



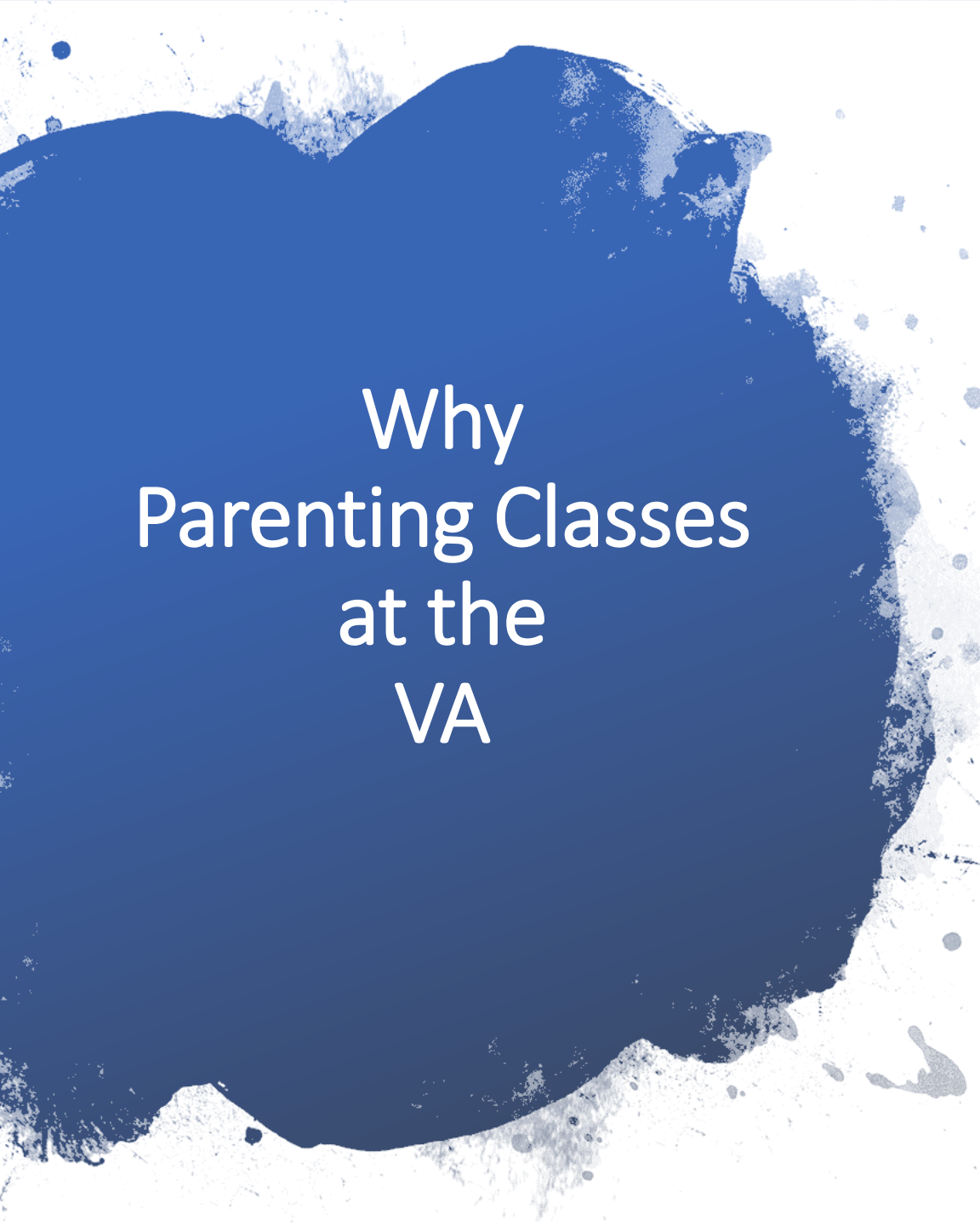
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Parenting Groups from Idea to Innovation

