



King County

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Implementation Plan 2012 – 2017 Veterans and Human Services Levy Activity 1.6 B: Military Family Counseling

1. Goal

Increase self-sufficiency of veterans and vulnerable populations

2. Strategy

The Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan (SIP) set a goal of enhancing services and access for veterans, military personnel and their families.

3. Activity 1.6 B Military Family Counseling

Activity 1.6 B Military Family Counseling is one of two activities funded under Activity 1.6 Support for Military Families.

4. Service Needs, Populations to be Served, and Promotion of Equity and Social Justice

a) Service Needs

This activity is new to the 2012 – 2017 Levy. It seeks to increase support to military families before, during and after deployment as recommended by the Center for Deployment Psychology¹ and the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Military Deployment Services for Youth, Families and Service Members². The National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the Center for Deployment Psychology have documented the negative effects of deployment on military families pre-deployment, during deployment and post-deployment including the following:

¹ Center for Deployment Psychology. <http://deploymentpsych.org/>.

² American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Military Deployment Services for Youth, Families and Service Members. The Psychological Needs of U.S. Military Service Members and Their Families: A Preliminary Report. 2007.

- Partners of veterans experience increased family responsibilities, financial issues, isolation and fear for their partner's safety causing anxiety, sadness or feelings of being overwhelmed.
- Children's reactions to a parent's deployment vary by child and by a child's developmental stage. Young children may exhibit separation anxiety or temper tantrums. School-age children may experience a decline in academic performance, mood changes or physical complaints. Adolescents may become angry and act out, or withdraw.
- The return of a family member with PTSD brings higher levels of marital problems, family violence and partner distress.^{3,4}

The National Center for PTSD has on their website, a summary of research findings on partners of veterans with PTSD. The research indicates PTSD's effects on intimate relationships can include such things as marital adjustment, family functioning, mental health of partners, compromised parenting, family violence, divorce, sexual problems, aggression, and caregiver burden. The veteran's population experiences a high rate of separation and divorce. For example 38 percent of Vietnam veteran's marriages failed within six months after the veterans returned from overseas. The divorce rate for veterans with PTSD is reported to be two times greater than for veterans without PTSD. Research indicates that in families of veterans with PTSD, there is more family violence, more physical and verbal aggression and more partner violence.⁵

Studies have also found that partners of veterans with PTSD are more likely to develop mental health problems. These partners tend to report lower levels of happiness, reduced satisfaction in their lives and more demoralization. Those partners describe difficulty coping with their partner's PTSD, stress because their needs are unmet and experiences with physical and emotional violence. The problems are often explained as secondary traumatization, an indirect impact of the trauma of those close to them.⁵

Partners of veterans with PTSD assume greater responsibility for the management of the household such as finances and maintaining relationships with children and extended family. The partners feel compelled to care for the veteran and his problems which can result in caregiver burden, a term that describes both the difficulties of caring for someone with a chronic illness and the emotional strain it places on partners. The level of caregiver burden has been shown to increase with the severity of the veteran's PTSD.

While more research is needed in this area, the information currently available documents the significant impact deployment can have on families and the importance of providing additional support to our military families.

b) Populations to be Served

This activity will provide counseling services to active duty military personnel, military veterans, members of the National Guard and Reserves, their partners and children who

³ Center for Deployment Psychology. <http://deploymentpsych.org/>.

⁴ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for PTSD. <http://ptsd.va.gov>.

are living in King County, to assist them in dealing with the stress of a parent's deployment, either before, during and/or after deployment.

c) *Promotion of Equity and Social Justice*

The Equity and Social Justice Ordinance requires King County to consider the impacts of its policies and activities on its efforts to achieve fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color and low-income communities.

i) Will your activity have an impact on equity?

King County's Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Initiative recognizes that the economy and quality of life of King County's residents depends on the ability of each individual to contribute. It further recognizes that important work needs to be done to remove barriers that limit the ability of individuals to fulfill their potential. King County's Strategic Plan 2010 - 2014 incorporates the principles of ESJ. This Military Family Counseling activity supports King County's Strategic Plan, in particular the goal to "Provide equitable opportunities for all individuals to realize their full potential."

ii) What population groups are likely to be affected by the proposal? How will communities of color or low-income communities be impacted?

