

DYNAMIC DIFFUSION NETWORK QUERI BULLETIN

Newsletter of the DDN QUERI Program

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UNDERSTANDING MILITARY CULTURE

A person-centered care approach is an essential component within the VA healthcare system and drives all activities in VA. A major part of person-centered care in the VA is relationship building, understanding and respecting Veterans’ viewpoints and lived experiences.

On April 5, 2022, Technical Expert Panel members and Veterans Dr. James Craig, Jeanette Leonard, Tammy White-McKnight, and Ronald Link led a 2-hr virtual session on military culture (Understanding Military Culture). The session served as a primer in cultural competence to support health professionals and researchers in working effectively with Veterans and their families.

 An event flyer for "Understanding Military Culture". The background is a dark green with a pattern of leaves. At the top, the title "UNDERSTANDING MILITARY CULTURE" is in white, all-caps, sans-serif font. Below the title, there is a short paragraph in white text describing the session's purpose: "Understanding Military Culture serves as a primer in cultural competence to support health professionals in working effectively with military members, Veterans and their families. During this session, hear from a group of Veterans as they offer:

- An overview of the U.S. military, customs and culture
- Insights and experiences to help remove barriers and aid rapport building
- Guidance for communicating with Veterans and establishing a common language

 Below this, the date and time "APRIL 5, 2022 | 2:00PM - 4:00PM EST" are listed in yellow, followed by "ZOOM" in white. A "Join Zoom Meeting" section provides the meeting ID (918 798 8004), passcode (394325), and phone number (+1 312 876 6799).

 The "SPEAKERS" section features three small portrait photos of the speakers: James Craig, Jeanette Leonard, and Tammy White-McKnight. Below each photo is their name and military affiliation.

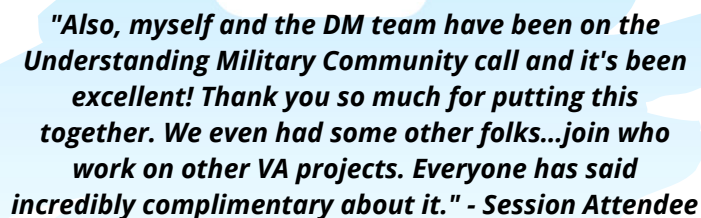
 At the bottom, it states "Additional Veterans will also be present to speak and answer questions." and "This event is supported by the following organizations:". Logos for ADAPT, Dynamic Diffusion Network Queri Program, AgrAbility, Vet REP, and Colorado State Extension are displayed at the bottom.

UNDERSTANDING MILITARY CULTURE (CONTINUED)


The session was delivered with the following objectives:

- Provide an overview of the U.S. military, its customs, and culture.
- Create a shared understanding of the U.S. military culture to remove barriers, aid in rapport, and offer common language when engaging with Veterans.
- Describe caveats in communicating with Veterans.
- Describe the most frequent disabilities encountered in combat Veterans (e.g., PTSD/TBI).
- Offer resources to improve outreach to Veterans.

Over 130 VA and non-VA health professionals and researchers across the nation participated in the session, along with other Veterans and members of the broader community. An overwhelming number of attendees provided positive feedback on the degree to which the session was helpful and much needed. As a result, the session has been made publicly available through the VA's Health Services Research & Development website at **Understanding Military Culture: A Primer in Cultural Competence Working with Military Members and Families** ([va.gov](https://www.va.gov)).



"Also, myself and the DM team have been on the Understanding Military Community call and it's been excellent! Thank you so much for putting this together. We even had some other folks...join who work on other VA projects. Everyone has said incredibly complimentary about it." - Session Attendee



"Thanks so much for hosting such a great meeting. It was so insightful and helped me a great deal as I've recently transitioned into my current role away from the private sector." -Session Attendee

MIG NEWS: MORAL INJURY GROUPS KICK-OFF



The Dynamic Diffusion Network (DDN) Moral Injury Groups have officially started! In partnership with VA Integrative Mental Health (IMH), the DDN QUERI Program is engaging with a total of 9 VA facilities across the nation to implement and evaluate moral injury groups with Veterans.

In May 2022, DDN teams of chaplains and mental health providers gathered in Durham, N.C. for a 2-day kick-off meeting. The meeting laid the foundation for using a novel approach (i.e., the DDN) to deliver and continuously evaluate care as part of a structured network experience that promotes cross-pollination of ideas and shared learning among frontline care providers. Dr. Keith Meador, Director of IMH, opened the meeting, welcoming and commending the teams for contributing to the advancement of moral injury work through clinical quality improvement within a learning health system. One team member described participation in the DDN as embarking on a “new frontier.”

Facilitated by Dr. Melissa Smigelsky alongside Drs. Jason Nieuwsma, George Jackson and Keith Meador, the group engaged in discussion and co-learning around several topics including:

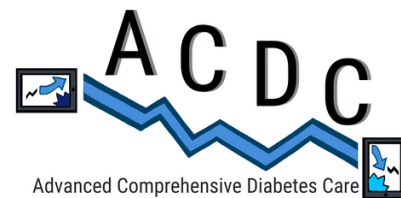
- The Dynamic Diffusion Network (i.e., what it is, why we need it, & how it works)
- Definition and conceptualization of moral injury
- Approaches to moral injury care
- Core components of moral injury groups
- Fidelity and adaptation of moral injury groups
- Measurement of moral injury

The meeting concluded with a virtual panel comprised of two chaplains and two psychologists, all of whom took part in a pilot of the DDN from 2019-2020. Panelists shared stories of Veterans who benefitted from participation in moral injury groups, advice for team building, and best practices for engaging Veterans in moral injury groups. The DDN QUERI Program is excited to work with all the teams and looks forward to seeing what they will accomplish within and beyond the program!



