Post Traumatic Growth: Alternative Therapies
August 22, 2019
Register for our email updates: ncgwg.org

Join us by live stream at www.facebook.com/govinst
or call 1-919-212-5747

Meeting agenda and minutes: ncgwg.org/minutes-and-group-updates
Welcome & Introductory Remarks
Secretary Larry Hall
North Carolina Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
Vice Chair Updates
Martin Falls
Chief Deputy
Retired Colonel, U.S. Army National Guard
NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Terry Westbrook
Deputy Director
NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
GWG Updates for 8/22/2019

Sept. 5th – VA Mental Health Summit, Salisbury, NC

Sept. 7th – Veteran Outreach Fair, Roanoke Rapids, NC

Sept. 8th – Together We Stand, Mission 22, Durham

Sept. 11th – Veterans Bridge Home/NC4ME & Hire Our Heroes, Charlotte

Sept. 12th-14th – Veterans Experience Action Center, Cary, NC


Sept. 17th – 19th NC4ME Hiring Event, Havelock, NC

Sept. 19th – Veterans Stand Down and Resource Fair, Matthews, NC
Dr. Michelle Laws
Interim Asst. Director for Consumer and Family Engagement
NC DHHS Division of MH/DD/SAS
PATH-Veterans

Projects for Assistance in Transitions from Homelessness

DMH/DD/SAS: Year 2 PATH-Veterans MHBG funding:

- Interactive Resource Center of Greensboro
- Supportive Housing Communities of Charlotte
- Wake Med in Raleigh
- Veterans Services of the Carolinas in Buncombe, Haywood, Gaston, Cleveland, Onslow, Carteret, Pender, Robeson, Cumberland & New Hanover counties
Virtual Reality PTSD Treatment Enhancement Pilot Program

HELP US EXPLORE
THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY
TO BETTER PREPARE VETERANS
FOR REINTEGRATION INTO CIVILIAN LIFE

- Earn up to $150 in gift cards
- Completed during regularly scheduled appointments
- Exercises done in controlled environment
- Virtual Reality-based exposure

Questions:
Call [RCNAME] at XXX-XXX-XXXX
email: thrive@rti.org
website: thrive.rti.org

Conducted by RTI International and Horizon Productions, with funding from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.
August 31, 2019
Overdose Awareness Day
Michael Howard

Veterans Benefits Administration
Winston-Salem Regional Office
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Upcoming VBA Outreach Events and Info

• Cary VEAC
  o Sept. 12\textsuperscript{th} & 13\textsuperscript{th} 9a – 3p
  o Sept. 14\textsuperscript{th} 9a – 2p

Herbert C. Young Community Center
101 Wilkinson Ave. Cary, NC 27513

For More Information About Upcoming Events, Please Visit:
https://www.benefits.va.gov/ROWINSTONSALEM/index.asp
Tracy Skala
Acting Deputy Network Director
VA VISN-6
MISSION ACT Update – Urgent Care

With urgent care, Veterans have a new option for care for the treatment of minor injuries and illnesses, such as colds, sore throats, and minor skin infections. The benefit is offered in addition to the opportunity to receive care from a VA provider, as VA also offers same-day services.

Veterans can call 1-833-4VETNOW (1-833-483-8669) to verify eligibility for this benefit; and to check which providers are available locally:

https://vaurgentcarelocator.triwest.com/Locator/Care

For Assistance with MISSION Act Care in the Community:
Charles George VAMC, Asheville, NC - Contact Number– 828-299-5956
Durham VAHCS - Contact Number: (919) 286-5225
Fayetteville VA NC VAHCS - Contact Number: 910-475-6790
Salisbury VAHCS - Contact Numbers: 704-638-9000; ext. 13718, 13719, 13720, 13760

News
VHA Smoke-Free Campuses Coming October 1
Caregiver Support Expansion potentially delayed until spring, ’20
Mark Edmonds
Chief Operating Officer - Workforce Solutions
North Carolina Department of Commerce
New Veterans Support Initiatives:

- The Cumberland NCWorks Career Center was selected to pilot a project through the National Association of Workforce Agencies (NASWA): Military Spouse Program.

  - Career coach for spouse will contact career center representatives
  - Cumberland NCWorks Career Center – Greggory Wade  910-486-1010
  - Ft Bragg NCWorks Career Center – Linda Gibson – 910-436-1304
  - Labor Market Information, career center resource information, community information, etc.