Parenting Groups needed at VA

IDEA IS BORN





Why Parenting Classes at the VA

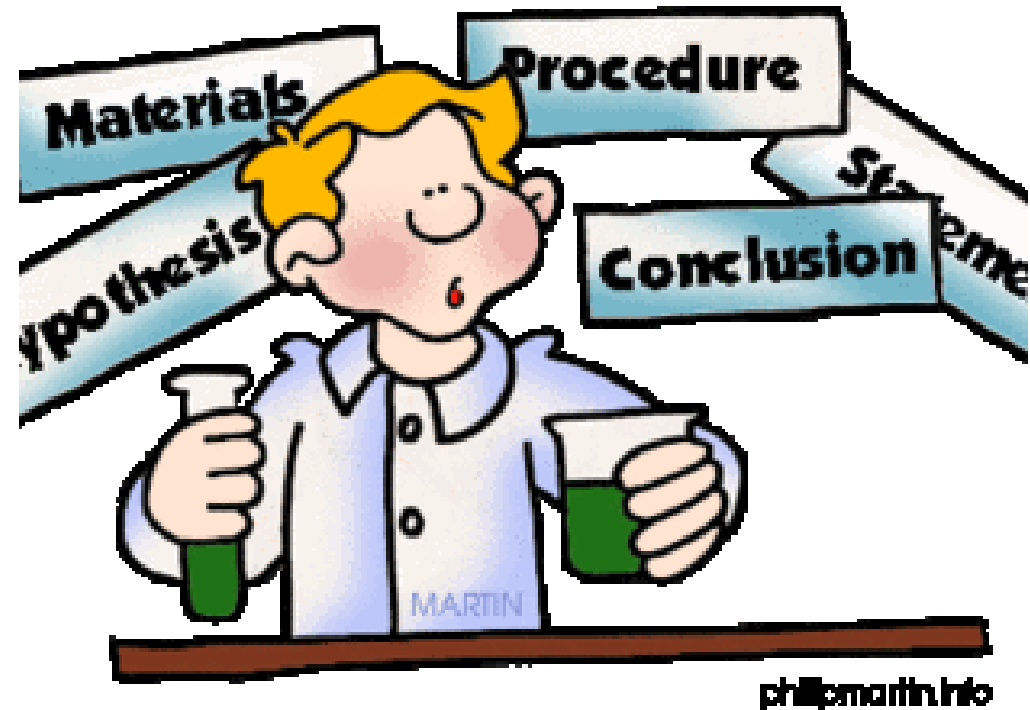
- Reporting open cases with Department of Children and Families
- Domestic Violence Charges
- This led me to thinking we needed more programing to support the families of these Veterans

How do I start or introduce new program while working for government agency

- Talk to immediate supervisor
- See if there are any programs that support new innovation/ideas at workplace
- Participate in a Project Improvement project
- VA has program called LEAD which is **one-year developmental program for highly motivated employees who have the desire to learn and work extra hard to develop their leadership skills.**

Participation in an Individual Process Improvement Project

What information do I need to get this program off the ground?



Department of Defense data indicated 3-6 months after returning home from Deployment

27% of Active Duty and 35.5% of National Guard Service members have screened **positive** for clinically significant MH concerns

- PTSD
- Depression
- Suicidal Ideation
- Interpersonal conflict
- Aggressive ideation

(Milliken, Auchterlonie & Hoge, 2007)



