

VA  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Manchester Healthcare System

### Guiding Veterans into Care Through the Behavioral Health Liaison Program

Presented For:  
NH Behavioral Health Summit

Presented By:  
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### Warm-up Prompt

Think about a client in your setting who:

- Has significant mental health and/or substance use challenges that negatively impact their daily functioning
- Isn't engaged with treatment or other supports

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### Large Group Activity

What factors are preventing this person from engaging?

- Grab a marker
- Walk around the room and consider the different types of barriers to engagement
- Use flip charts to brainstorm potential barriers

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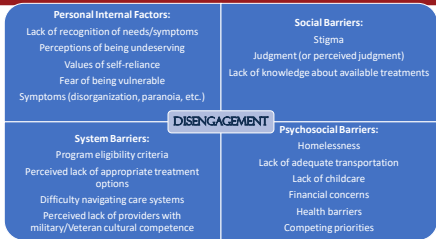
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## Barriers for Veterans



Chen, M., Nangle, C., Mitt, C. et al.  
Bartels, L.A., Wessely, S., Stein, S.A.M., & Greenberg, N. (2010).



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## What this looks like



I want to get my drinking and suicidal thoughts under control, but I don't want to go inpatient. I was hospitalized once, and I won't do it again ... but outpatient therapists won't work with me.



Of course I'm depressed—I've been living in my truck for a month! I don't care about getting on meds or talking to someone. I just need help finding an apartment.



The last time I tried to get help for my anxiety, all the doctor wanted to talk about was my drug use. I've been clean for 4 years, but I still get judged for my past. It's better to just try to figure it out on my own. I'm a Marine, I guess I can handle it.



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## Bridging the Gaps

### Small Group Brainstorm



What resources, supports, interventions, or strategies could help to resolve these barriers?



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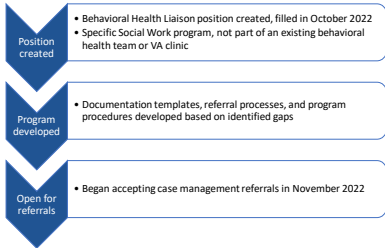
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## Bridging the Gaps at VA Manchester



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## Behavioral Health Liaison Case Management Model



Rafferty, L.A., Minardi, S., Steinhilber, S.A.M., & Greenberg, N. (2018).  
SAGE, 4(4), 444-451. doi:10.1177/2165029718777777



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## Practice Elements



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## Practice Elements

### Prioritizing Goals that are Personally Meaningful to Veteran



Listen for what matters to the Veteran and start there



Avoid pushing my own agenda



Help Veteran see connection between personal goals and behavioral health



Understand that formal behavioral health treatment isn't always the answer




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## Practice Elements

I want to stop drinking, but it's just not realistic. I know it's bad for me, and the pain clinic wants me to stop, but I enjoy having drinks with my old friends and it helps with my pain.

Possible response: It's not safe to keep using alcohol while you're on pain medications. It's very important that you start cutting back.

Alternative: How could you develop discrepancy?

I'm not crazy. There's another Veteran with the same name and date of birth as me, and they keep stealing my money. I don't need to see a shrink, I need this person to leave me alone!

Possible response: There's no other Veteran in our system with your name. If you meet with the mental health team, maybe they can help figure out what's really happening to your money.

Alternative: How could you express empathy and avoid arguing?

I decided not to go to rehab after all. It's too much of a hassle. I'm not using that much, and I can manage it on my own. I've done it before.

Possible response: It's dangerous to keep using heroin, but it's also dangerous to stop without support. You might need detox to help you do it safely. You really should go to rehab.

Alternative: How could you support self-efficacy?

### Motivational Interviewing




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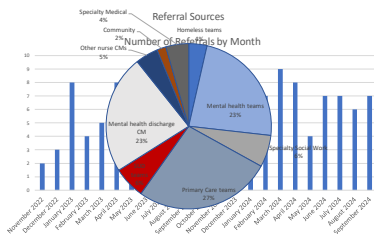
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## Data & Evaluation: Building the Program




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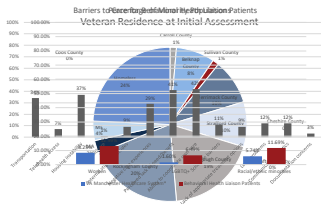
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## Data & Evaluation: Refining the Program



National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS)




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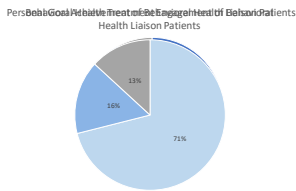
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## Data & Evaluation: Program Outcomes



Person has access to behavioral health treatment  
 Person has a goal to engage in behavioral health treatment  
 Person has a goal to engage in behavioral health treatment in 6 months




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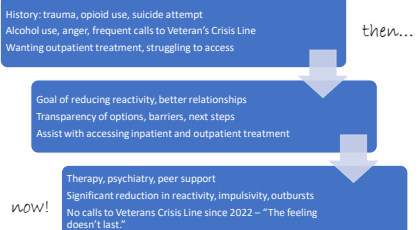
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## Success Story




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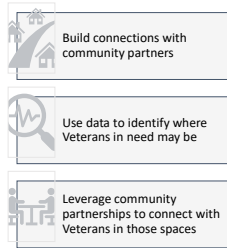
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## Future Direction



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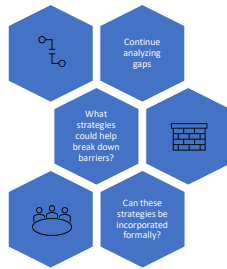
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## Call to Action



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## References

Cheney, A.M., Koenig, C.J., Miller, C.J. et al. Veteran-centered barriers to VA mental healthcare services use. *BMC Health Serv Res* 18, 591 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-3346-9>

National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. (2024). *New Hampshire State Summary*. <https://www.data.va.gov/stories/s/cprf-5mbx>

Rafferty, L. A., Wessely, S., Stevelink, S. A. M., & Greenberg, N. (2019). The journey to professional mental health support: a qualitative exploration of the barriers and facilitators impacting military veterans' engagement with mental health treatment. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2019.1700613>

Seal, K.H., Abadjian, L., McCamish, N., et al. (2012). A randomized control trial of telephone motivational interviewing to enhance mental health treatment engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 35(5). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.genhosppsych.2012.04.007>



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# Questions?

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