- The Cumberland NCWorks Career Center will provide employment related Transition Assistance Program (TAP) resources to the Ft Bragg military

- Upcoming NC4ME (North Carolina for Military Employment) Hiring Events

  - September 11th: Charlotte (Partnering with Veterans Bridge Home)
  - October 22nd: Ft. Bragg (Partnering with the USO of North Carolina)
NC Department of Commerce
Division of Workforce Solutions

Veterans Support Initiatives:

• The last quarter JVSG staff served 2,036 veterans with significant barriers to employment

• Of the 94 career centers across the state our 20 local employment veteran’s representatives have contacted and worked with 9,400 employers this program year ending June 30, 2019
NC Department of Commerce
Division of Workforce Solutions

- Veterans Support Initiatives: Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)

Our partners at Asheville Buncombe County Christian Ministry (ABCCM) have been awarded two additional HVRP grants effective July 1, 2019.

- One new grant will serve the central NC/Piedmont area and the other will serve eastern NC.

- There were no other new grant awards in NC.

- Volunteers Of America continues to serve homeless female veterans and homeless veterans with dependents in the Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville area.
NC Department of Commerce
Division of Workforce Solutions

- Veterans Support Initiatives: Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)

ABCCM continues to serve all homeless veterans in western NC through existing grants.

For the new program year, USDOL/VETS is making over $1.7 million available to serve the employment needs of homeless veterans in North Carolina with four HVRP grants awarded for near statewide coverage.

Prior to the award of the new grant HVP covered 49 counties, we will not be able to cover 79 of our 100 counties.
Jeff Smith

Military and Veterans Program Liaison
Division of MH/DD/SAS
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Where to find us...

- ncgwg.org
- helpncvets.org
- strive.ncgwg.org
- home.ncgwg.org
- facebook.com/GovInst
- twitter.com/GovInst
- youtube.com/c/GovInst
- twitch.tv/GovInst
- Ask about our email list!
HELP WANTED:

State Homeless Veterans Coordinator

By-Name-List Coordinator

VISN Homeless Veterans Coordinator

https://home.nccgwg.org
NCserves Update
NCServes Central Carolina 1 January to 31 July 2019

VSO Referrals into the Network (119)
NCServes Western 1 January to 31 July 2019

VSO Referrals into the Network (44)
NCServes Network Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network Name</th>
<th>Coordination Center</th>
<th>Launch Date</th>
<th>No. of Requests</th>
<th>No. of Clients</th>
<th>No. of Providers</th>
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<tr>
<td>NCServes-Western</td>
<td>Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>1,120</td>
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<td>NCServes-Central Carolina</td>
<td>United Way of Health Care</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>4,917</td>
<td>2,738</td>
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<td>NCServes-Western</td>
<td>Veterans Bridge North</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>125,16</td>
<td>4,789</td>
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<td>NCServes-Charlotte</td>
<td>Eastern Carolina Human Services Agency, Inc.</td>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>4,866</td>
<td>1,665</td>
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Service Requests by Type

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Service Episodes Over Time

Data current through 07/31/19

*unique count of clients nationwide (some clients may receive services in multiple networks)
Robert Elliott and Dr. Crystal Kyle

Gardening/Horticulture/Farming
Agriculture Therapy for Military Veterans
About Us

ROBERT ELLIOTT

• Farmer Veteran
• The Veteran’s Farm of NC, Inc.
• Soldier to Agriculture Program Coordinator
• Fidelis Farms, LLC
• Honor Hemp, LLC

DR. CRYSTAL KYLE

• Farmer Veteran
• NC AgrAbility Director
• NC Agromedicine Institute Coordinator
• Mental and Physical Health of Veterans Researcher
• Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Certified
USMC

- C130 Mechanic
- Travelled the world (mainly Pacific Islands)
- Honorably Discharged June 2002
- Contractor for the Marine Corps from 2002-2011
- Laid off 2011
Cypress Hall Farms
How I Survived

- No longer felt like part of something
- Hard time fitting into the civilian world
- Farming saved my life
- Articles brought veterans to me
US Army

- CH-47 Mechanic: 1/159th and 3/82nd Airborne
- Afghanistan and Iraq Veteran
- Honorable discharge after ten years
- BS in Environmental Science/Soil Science/OSHA
- MS Ag Science (Row Crop & Animal Production)
- PhD Agricultural Leadership, Community Development, and Education
My Experience: Agriculture to Heal

- Isolated and Angry to connecting to my children
- Survival guilt to reconnecting with peer veterans
- Isolated to began to interact with civilians
- Worthless feeling to passion to complete a PhD
Agriculture Therapy

Agriculture Therapy is an important form of social, activity, and exercise through which the health and well-being can be maintained through mediation properties that physically changes the mind.
Human Development: more than just Putting our Hands in the Dirt

- Ewalt and Ohl (2013) and Kyle 2018 argue cultural, organizational, and occupational identity are critical to military veterans who have spent many years with a developed identity tied to each.