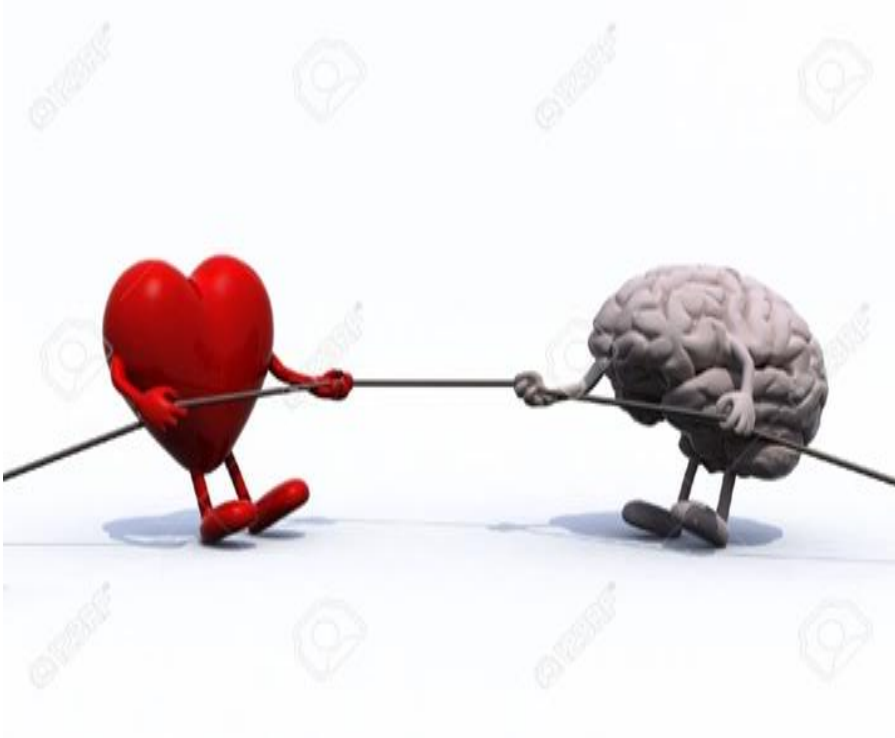
Statistics on anger among Veterans



Out of 117 OEF and OIF combat Veterans presenting to a VA Deployment Health Clinic:

- 39% at least one act of aggression (ex: destroying property)
- 15% threatened physical violence
- 21% got into physical fights
- Survey of reintegration problems among combat veterans showed that anger was the most commonly reported problem
- 57% reporting increased problems in controlling anger.

What Happens When A Combat Soldier Comes Home?



- Inability to regulate behavioral responses to perceived threats
- Persistent response of excessive anger and aggression in situations perceived as threatening, even in the absence of real threat
- Loss of the ability to regulate the intensity/expression of anger
- Overestimates of threat
- High levels of arousal
- Causes inability to regulate the intensity of emotion and behavioral response

• (Novaco & Chemtob, 2002)

Implications Of Veterans Struggling With Anger On Their Families

Adverse consequences include:

- Increased risk for divorce
- Domestic violence
- Job loss and financial instability
- Serious impairments in family, social, and occupational functioning

Implications also indicate Long Term Issues

- In a sample of 754 treatment-seeking OEF/OIF combat Veterans
- Families experience challenges as much as 3 years following a deployment
- Sample identified high rates of divorce and anger control problems

(Sayer et al, 2010)



Key Facts about Veteran's of the Post 9/11 ERA

- 17 % are women
- One in five veterans served on active duty after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.
- Roughly half (47%) of post-9/11 veterans say they had emotionally traumatic or distressing experiences related to their military service
- About half of post-9/11 veterans say readjusting to civilian life was difficult





Transitioning from
Military life to
Civilian life comes
with many
challenges



Issues Veterans encounter when transitioning from Military to Civilian life are layered on top of

“Normal Family Conflicts”



These conflicts may involve



- Financial
- Job Loss/Career disruptions
- Serious Impairments within Families
 - Social
 - Occupational Functioning





These issues raise the risk of

Domestic Violence

Divorce

Suicide





Research shows
that Veterans'
Mental Health has
a direct impact on
the family system



Brad Ivanchan
0331 Machine Gunner
1st Battalion, 7th Marine
Purple Heart
Afghanistan Campaign Medal
Iraq Campaign Medal
United States Marine

Life Remote Control



Families cannot just hit the rewind and play buttons and return to the past



Families including the Veteran need time to grieve the losses and develop a new picture of what family life will look like



Families are Complex

They can be a source of

Strength

and a

Source of Stress

We want to help them

find

Their strengths





Parenting Groups

offer important information and tools to strengthen parenting skills and to reconnect families.





