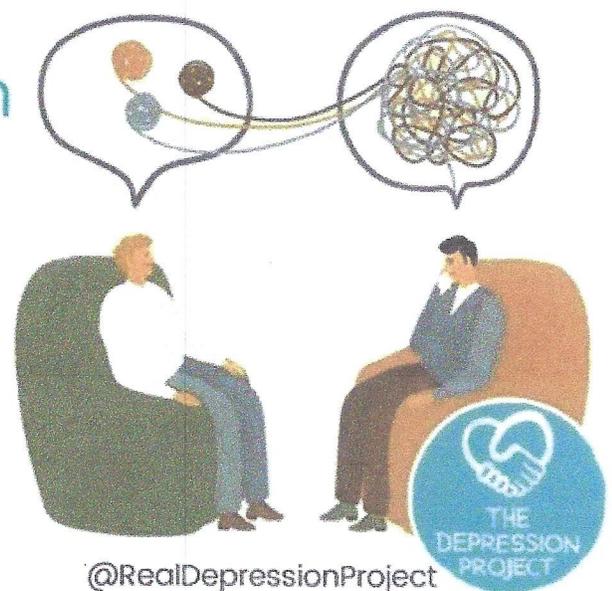
Sent to davelp.lapointe@gmail.com on behalf of US Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration · 810 Vermont Avenue, NW · Washington, DC 20420 · 877-222-VETS (877-222-8387)

Seeing A **Therapist** Doesn't Mean There's Something **"Wrong With You"**. It Means You May Be...

- Seeking **clarity** in some areas of your life
- Wanting to work through **complex emotions**
- Working through a **traumatic experience**
- Challenging negative **thinking patterns**
- Learning new **techniques to cope** with difficult situations
- Focused on **personal growth**

Let's **stop shaming** those who seek to better themselves.

#StopTheStigma



@RealDepressionProject