DDN QUERI Moral Injury Group Team Members and Staff

ACDC NEWS: MEET THE NEW KID - WHAT IS THE ACDC PRACTICE?



ACDC is a practical and effective approach to support Veterans who are struggling with their type 2 diabetes despite receiving standard VHA care. Through ACDC, these Veterans can access comprehensive, telehealth-based diabetes care. By design, ACDC uses only existing VHA staffing, equipment, and infrastructure – the program is delivered almost entirely by Home Telehealth nurses.

HOW DOES ACDC WORK?

The ACDC practice provides Veterans with structured telehealth encounters delivered by Home Telehealth nurses every 2 weeks. These encounters help Veterans build self-management skills to improve their Type 2 Diabetes control. ACDC provides Veterans with education, support, and medication management that leads to **improved hemoglobin A1c** and **high patient and staff satisfaction**.

ACDC has three parts:

- **Telemonitoring:** Every 2 weeks, the HT nurse reviews interim blood sugar data transmitted by the Veteran, performs medication reconciliation, and assesses medication adherence.
- **Self-management education and support:** Using brief modules created by the ACDC team, the HT nurse provides evidence-based self-management education on important topics.
- **Diabetes medication management (aided by an ACDC medication manager, usually a clinical pharmacist):** The HT nurse puts together a summary progress report which is sent through the electronic health record (CPRS) to the ACDC medication manager. The medication manager orders any necessary medication changes, which are then implemented by the HT nurse.

These components are delivered during telephone encounters that occur at 2-week intervals over a 6-month period.

By providing enhanced support to Veterans whose hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) levels remain elevated despite standard VHA diabetes care, ACDC empowers Veterans to manage their diabetes effectively, leading to improved diabetes control, better self-care, and a positive Veteran and staff experience.

Check out some of our Veteran & staff feedback!

VETERAN PERSPECTIVES ON ACDC

"[My ACDC nurse] calls me periodically, checks on me. Any of my needs I can discuss with her, and she'll follow through with it."

- Veteran receiving ACDC in Durham, NC

"[My ACDC nurse] has been so supportive and so terrific and is willing to answer any question or talk to me about issues that I've had going on."

- Veteran receiving ACDC in Denver, CO

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON ACDC

"I like that we were able to check in frequently. . . my favorite thing was seeing how patients did between visits and making quick adjustments." **-VA Staff Member**

"The Veteran becomes aware that you are not there to judge them [but] to educate them. . . and they are more than willing to tell you what they're eating and doing what their meds." **-VA Staff Member**

DDN QUERI SPOTLIGHT

Meet Carter Check!

DDN QUERI Technical Expert Panel Member
Clinical Integrated Health Chaplain
Eastern Oklahoma VAMC
U.S. Army Veteran



Hometown: Tulsa, OK

Favorite Food: Eggs & Toast

Favorite vacation spot: Grayton Beach, FL

When I have 30-min. of free time: I shoot my bow.

One thing most people don't know about me: I have a foundation that uses archery as an upstream suicide prevention.

One life lesson I would share: Here are the essential components of companionship each other on this journey of life. What I call, keeping it REAL!

-**BE HONEST.** Honesty saves us time on this journey.

-**BE AUTHENTIC.** Authenticity means showing our true selves and not pretending to be something we're not. Authenticity is essential for trust, and trust is essential for lives journey.

-**BE INTENTIONAL.** Intentionality involves showing up for each other moment-by-moment. It means listening, responding when appropriate, and sharing of ourselves so that we can connect to one another's stories.

Why I choose VA: I choose the VA because it is at the center of innovations in care for Veterans. I choose the VA because it is where innovations in healthcare chaplaincy have evolved to allow clinical chaplains avenues of specialized care, within the context of behavioral medicine, for suicide prevention, moral injury and specialized grief support for our Veterans. I'm honored to be a part of Integrative Mental Health initiatives to promote whole health for our nation's Veterans.

DDN QUERI SPOTLIGHT

Meet Dr. Sarah Cutrona!

Multiple Principal Investigator

DDN QUERI Program/ACDC

Associate Director

**VA Center for Healthcare Organization and
Implementation Research (VA Bedford)**



Hometown: Larchmont, NY

Favorite Food: Dark chocolate or Brie cheese. But mostly the chocolate!

Favorite vacation spot: I've been lucky enough to visit all sorts of beautiful and intriguing places across the globe, but I think Cape Cod (Nauset Beach!) will always be where I find myself returning.

When I have 30-min. of free time: I love watching my daughters in all their activities – sports (soccer, swimming), theater, or just joining them to go for a walk with our dog.

One thing most people don't know about me: I find tons of four-leaf clovers every year and always try to give them away immediately. It's fun to see someone get excited when I offer them a tiny piece of good luck.

One life lesson I would share: It's important to like and respect the people you work with – life's too short to do it any other way!

What I enjoy most about working with the VA: I have worked in many different healthcare facilities, but the VA is really unique in the unwavering commitment shown by its staff to support, problem-solve, greet, welcome and care for this population of men and women who've done so much for our country.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

HSRD/QUERI National Meeting: Advancing Health Equity through Research, Implementation Science, Diversity, and Inclusion

October 2022 (Abstracts due July 11)

[Event Details](#)

15th Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health

Theme: (Re)Building Better Systems: Being Proactive, Nimble, and Responsive

December 11 - 14, 2022 (Abstracts due July 19)

[Event Details](#)



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Website: www.durham.hsr.d.research.va.gov



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