- Deployment of a parent to a combat zone has been described as “**Catastrophic**”
- The impact on the family has been described as a spiral effect...
- More deployments = increasingly complicated issues

(Peebles-Kleiger, 1994)



Programs Already Offered

- Moving Forward, The Power of Two
- Safe: Support and Family Education
- NAMI: Family to Family
- Operation Enduring Family
- Talk, Listen Connect - Sesame Street program
- Coaching Into Care
- Military Child Education Coalition(MCEC) Initiative



Steps To Implementing Parenting Group

- Project approval
- Class Material (Veteran, Spouse, Significant Other)
- Class Material (Children Toddler – Teenagers)
- Time
- Money for Resources
- Manpower
- Permission: to run onsite child group
- Space
- Food



Time Line

- (9/14 - 6/2015 start of Lead class)
- Parenting Classes started on 10/2016
- Consecutive groups ran on
 - 4/2017
 - 9/2017
 - 2/2018
 - 10/2018
- Call for grants on 9/2018

Where I was prior to applying for grant

- Pilot Phase, I am running Cohort 3. In order to sustain and grow the program, I need to be able to obtain monies to support the individual who runs the Children's program. The Children's program is important, as it not only allows the Veteran and their significant other participate in program, it takes care of worries about childcare and dinner. The Children's group offers dinner (pizza), a snack, and meaningful activity. Currently the Children's group is run by my previous Intern Jennifer who is now graduated with her MSW and works for the Department of Children and Families. if she notices children are having issues or difficulties within their homes and/or schools, Jennifer has a host of information about community resources that she can share with the families.



9/2018 - OPEN CALL FOR VISN 1 INNOVATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Innovation Grants program offers funding to frontline clinical and administrative staff to support innovation in quality, safety and value for Veterans and our fellow employees.
- Innovation is a new idea, more effective device or process
- Innovation can be viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing needs.
- Funding will be awarded to innovative and focused projects which are expected to be completed by September 30, 2018.
- Financial Support: Grants Funding requests may range from \$1,000 to \$25,000.



Expectations of the Grant

- Recipient must complete a project report outlining what was learned
- Recipient will be available as requested to present at the VISN 1 Improvement and Innovation Summit
- Recipient will be available to assist in the next round of innovation grants (i.e. review and score grant submissions).

Applying for the Grant

- **PROBLEM** - Identify the problem/opportunity. What is the problem and why are you undertaking this project.
- **STAKEHOLDERS** - Please interview 2-5 stakeholders related to the problem you are trying to solve to further understand their needs and experiences. What have your stakeholders said about the problem during these human centered design interviews.
- **SOLUTION** - What is your proposed solution to help solve this problem?
- Describe the current state of this project and how you developed this proposed solution.
- **OBJECTIVES**-What goals/objectives do you hope to achieve for both Veteran and the VA? How big is the opportunity?
- **RISKS**-What risks, challenges and barriers do you anticipate?
- **SUCCESS**-How will you determine that your innovation was a success?

