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Release No.16-08-10

August 10, 2016

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DoD's Deployment Psychology Center Celebrates 10th Year

More than 40,000 Behavioral Health Providers Trained to Address Military Deployment Issues

Bethesda, MD -- More than 40,000 behavioral health providers across the country have been trained in aspects of military psychology by experts at the Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP) over the past decade to help address chronic pain, depression, substance abuse, suicide, post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury and other issues affecting some of the more than 2 million U.S. service members who deployed in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

CDP, a center at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Since its founding in 2006, CDP's courses, webinars and other educational offerings have prepared behavioral health professionals to meet the deployment-related needs of service members and their families. CDP incorporates the latest research on military psychology in its training workshops and educational resources and integrates the personal experiences of how service members and their families are impacted by deployments and other military demands.

"The staff and faculty at the CDP are among the most skilled and dedicated professionals in the nation. The courses and materials that they have created and delivered over the last 10 years is truly amazing," said David Riggs, Ph.D., chair of USU's Department of Medical and Clinical Psychology and director of CDP.

Riggs said he receives feedback regularly from course participants who believe CDP's training is among the best they have ever taken.

"I think it all comes down to recognizing and valuing the mission of the CDP – everyone here works hard to deliver outstanding training because we believe that it is imperative that providers deliver the best care possible to our service members veterans and their families," said Riggs.

Over the past 10 years, both military and civilian providers have been trained through CDP's courses, which include:

- Training for Military Providers – an in-depth training on deployment spectrum issues facing service members, their families and providers
- Regional Civilian One-Week Training
- Evidence-Based Workshops – mobile 2-3 day workshops held at military bases that teach evidence-based psychotherapies
- University Counseling Center Core Competency (UC4) – 1-2 day training sessions designed to air university counseling centers in their awareness, outreach, and sensitivity to the unique needs of veterans on their campuses and instruct counselors in the use of evidence-based practices
- Star Behavior Health Providers – CDP, the National Guard, the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, and local organizations in several states have partnered to design a program to heighten the expertise of clinicians interested in treating service members and veterans
- Online Courses – a variety of self-paced modules to help behavioral health providers care for service members, veterans, and their families

Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way

- Certificate Program – CDP and Widener University offer a certificate in Military and Veteran's Behavioral Health. Certificates are also offered via the online Serving Our Veterans Behavioral Health Certificate program.
- The Summer Institute-Preparing for Military-Focused Career – a five-day course for doctoral students in clinical or counseling psychology who anticipate applying for a military internship. This intensive program strengthens trainees' backgrounds in military behavioral health in preparation for an internship and career serving the military population.
- Online Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals Course – Four modules to help assess and help develop a provider's understanding of military culture

“More than two million U.S. service members have deployed into combat zones over the last 15 years. A significant number of them will struggle with psychological health problems when they return,” Riggs observed. “We, as a country, owe it to them to do what we can to ease their adjustment back home. The fact that the CDP has helped improve the care for these individuals and families is tremendously gratifying.”

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About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation's federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. A large percentage of the university's more than 5,300 physician and 1,000 advanced practice nursing alumni are supporting operations around the world, offering their leadership and expertise. USU also has graduate programs in biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research, and in oral biology. The University's research program covers a wide range of clinical and other topics important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.