- Critical connections with military comradery and symbols of the military may serve an important role (Ewalt & Ohl, 2013, Kyle, 2018) for success and mental health.

- Each are strongly “mission oriented, and the success of both requires significant skill and strategic planning” (Besterman-Dhah, Chavez, Bendixsen, & Aspillaga, 2018, p. 5).
Resilience is Key

- Resiliency can guard against
  - PTSD, (Pietrzak et al., 2010)
  - Depression, (Pietrzak et al., 2009)
  - Anxiety (Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2013)
  - Behavior and adjustment disorders (Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2013)
  - Suicide (Simmons & Yoder, 2013)

- **High resilience**: higher self-esteem, trust, ability to be resourceful, self-efficacy, internal locus of control, however **low resilience** can lead to:

- PTSD = elevated release of hormones that do not stop after responding to a stressful situation (PTSD, 2014) affects the control center for our responses to fear and emotions (Brock & Lettini, 2012). 118,000 veterans diagnosed (Fischer, 2014).

- **Moral Injury**: spiritually and morally injured (Drescher et al., 2011). Violation of their deeply held moral beliefs and values (Litz et al., 2009).

- = Frequently experience social problems, loss of trust, and psychological challenges (Drescher et al., 2011).
An Agriculture Program

Some veterans feel clinical treatment is inadequate and are turning to programs where they feel more connected to their peers (SAFC, 2017, Kyle 2018).

The Agriculture Education Program is a program designed to educate emerging farmers on techniques that are needed to be successful in pest control, soil management, seed selection, marketing, and farm business planning, but are providing much more.

Pre Interviews

“Military gave me purpose, it wasn’t about me. The mission was bigger than I”

“Civilians don’t understand what we did and what we went through in the military”

“Civilian jobs are about making money... Military was about a mission, purpose, honor, and respect”
Mentally Healthy

- Built Capital
- Financial Capital
- Natural Capital
- Political Capital
- Cultural Capital
- Social Capital
- Human Capital

Healthy Ecosystem
Vital Economy
Social Well-Being
Why Agriculture Works to Assist Veterans With PTSD, Moral Injury, and TBI

Kyle, 2018 Conceptual Model
Ag Ed Programs for Military Veterans

“I see the American flag and I think about service and how we're doing something for this country that others are not doing. If you think about how few people join the military and then how few people are farming, it just definitely connects to me.” (Luz, Veteran Farmer)

“This program has helped me to find my purpose and redefined it. I think because of this program, I have more confidence.” (Kylee, Veteran Farmer)

“I think for me this program has helped me change from that of a military personnel to that of a farmer. My mission changed from the mission of protecting my position of danger to the mission of service through growing food and harvesting food for others. Is there a better feeling?” (Rob, Veteran Farmer)
George’s Experience  (Kyle, 2018)

BEFORE AGRICULTURE

“Wow that thing took a bullet for me.” So, a bullet raced across my back and it was so close... it was probably less than inches from my spine...There's this tidal wave of emotion that sometimes is uncontrollable and it sometimes I have a good handle on it and other times I'll just start bawling...and I don't know why but the point is that's just who I am. That's just a part of me”

(George, OVFP participant)

AFTER AGRICULTURE

“...here we are on this adventure, on this odyssey that we're starting up on our own. We're getting educated and we are farmers. I mean I love it...and to live this next chapter of my life here, the way I want to live it... This has been like a blessing, farming is like a present”

(George, OVFP participant)
Jade’s Experience  

(Kyle, 2018)

BEFORE AG

“I had a lot of mental problems when I left the military. I didn’t want to interact with others or be in crowds. Normal, desk jobs would not work for me. I needed something that would allow me to be in charge and work outside.” (Jade, OVFP participant)

AFTER AG

“This picture is me clearing out my yard and preparing for a garden next year. I am holding a giant spider. Which I would not usually do, but I am doing it now. Being in the outside and in the dirt is therapeutic and being a farmer makes me feel good.” (Jade, OVFP participant)
Improving Mental Health (Kyle, 2018)

- **Changes in Mood:** “It [farming] makes me feel good again.” (Jade, participant)

- **Connection** “I noticed the civilians around this program are starting to see that veterans perform well and that we fit well for the needs in farming. I am not just a veteran with PTSD anymore.” (Luz, participant)

- **New Purpose** “This program helped everyone recognize that we served your country, now we're helping the people where we live locally with the food products that are made because everybody's gotta eat. And I think with that, that is kind of a service that is a recognized service.” (George, participant)