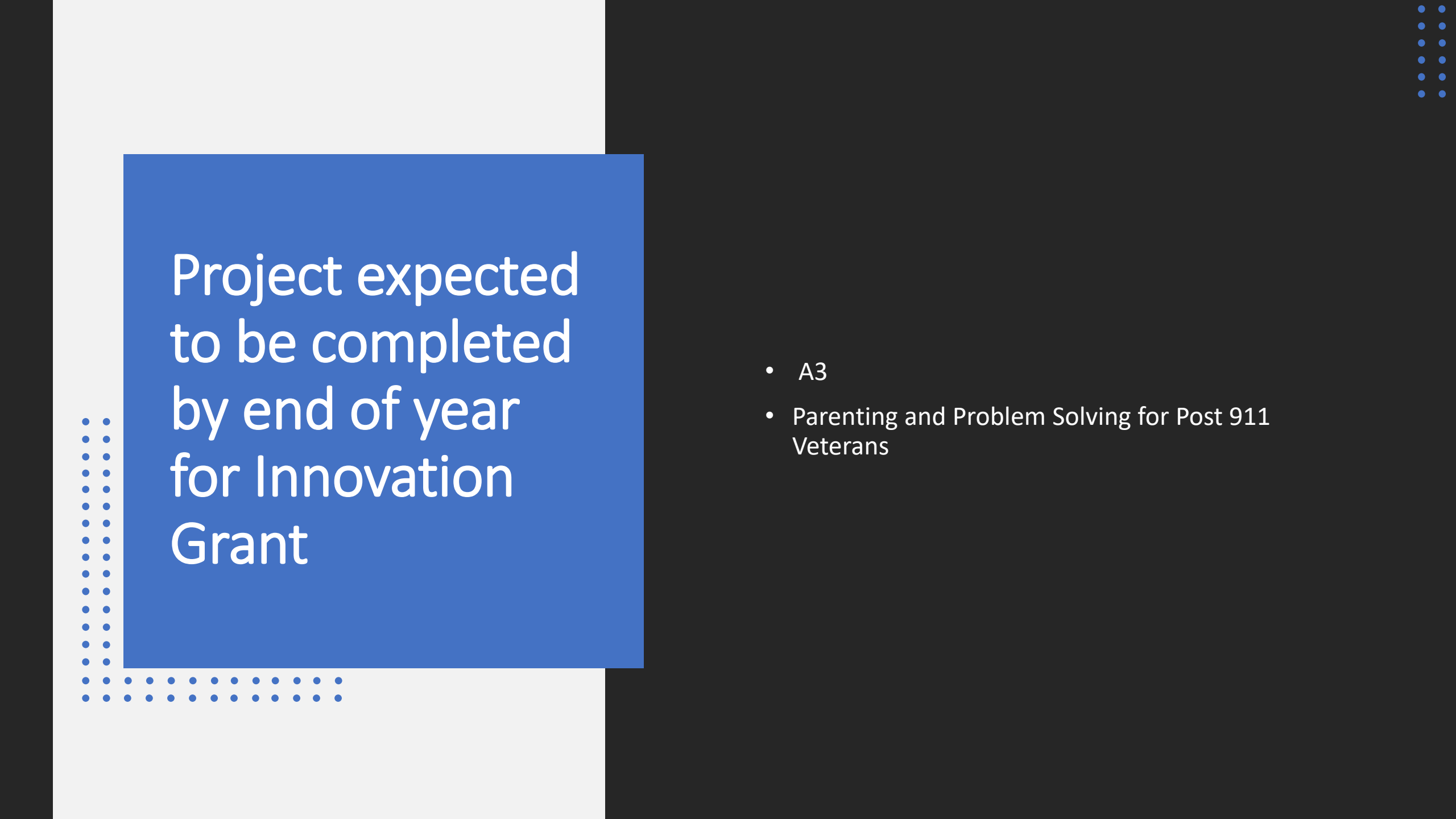


12/15/2018

Congratulations You have been awarded \$7500 for your project for the Innovation Cycle.


- Fund Control Point
- How to write a business budget
- Need to know Logistics
- Need to ensure that you actually get all of the materials you ordered/logistics of where to keep them stored
- Network/Program Assigned Contracting Officer (CO) if you are paying someone outside to work need to submit app. Paperwork prior and have approval