As described above, counseling services would be available to active duty military personnel, military veterans, members of the National Guard and Reserves, their partners and children who are living in King County. Those utilizing the services available through this activity are likely to be positively impacted by these services. This would include veterans of color and their families. The 2010 American Communities Survey, indicates veterans of color represent between 16 and 19 percent of the veterans living in King County.

iii) What actions will be taken to enhance likely positive impacts on these communities and mitigate possible negative impacts?

King County is rich in resources to help veterans and their families. Providing counseling to families experiencing deployments will likely have positive impacts that will be enhanced by referrals to other federal, state or community resources to help support families.

5. Activity Description

This levy-funded activity will provide couples and family counseling to support families of military personnel pre-deployment, during deployment and post-deployment. The counselor will make appropriate referrals for deployment-related needs, increase the military family's understanding of the impact of deployment and help build family members' resilience to the impact of the deployment.

According to the National Center for PTSD effective treatment for partners of veterans with PTSD should include psychoeducation, support groups for both partners and veterans, concurrent individual treatment and couple or family therapy. Psychoeducational groups can educate veterans and their partners on the effects of trauma on the couple or families.

Individual therapy can be important particularly when both individuals are experiencing PTSD symptoms. These services for family members are beginning to be offered at Veterans Affairs PTSD programs and Vet Centers.⁵

6. Funds Available

The 2012 - 2017 Service Improvement Plan allocated \$100,000 annually beginning in 2014. An additional \$100,000 was included in the 2013 Supplemental Appropriation Ordinance which was approved by the King County Council in September 2012. This 2013 allocation will allow this activity to be implemented one year earlier than was proposed in the Service Improvement Plan.

All funds are to be spent in the year in which they are allocated. Any funds unspent at the end of the contract period will be reallocated.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Veterans Levy	-	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Human Services Levy	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

7. Evidence-based or Promising Practices

There are several evidence-based treatments for PTSD. One that focuses on the role of intimate relationships to improve both PTSD symptoms and intimate relationship functioning is Cognitive-behavioral conjoint therapy for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (CBCT for PTSD). This evidence-based and problem-focused intervention consists of 15 treatment sessions of 75 minute duration. A National Institute of Mental Health-funded study found that 81 percent of couples who received CBCT for PTSD experienced a significant improvement in their PTSD symptoms and 62 percent reported improvement in their relationship. The U.S. Air Force and Army clinicians are receiving training in CBCT, one was scheduled at Fort Lewis Army Base in February 2012.^{6,7}

The agency that will carry out this implementation plan has yet to be identified. That agency may propose using a different evidence-based treatment than has been described above. The viability of that treatment will be evaluated, and may be part of the negotiation process.

8. Service Partnerships

Service partnerships are important to ensure a variety of services are available to help support military families. The King County Veterans Program (KCVP) is an important player in providing services and referring veterans to appropriate services. The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs with whom the KCVP works closely provides many services including some funded by the Veterans and Human Services Levy. Other key organizations providing services to veterans include the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Veterans Affairs

⁵ National Center for PTSD. www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/partners_of_vets_research_findings.asp

⁶ Couple Therapy for PTSD. <http://coupletherapyforptsd.com/therapy/>

⁷ Ryerson University Research News. http://ryerson.ca/news/media/General_Public/20120814/RN_PTSD.html.

Regional Office, and veterans' service organizations in addition to a variety of community-based service agencies.

The Veterans and Human Services Levy funds an array of services to serve veterans and their families in King County. The Levy website located at www.kingcounty.gov/DCHS/Levy includes an interactive map providing information on all of the Levy-funded activities along with contact information. In addition, a Levy-funded Veterans and Information Assistance Call Center, operated by the WDVA maintains a database of resources available to assist veterans. The call center number is 1-877-904-VETS (8387).

9. Performance Measures

The following performance measures were identified by the Levy's Performance Measurement and Evaluation Unit for the Military Family Counseling activity. These performance targets may be adjusted on an annual basis.

Objectives	Service Outputs/ Measures	Most Recent Performance	2013 Target(s)	Data Source
Treatment/ Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of clients receiving Levy-funded PTSD/family counseling • Number of hours of individual PTSD counseling provided • Hours of PTSD/Family counseling support groups • Percent of clients demonstrating reduced impacts of PTSD/family stress measured pre/post 	(N/A)	TBD	Report Card – Services Report Card – Services Report Card – Services Report Card - Outcomes