



## Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury

### About DCoE

**Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury** (DCoE) serves as the principal integrator and authority on psychological health and traumatic brain injury (TBI) knowledge and standards for the Defense Department. An integral part of the Military Health System, DCoE programs and resources help promote resilience, rehabilitation and reintegration for our nation's warriors, families and veterans.

DCoE Director **Navy Capt. Paul S. Hammer** serves as special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. Hammer is supported by a diverse staff of senior military officers and civilian experts.

### Services

DCoE maintains a **24/7 outreach center** staffed by health resource consultants who provide psychological health and TBI resources for service members, veterans and their families. Information can be accessed for free by phone at 866-966-1020, email to [resources@dcoeoutreach.org](mailto:resources@dcoeoutreach.org) or via online live chat. The outreach center also supports **Real Warriors Campaign**, an initiative launched by DCoE to promote the processes of building resilience, facilitating recovery and supporting reintegration of returning service members, veterans and their families. The campaign promotes help-seeking behavior among service members and veterans with invisible wounds and encourages the awareness and use of available resources.

DCoE manages the **inTransition** program to ensure that service members who receive psychological health care do not "fall through the cracks" when moving from one duty station to another, deploying or transitioning from Defense Department to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) care. DCoE disseminates family-oriented materials through its partnership with **Sesame Workshop** addressing issues such as deployments and injured parents.

### Products

DCoE programs and products are developed to drive innovation across the continuum of care by identifying treatment options

and other clinical and research methods that deliver superior outcomes. Products range from tools customized for health care providers to electronic resources for service members and families. Examples include:

**The Co-occurring Conditions Toolkit** is based on existing Department of Defense and VA clinical practice guidelines, including mild TBI, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression, substance use disorders and chronic opioid therapy. This resource for primary care professionals provides instructions and tables on the diagnosis and management of warriors with combinations of these persistent post-concussive symptoms.

**The Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Pocket Guide mobile application** for health care providers allows instant, mobile access to the comprehensive quick-reference pocket guide for current medical management of mild TBI patients.

DCoE worked with TBI experts from Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC), National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE), VA, the services and various civilian institutions to develop a **new concussion and mild TBI in-theater protocol** and a revised Military Acute Concussion Evaluation (MACE) to reflect the current state of science. The newly revised in-theater protocol helps medics and health care providers with early screening for concussion and aids in the diagnosis, evaluation and management of symptoms related to mild TBI.

Two psychological health toolkits were recently updated: the **Substance Use Disorder Toolkit** and **PTSD Toolkit**. The updated toolkits provide recommendations that are current with scientific advancement in the identification, evaluation and treatment of each substance use disorder and PTSD respectively.

The "**T2 Virtual PTSD Experience**" developed by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2) is an online, interactive tool that informs visitors about causes and symptoms of PTSD and offers resources for care in a unique, personal environment.

**Afterdeployment.org** is a Web-based application spanning 18 topics from post-traumatic stress and depression to sleep and stig-

ma. The website is designed for service members, veterans and families to provide an online, anonymous self-care solution and offers multiple access points to learn behavior-change strategies. Features include topical libraries, self-assessments, video-based personal stories, interactive workshops, community forums, expert blogs and a provider training portal.

Additionally, DCoE hosts a website with [online resources](#) on psychological health care and TBI; participates in training events and conferences; hosts webinars; publishes a blog; offers a news room with timely, relevant information for stake holders; and uses social media to outreach and provide additional opportunities for people to engage in conversation and access resources.

## DCoE Centers

### Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

[www.dvbic.org](http://www.dvbic.org)



The DVBIC mission is to serve active-duty service members, their dependents and veterans with TBI through state-of-the-art medical care, innovative clinical research initiatives and educational programs. DVBIC serves thousands of patients through a comprehensive network of 17 physical sites, including two civilian sites. The center provides education to clinical providers, families, the public and line leadership; conducts a robust research program providing primary expertise to the Defense Department on TBI issues and ensures optimal outcomes for warriors and veterans with all levels of TBI severity and in every environment of care. DVBIC developed MACE, the officially adopted in-theater screening tool and worked with the Brain Trauma Foundation to develop the “Guidelines for the Field Management of Combat-related Head Trauma.”

### Deployment Health Clinical Center

[www.pdhealth.mil](http://www.pdhealth.mil)



The mission of DHCC is to provide hands-on medical and psychological health care to service members and veterans while simultaneously serving as a catalyst and resource center for the continuous improvement of deployment health care across the Military Health System. DHCC developed RESPECT-Mil, a collaborative care model that enables health care providers to screen patients for post-traumatic stress and depression in primary care clinics using an evidence-based systematic process of care.

From program inception through the end of FY 2011, 76 clinics at 31 active RESPECT-Mil sites provided more than 1.6 million primary care visits to active-duty service members with more than 1.3 million of those visits screened for PTSD and depression. This represents an overall 80 percent screening rate for active-duty primary care visits to participating clinics since February 2007. Of screened visits, 168,519 (12.7 percent) resulted in a positive screen and 49 percent of positive screens resulted in a primary-care diagnosis of depression, possible PTSD or both.

During the life of the project, more than 13,000 service members have been referred to and followed by RESPECT-Mil and more than 27,700 service members (nearly 11,450 in FY 2011) with previously unmet behavioral health needs were referred for care. To date more than 13,600, or 1 percent of screened visits (approximately 6,900 in the past year) involved suicidality and received mental health intervention.

## National Center for Telehealth & Technology

[www.t2health.org](http://www.t2health.org)



National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2) is engaged in multiple projects to help service members get information and care while avoiding concern that accepting care will come at a cost to their careers. As part of the T2 mission to lead the development of telehealth and technology solutions for psychological health and TBI to improve the lives of the nation's service members, veterans and their families, the center is responsible for developing the following mobile apps:

**Breathe2Relax** is a portable stress management tool that helps users learn about deep-breathing, also called diaphragmatic breathing, to calm the body's “fight-or-flight” response and help with mood stabilization, anger control and anxiety management. Breathe2Relax is available for iPhone and Android markets.

**T2 MoodTracker** allows users to monitor moods and behaviors associated with common post-deployment behavioral health concerns. Users track their emotional states via touch-screen slider bars and can review their responses to discover situations, stressors and behaviors that affect their moods. T2 MoodTracker is available for iPhone and Android markets.

**Tactical Breather** provides a simple, portable method for managing stress. This customizable mobile app includes an introduction to the benefits of controlled breathing, a tutorial and guided exercises. Tactical Breather is available for iPhone.

**PTSD Coach** complements psychological treatment and functions as a stand-alone educational resource. PTSD Coach provides a self-assessment tool; teaches coping skills; and includes resources for finding support and information about trauma, PTSD and available treatment options. Developed in collaboration with the VA and National Center for PTSD, PTSD Coach is available for iPhone and Android markets.

T2 developed and manages [afterdeployment.org](http://afterdeployment.org) and T2 Virtual Experience, and is finalizing development of [MilitaryKidsConnect.org](http://MilitaryKidsConnect.org). **MilitaryKidsConnect.org** is an interactive website designed to address the unique stressors and everyday challenges experienced by military children and adolescents before, during and after deployment. A key benefit of the site will be peer-to-peer communication, allowing kids to discuss issues with one another. Separate parent and educator sections of the website provide tools and information adults can use to help support children in their care.