Lessons Learned About Getting A Grant



Project expected
to be completed
by end of year
for Innovation
Grant

- A3
- Parenting and Problem Solving for Post 911 Veterans



Call For Posters For Improvement And Innovation Summit

Must Be In Format Of A3
A3 Selected To Present At
Summit

Frame:	Design:	Deliver:																																																							
<p>Problem Statement: ~2% of the estimated ~1500 eligible patients in the Providence (OIE/OEF/OND) Post 9/11 Veteran population are utilizing the Parenting and Problem Solving Group Education classes.</p> <p>Benefits to the Veteran:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Family: improve family and co-parent communication and problem solving techniques; stabilize family expectations in disciplinary situations, etc.Clinical: Veterans and families can deal with other medical & MH issues (ie: anxiety, depression, PTSD, etc.)Financial: Provides employment stability <p>Organizational/Societal Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Decrease DCF, violence, etc.; increase support to Veterans affecting clinical and mental health burden <p>Returning Post 9/11 Veterans and significant others manage stress and emotions of parenting, help parents help their children with difficult emotions and behaviors.</p> <p>DOD data indicates 3-6 months after the soldier returns home from Deployment, 27% of Active Duty Veterans and 35.5% of Army National Guard Veterans have screened positive for clinically significant mental health concerns to include PTSD, depression, suicidal ideation, interpersonal conflict and aggressive ideation (Milliken, Auchterlonie & Hoge, 2007).</p> <p>Discover:</p> <p>Research has shown that Veterans' Mental Health has a direct impact on the family system. In one study the Department of Defense data indicated 3-6 months after returning home from Deployment 27% of Active Duty and 35.5% of National Guard Service members have screened Positive for Clinically significant MH concerns (Milliken, Auchterlonie & Hoge, 2007).</p> <p>Pilot Observations (3 Cohorts):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cultivated local course content from national sources, including a VA Pilot Program for the same parenting/problem solving curriculumPre & end of class survey data: (3 cohorts surveyed as of 4/2018)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pre & end of class survey data has reflected on the curriculum, format, and participant information retention.We realized that there was no follow up with participants ~6-12 months after the class to confirm that the parenting and problem solving skills were retained and have added value to the Veteran's parenting experience. <p>Enrollment Concerns:</p> <p>Enrollment has been restricted during the Pilot phase of the project to ensure that the curriculum and course format are meeting Veteran/family needs.</p> <p>Completion Concerns:</p> <p>Veterans who participate in the class with their co-parent increase their course completion rate. This was evidenced by the 3 Veterans who have dropped since the 1st cohort was offered for this reason.</p> <p>Deployment of a parent to a combat zone has been described as "Catastrophic", The impact on the family has been described as a spiral effect and More deployments = increasingly complicated issues (Peebles-Kleiger, 1994). A survey completed by Sayer et al, 2010 & Japukcat et al, 2007 noted Anger was the most Commonly reported problem among combat Veterans, 57% reporting increased problems in controlling anger.</p>	<p>WHO: Early referrals to the program were managed by informal, word-of-mouth referrals from the TCM team and Mental Health providers. No consult mechanism was in place at the beginning of the program. PTSD and Returning Veteran programs were targeted for participant recruitment for the Parenting Program. Applicants were "interviewed" by an MSW in the TCM program to determine suitability for the program. Some participants already had, or were at risk of having Child Protective Services involved prior to enrollment in the program.</p> <p>WHERE:</p> <p>To be held at the main PVAMC campus utilizing two adjacent classrooms. One classroom will host the Parent participants. One classroom will host the Children participants.</p> <p>WHAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Curriculum development done prior to first cohortDOD & VA Materials usedFirst two cohorts gave feedback, curriculum was revised <p>WHEN: Classes will be held after normal business hours according to needs of the participants. Initial curriculum was designed with 1.5 hour classes for a total of 8 weeks. Feedback from the initial two cohorts led to expanding the program to 10 weeks in duration.</p> <p>HOW:</p> <p>Curriculum Delivery: A qualified PVAMC staff MSW leads the Parenting portion of the program. A qualified non-VA MSW provides the support for the Children's portion of the program.</p> <p>Childcare Support: The children's group offers dinner (Pizza) snack and meaningful activity while providing appropriate childcare. The children's program allows the Veteran and their significant other participate in program without the worry of coordinating</p> <p>First 2 Cohorts—Feedback from Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Change course name from "Parenting Group" to something like "Family Functioning/Parenting and Family Resources", etc.More interactive questions/engagement from participants <p>RISKS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Instructor Coverage: Classes will be held after normal business hours according to needs of the participants. The assigned MSW is running the Parenting Program as an additional duty due to no available FTEE assignment. There is a Volunteer MSW running the children's group. This resource is not currently managed by the PVAMC. The children's group is essential for parents to participate in the program.Referrals: Cohorts run for 10 weeks. Some students are wary of committing to such a long program/time of year.Timing: The summer months are not utilized to run a cohort due to low demand by students and limited availability of the instructors. Holidays, especially during Nov.