MISSION Diversion & Recovery for Traumatized Veterans (MISSION DIRECT VET): Early Findings and Lessons Learned

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What is MISSION DIRECT VET?

MISSION DIRECT VET is a SAMHSA- funded, court based diversion program targeting veterans in Massachusetts with trauma-related mental health and substance use problems.

❖ MISSION-DIRECT VET seeks to:
* Reduce criminal justice involvement
* Treat mental health, substance abuse and other trauma related symptoms
* Use a systematic wrap-around model
* Provide care coordination, peer support and trauma informed services
* Develop interagency partnerships to serve veterans with co-occurring disorders

Background

❖ The MISSION (Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach, and Networking) model has successfully reduced chronic homelessness in veterans through:
* peer support
* case management
* integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment

❖ This model was adapted for criminal justice involved veterans.

❖ Program Pilot site: Worcester District Court

Baseline Participant Data - Pilot Site - First Year

Recruitment Numbers as of September 10, 2010	
Number Screened	27
Number Screened as Eligible	25
Number Diverted to MISSION (by Judge)	16
Number Currently Receiving Services	14
Number Currently Enrolled in Evaluation	14

Military Histories	
Honorable Discharges	11
Service era (not exclusive):	10: Persian Gulf era; 8: Iraq/Afghanistan era; 5: post - Vietnam; 1: Vietnam
Military branch (not exclusive):	8: Army; 1: Navy; 1: Airforce; 5: Marines; 1: National guard
Deployments	Range: 1-7; 7 were deployed for more than one tour of duty
Active Combat	10

Prior Criminal Justice Involvement	
Jail	Range: 1-4 times in jail
Age of 1st arrest	Range: 10-51 years old, 52% before the age of 18
Probation	12
Prior convictions; ≥ 2 prior convictions	8; 6
Restraining Order	9

Client Demographics	
Age Range	24-61
Education	10: ≤ high school degree; 3: B.A.
Employment	6: employed full or part time
Finances	3: federal disability; 8: veterans benefits; 2: unemployment
Living Situation	9: live in own home/apartment

Mental Health Treatment and Symptoms	
Prior outpatient treatment	11
Prior inpatient treatment	8
Witnessed another seriously injured or killed; same, before the age of 18	12; 9
Engaged in physical violence with someone they did not know; same, before the age of 18	11; 6
First encounter mental health services before the age of 18	3

Substance Abuse Treatment and Symptoms	
In the last month, used alcohol/drugs 2 or more days	11/6
Prior inpatient treatment	8
Prior outpatient substance abuse treatment	4
Prior inpatient substance use treatment	9
Average age at 1st substance abuse treatment	23

Lessons Learned

❖ Clients are both service and crisis intensive.

❖ Clients; high service need raises issues regarding treatment team caseload capacity.

❖ Critical events include: re-arrests, probation violations, hospitalization and suicide threats. Referrals ebb and flow; still looking for patterns and reasons why.

❖ Efforts to optimize referrals have included training criminal justice personnel, having treatment team presence in court, increasing program visibility, addressing incentives/disincentives with prospective participants, and networking with other veteran outreach programs

Next Steps

❖ Expansion to Lawrence District Court: November, 2010

❖ Options for program expansion include alternative diversion intercept points and further interagency partnering.

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