

Behavioral Healthcare in the Fort Drum Region: Increased Understanding & Quality of Care through Outreach and Training

The Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO), initiated and supported by Congressman John M. McHugh, originated out of a Department of Defense 721 pilot program for healthcare delivery. The FDRHPO provides a platform to analyze the existing healthcare delivery system and to seek new opportunities to leverage healthcare resources to carry out a regional healthcare approach and meet the needs of the military and civilian populations in the Fort Drum region, significantly strengthening the North Country healthcare system.

Due to the unique Fort Drum Community-Based Model of Healthcare, many military families seek behavioral health services from civilian providers in the Fort Drum Region. It is imperative that civilian behavioral healthcare providers receive specific training in military mental health needs in order to adequately treat this population. Military families must also feel empowered to easily access behavioral health services in the Fort Drum Region and understand their military behavioral health benefits. Therefore, the Community Mental Health Education Program was developed to fill this gap.

★ PROJECT PARTNERS

**Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization
Jefferson County Department of Community Services
Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County**

★ OBJECTIVE

To build capacity and raise community awareness of military mental health needs for local healthcare providers, frontline workers, and military families; to strengthen the referral system between Fort Drum and the Fort Drum Region behavioral healthcare services; and to empower military families to effectively and efficiently access behavioral healthcare services.

★ PROJECT PERSONNEL

Community Mental Health Educator: Kate Falb, MHS (315) 788 – 8450, x 321, klf55@cornell.edu

Collaborates with key stakeholders to achieve program objectives by spearheading trainings and other educational opportunities to engage the community in military mental health needs and the referral mechanisms between Fort Drum and the Fort Drum Region.

★ COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Trainings Provide trainings to soldiers, family members, community members, Family Readiness Group Leaders, Family Readiness Support Assistants, Fort Drum Behavioral Health Department, and frontline workers to include, law enforcement, teachers, social service agencies and school nurses to promote understanding, early recognition, treatment and referral mechanisms for military mental health services.

Presentations Provide presentations and activities for school children with mental health related information as it pertains to the deployment of service members. The presentations focus on a general understanding of what their peers may be experiencing.

Website Created a website focused on finding information about military mental health needs and how to access services in the Fort Drum Region (www.jeffcountymentalhealth.com). Also maintains directory of military mental health related trainings and events in the area.

Informational Packets Created packets of mental health services in the Fort Drum Region to be distributed to military spouses during trainings and *New Spouse Orientations*.

★ TRAINING EXAMPLES

Finding Your Way through the Mental Health Network in the Fort Drum Region

Over 140 providers attended the one-day training to learn about what services and supports are available on and off of Fort Drum for mental health needs.

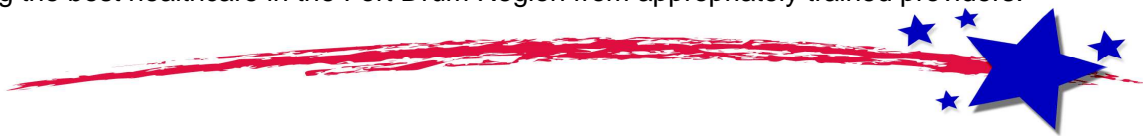
Managing Post-Combat Soldiers in an Emergency Setting

Educated over 60 current law enforcement officers in the Watertown Police Department and 15 new recruits in the Black River / St. Lawrence Valley Law Enforcement about the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury they could come across in an emergency setting when interacting with soldiers.

Veterans' Roundtable

Collaborated with the Institute for Professional Development in the Addictions to implement a two-day training about veterans' issues in New York State. Over 100 leaders in mental health, substance abuse, and veterans' communities attended.

The Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, Jefferson County Department of Community Services, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County have created a partnership to fill the training and community education gaps in the Fort Drum Region about military mental health needs. We will continue to identify training needs, create educational materials that will enable providers and military families to better understand the mental health services in the Fort Drum Region, and work to ensure that military families are receiving the best healthcare in the Fort Drum Region from appropriately trained providers.



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