-Jan. affect willingness of students to attend.Participation: Veterans who enroll with a co-parent/significant other are much more likely to complete the course.	<p>Lessons Learned from the first 2 cohorts offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kids are motivating factor in parents returning to classEach session asked for the group to run longerEach session inquired about follow up groupsEvaluation on quality of workshop has received scores of 4 out of 5 (1=poor, 3=average, 5=excellent)Too many evaluation formsRequest to incorporate more role playing <p>Post Class Survey Responses—Evidence From Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I have learned from surveys that this Program has been instrumental in helping Veterans and families improve communication and problem solving skills. Which have also decreased stress, DV, and family issues. Veteran and Spouse have communicated a need for additional parenting classes to address and have support for other issues as their families grow. They have spoken about the resources provided in the classes and stating they will occasionally refer back to them when encountering issues in their homes.One couple informed the interviewer in the post-class survey that they had participated in parenting classes as a court ordered requirement while going through a divorce and stated that the class really helped them in using age appropriate tasks/punishments and gave them further understanding of how PTSD/Depression can negatively affect their parenting. Veteran and Spouse stated that by having a better understanding of how their mental health affects their communication skills and therefore their parenting skills they are more aware of self and how they talk to their children and how to assign appropriate task/punishments.Veteran and spouse have informed interviewer that they communicate more now when deciding on tasks/punishments with their children allowing them to be on the same page and feeling like they have each other for support. <p>Scale:</p> <p>Using Innovation Grant Funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">For: Supplies purchased for Parents and Children (books supporting the curriculum, art supplies for children's group); and Paid support to a non-VA MSW to run children's group for 2 cohortsGetting funds management and purchasing support was challenging and efforts fell to FY18 Q3-4 resulting in not all funds being utilized. <table><tr><th>Class</th><th>Class 1 (Oct. 2016)</th><th>Class 2 (Apr. 2017)</th><th>Class 3 (Oct. 2017)</th><th>Class 4 (Feb. 2018)</th></tr><tr><td>Veteran Enrolled</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Veteran Completed</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Significant Other Enrolled</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Significant Other Completed</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Total Enrolled (by Cohort)</td><td>7</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Total Completed (by Cohort)</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Cohort Enrollment Rate (out of 10 slots)</td><td>70%</td><td>50%</td><td>60%</td><td>60%</td></tr><tr><td>Cohort Completion Rate</td><td>100%</td><td>80%</td><td>83%</td><td>67%</td></tr><tr><td>Enrollment Rate (Avg. by FY)</td><td></td><td>60%</td><td></td><td>60%</td></tr><tr><td>Completion Rate (Avg. by FY)</td><td>FY17</td><td>90%</td><td>FY18</td><td>75%</td></tr></table> <p>Opportunities Moving Forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Explore options of networking with community resourcesExplore options at PVMAC to see if can get other providers to participate in programAdd 3, 6, and 9 month follow up calls for participants to ensure that they have continued access to parenting resourcesChildren's group at this time is mixed ages, would be nice to have additional volunteersMay be beneficial to have researcher look at Parenting program at VA and complete their own pre and post surveys to show how this program is supporting our Veterans and their families. This may help the program become notice/important and will grow throughout the VA Healthcare system. <p>Challenges Moving Forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Continuing to support multiple cohorts with no dedicated staff timeRecruitment of participants from a vulnerable Veteran populationEnsuring participants come to class with a co-parent to increase completion rates	Class	Class 1 (Oct. 2016)	Class 2 (Apr. 2017)	Class 3 (Oct. 2017)	Class 4 (Feb. 2018)	Veteran Enrolled	4	2	3	3	Veteran Completed	4	3	4	5	Significant Other Enrolled	3	2	2	1	Significant Other Completed	3	2	2	1	Total Enrolled (by Cohort)	7	4	5	4	Total Completed (by Cohort)	7	5	6	6	Cohort Enrollment Rate (out of 10 slots)	70%	50%	60%	60%	Cohort Completion Rate	100%	80%	83%	67%	Enrollment Rate (Avg. by FY)		60%		60%	Completion Rate (Avg. by FY)	FY17	90%	FY18	75%
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Curriculum Taken From The Following