- **Bottom Line:** Agriculture is a bigger purpose then “ME”. Its service to our nation like the military allowing symbolic connections, social mobility, resiliency, and improved mental health through human development.
Agricultural Education programs for Military Veterans will need to:

- Create a veteran specific Ag Ed community were veterans will participate
- Incorporate familiar military symbols, behaviors, and language
- Utilize symbolic military familiar educational practices and create a purpose and mission
- Use Military veteran educators and engagement with civilians
- Have trained mental health first aiders

Veteran Focus “I don’t think I would have participated if it wasn't for the veteran focus, because I would not have shown who I really am and been vulnerable in front of civilians. But the fact that there are veterans here and we are all working towards something very similar makes participation a lot easier.” (Rob, participant)
A Snapshot of Agriculture Today

- 58 years old, Veterans are well suited and often not new to Agriculture
- Low rate of return
- Population predicted to increase 44% by 2050. Making the world 9 billion to 16 billion people.
- Need to double food production by 2050
New program to teach veterans to farm on small to mid scale size

Fully operational farm where all training is hands on with an existing agricultural business

Providing therapy through agricultural education

Equipment programs for veterans beginning farms

Strong focus on networking and marketing of veteran produced products
NCSU Agricultural Institute

- Introduction to agriculture course to transitioning veterans still on active duty
- Scholarships available for veteran’s entering the campus courses
- New generations of middle management jobs on farms and within industries
- 96% hire rates
- NCSU’s only 2 year program
- Started July 2017
- Over 100 participants completed
- Waiting list includes over 250
- 6-week program designed to educate veterans about building an agricultural business
- Includes tours, business classes, and more!
Thank You!

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Dr. Terry Morris

Vets to Vets
Vets To Vets United, Inc.
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North Carolina Governor’s Working
August 22, 2019

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Vets To Vets

Does Animal Assisted Therapy make a difference?

• Meet Nick and Winston …
Captain Willis C. Morris

Captain Karon D. (Morris) Crawley
Thanks you for your time

Questions?
Vicki Vitiello

Statewide Arts Program
North Carolina Arts Council

Military and Veterans Arts Program
Benefits of Arts Participation

• Enhances healing and provides health benefits
• Creates opportunities to tell one’s story
• Diminishes feelings of isolation
Our Goals

To increase access to the arts for North Carolina’s service members, veterans, and military families.

To promote partnerships between arts organizations and military bases, VA hospitals, and veterans service providers.
Funded Program: “Brothers Like These”

- First writer-in-residence at a VA Hospital
- Over 45 Vietnam veterans have taken part
- Incorporated a non-profit organization called NC Veterans Writing Alliance
Funded Program:
Cape Fear Regional Theatre

• Customized classes and workshops for military families
• On post at Throckmorton Library in Fort Bragg
• Sold out in 2 hours!
Funded Program:
Artists as part of USO of NC

- Acclaimed resiliency programs: Warrior Reset, Spouse Reset, Family Reset
- Training workshops for local arts council and artists
Upcoming

Sept 14, 2019
“Brothers Like These”
Staged Reading

Nov 9 & 10, 2019
7th Annual Outer Banks
Veterans Writing
Workshop

March 1, 2020
Grant Deadline for
FY2020-21
MISSION

To Reconnect Veterans to Life at Home

We use the power of community to engage, educate and encourage veterans and their families.

METHODS

- We partner with other organizations to bring about systemic change in the way in which veterans are served.
- We advocate for the importance of non-traditional services for veterans and their families.
- We provide a direct connection to non-traditional services.
PROGRAMS

- NC Veterans Coffees
- Resource Connection
- Operation A.R.T.
Operation A.R.T. is a program for veterans and their families. Whether the art student is a beginner or someone refreshing old skills, this program not only enhances artistic ability but also creates camaraderie and community with the veterans and their peers.
CLASSES

- Photography/Photoshop
- Drawing
- Watercolor
- Oil Painting
- Acrylic
“The great unexpected benefit of taking these classes was interacting with other veterans. I’ve gained some very solid friendships, which I consider a gift beyond a value I can put into words.”
“Since I started taking Operation A.R.T. classes, I have found hope, peace, confidence, accomplishment, a sense of direction, and camaraderie with veterans.”

PHOEBE, NAVY VETERAN
CONTACT

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Introductions and Updates
Next Meeting:
September 26, 2019

Joint Force Headquarters
Raleigh, NC
Register for our email updates: ncgwg.org

Join us by live stream at www.facebook.com/govinst

Meeting agenda and minutes: ncgwg.org/minutes-and-group-updates