Launching a Community Collaboration to Enhance Mental Health and Support Services for Military Families

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Need

- 1% of adult Americans serve in today’s armed forces
- Nationally, Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system serves only half of post-9/11 veterans
- Increasing demand for civilian service providers
- President Obama: Veterans and military families are top priority

Mission

**Serving Together**: A collaborative partnership to coordinate and strengthen community-based health/mental health, education, employment, and other support services for service members, veterans, and families in Montgomery County MD
Support

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: 4 year grant
- Montgomery County Government
- 10 National Capital Area Foundations
- Other Local Donors

Montgomery County, MD

- 50,000: Total Veterans
- 8,000: OEF/OIF/OND
- 500: Wounded Warriors
- Walter Reed National Military Medical Center
- National Intrepid Center of Excellence
- Within 1 hour: Ft. Meade, Ft. Detrick, Andrews Air Force Base, Coast Guard Yard, Baltimore

Goals

- Build community awareness of military family needs
- Coordinate and increase access to services for veterans, service members, and families
- Train behavioral health providers in evidence-based interventions
- Educate military families about mental health issues
- Create user-friendly tools to access local resources, including website and peer navigators
- Evaluate project impact on community and systems change
Advisory Council

- Military installations and National Guard
- Military-serving nonprofits
- Education
- Federal, state and county government
- Business and employers
- Faith communities
- Veterans and family members
- Funders

Evaluation of Year 1

  - Purpose
  - Membership
  - Environment
  - Structure/process
  - Communication
  - Resources
- Interviews with key stakeholders and project staff

Year 1 Outcomes

- Advisory Council
  - Membership
  - Process
  - Communication
  - Resources
Year 1 Outcomes

- Community Awareness
  - 43 briefings
  - Forums with business and non-profit community
  - School Resource Guide
- Mental Health First Aid Trainings
  - Military families and volunteers
- Behavioral Health Training
  - Substance abuse issues among service members and veterans
- Non-profit military screening project
- Website
  - [www.servingtogetherproject.org](http://www.servingtogetherproject.org)

Website: [www.servingtogetherproject.org](http://www.servingtogetherproject.org)
Website

Year 2 Goals

- Peer Navigation System
- Behavioral Health and Primary Care Professionals Needs Assessment
- Circle of Champions Policy Forum

Lessons Learned

- Credible non-profit leadership
- Community-based and data driven
- Outcome-focused
- Wellness-oriented
- Strategic partnerships with range of stakeholders
- Case management programming
- Evaluation
Thank you!

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