- Moving Forward a Problem-Solving Approach to Achieving Life's Goals, Developed by Arthur M. Nezu, Ph.D., ABPP and Christine Maguth Nezu, Ph.D., ABPP., Revised May 2014
- Operation Enduring Families , Information and Support for Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans and Their Families. Ursula Bowling, Psy. D., Alan Doerman, Psy. D., ABPP and Michelle D. Sherman, Ph.D., Third Edition, September 2011
- Department of Veteran's Affairs, Parenting for Service Members & Veterans Parenting Course. <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting>

Overview of Curriculum Offered

Class 1:

Family Relationships/Communication Tips for Veterans and their families

Class 2 - 4:

Problem Solving Skills

- **Overcoming obstacles to your goals**
- **How to become an effective problem solver**
- **Review problem solving skills material**

Class 5:

How to manage your anger well and prevent situations from getting out of control



Curriculum Continued

Class 6:

Promoting Positive Parent Child Communication

Class 7:

Helping Your Child with Difficult Emotions and Behaviors

Class 8:

Positive Approach to Discipline

Class 9:

Managing Stress and Emotions

Class 10:

Parenting with physical and emotional challenges.

Additional Material: Information about PTSD and Depression

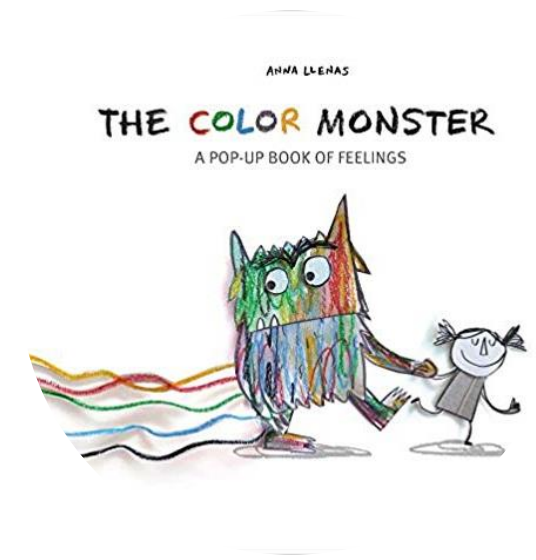


Child Care was offered prior to Covid 19 Pandemic
- offers pizza, juice, a snack and meaningful activities
- Volunteer had a BCI Check including fingerprinting.

10 weeks of classes are offered in evening (5:30 PM – 7 PM) to accommodate veterans and their families work and life schedules. Provide additional Information about community resources as needed

Children's Group - Curriculum

- Read books about emotions: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and calm
- Ask children to share a time when they felt silly, scared, happy, sad, angry, excited and proud.
- Use the children's examples to ask the children to show with their faces and bodies how they would show what they feel
- Use outlines of faces – discuss how to handle them
- Create a feelings book (use magazine Pics, draw pics)



Movies, Feeling Activities and Games

Activities:

- Make faces out of paper plates and/or construction paper
- Coloring pages about emotions and feelings
- Make a collage all about me (emotions and feelings)

Games:

- Which Emotion am I (set of emotion cards)
- Guess the emotion
- Matching emotions
- Positives and negatives



Adolescent Material



How choice impacts our future

- Who are you?
- Who are you becoming?

VA has been offering parenting groups since 10/2016

We have just completed our 8th group





Where We Are Today:

Obtained a grant in
12/2018

Boston VA And PVMAC had
ran co-group for both sites
Via VVC due to Covid 19
Pandemic

Bedford VA will be starting
their first Parenting
Program in October 2021



Bedford and Brocton VA have adopted the program

Brocton has run 1 program alone and 1 program with writer via VVC.

Bedford is starting program in Woman's group with Psychologist and SW and will run 1st program in October 2021.





Parenting Program was presented
To
the Judge Hastings, District
Attorney' Office, Probation and VJO
workers at Kent County Court in
2019 They agreed to refer Veteran's
to Parenting Group at PVAMC



Parenting For Veterans



What's Next:

Caitlin Burditt, Psychologist in MH is going to join me in running a group

Goal is to be able to run more parenting groups and keep them running throughout the year.

Talking to MH about possibility of running additional groups to help grow the program

Collecting data to show importance of the program in hopes to obtain additional support and to eventually have additional services at VA for Veteran's and their Families

Please Recognize

- It is important to understand there is no such thing as "One Size Fits All" parenting.

You will make mistakes, exercise poor judgement and even at times second guess your parenting ability

This class is offered to provide additional information and support to parents



Questions

