



The Soldiers Project
Free, Confidential Psychological Counseling for Soldiers and Their Families

Newsletter

We would like to start the February Newsletter with continued **THANK YOUs** to all of The Soldiers Project Volunteers, and a note from Dr. Barbara Schochet:

Dear Volunteers,

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Barbara Schochet, the Associate Director of TSP, and I'm covering for Judith Broder while she is out of the country.

February, with Valentine's Day, is a time to remind us to express affection and appreciation for those we know. I would like to express appreciation to the incredible volunteers and paid staff of The Soldiers Project. We do what we do through the hard work of many – those who see patients, who answer phones and have done referrals, who welcome our new volunteers, who work on finding new volunteers, who educate our therapists and the community, who sit at tables, who lead consultation groups, who write grant proposals, who thank our donors, who started groups, who donate, and who provide a cheerful and reliable presence to our group. Thank you!

Please read the announcements below carefully – we have some important changes.

We now are providing psychological services exclusively.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Schochet, Ph.D.
Associate Director
The Soldiers Project*

License & Insurance

If you have recently updated your license and/or insurance please fax a copy to 310.943.1974. It is very important that we have these documents on file. Thank you!!

*In the month of January The Soldiers Project has had
7 referrals in Southern California.
Thank you for your support!*

Patients Who Need Medication

The Soldiers Project is now providing psychological services exclusively. If you have a patient whom you think should be evaluated for medication, here are some options:

If patients can go to the VA, they should get medication there. They will probably have to wait for an appointment. If it is an emergency, they can go the ER.

If they are active duty or family of active duty, they should be able to get medication through their health insurance – they can contact www.MilitaryOneSource.com to find out.

If they were dishonorably discharged and cannot use the VA and have no insurance, or are indigent, they may be able to go to Exodus, a 24 hour treatment facility in Culver City. 310 253-9494. You **MUST** call first and clear this as a Soldiers Project referral with their charge nurse. If they are living out of their car or it is a real emergency, you can send them there without calling. But please read this carefully – wrong referrals can mean that they will stop working with us! Please do not give out Exodus' name randomly to other vets you meet – inappropriate referrals mean that we lose the ability to use a resource.

Referrals can be made to county mental health clinics. There is a new initiative for OEF/OIF veterans and they can be seen at these clinics.

You could consider referring them to a colleague who is a psychiatrist in private practice and willing to see them for free. Before you do so, please consider the following:

- a) Will the patient be able to pay for psychiatric medications that are prescribed? Your patient may not be able to get a prescription written by a non-VA psychiatrist filled at the VA. Psychiatric medications can be extremely expensive.
- b) Does the psychiatrist know anything about veterans?
- c) What about follow-up – is the psychiatrist willing to see this person over time, or just once?
- d) If you do this, you need to inform your patient that the psychiatrist is not part of The Soldiers Project.

Workshops & Events

- February 20 - Speaker Bureau's Training from 12-2PM. Please RSVP to caroltanenbaum@aol.com by February 15th.
- February 27 - **The Hurt Locker** from 2-5PM. The Theatre Room at the CenterPointe Club, 6200 Playa Vista Drive, Playa Vista, CA 90094. RSVP to lynn@thesoldiersproject.org
- February 28 - **Two Brothers** from 2-5PM. The Theatre Room at the CenterPointe Club, 6200 Playa Vista Drive, Playa Vista, CA 90094. RSVP to lynn@thesoldiersproject.org
- March 6 - **ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY IN OEF/OIF VETERANS** from 1-3PM. West Los Angeles Vets Center, address & room number TBA. Please RSVP to lynn@thesoldiersproject.org.
- March 7 - **The Messenger** from 2-5PM. The Theatre Room at the CenterPointe Club, 6200 Playa Vista Drive, Playa Vista, CA 90094. RSVP to lynn@thesoldiersproject.org
- March 26 - Carol Tanenbaum will speak on Combat Stress and The Soldiers Project to therapists at CAMFT in the San Bernardino area.

Other good work around the Country.....

IN BOSTON... In the Boston Chapter, we've been in the process of planning some outreach activities to tell people about the availability of services to this population. I've been trying to get commitments from more volunteer therapists, as thus far we have only two psychiatrists willing to devote treatment time. We also have two non-clinical volunteers that are willing to help us with administrative tasks as they arise. We've been fortunate in winning a grant of \$2500 to print business cards, flyers, and informational brochures on TSP services we're offering. Once the printing is complete, we are planning to more fully outreach to both the provider community and the veteran community to increase awareness, hopefully balancing any future demand for care with availability of therapists locally.

IN SACRAMENTO... It's the beginning of a busy year! We have already had 5 referrals this week (the week of 1/18)! We had a training with 52 therapists on 09 January 10 with Mary Tendall regarding Returning from Combat. This upcoming Saturday, some of us will be at the ISFAC invitation to present. A few other members of our outreach here at The Soldiers Project Sacramento will be at the Gold Country Fairgrounds in Auburn, CA for their Forgotten Soldiers Program. We are very excited about the busy start to the New Year and have high expectations for the rest of 2010!

IN THE NORTHWEST... On March 12th Trisha Pearce will be attending the annual awards banquet for the Washington State marriage and Family Therapy Association to accept an award for The Soldiers Project NW. We are being honored with the "Family Advocacy" award for this year. Last November, Trisha was designated "Female non Veteran of the Year" by the Washington Dept of Veterans Affairs for her work with the project.

We just became a part of a new group organized by the Puget Sound VA to promote collaboration between all groups offering services to our military service members and veterans. Trisha went to the first meeting in Tacoma yesterday they are calling it an Interagency Delivery Model.

Trisha attended the Heroes to Hometown meeting in January 2010 in Tacoma as one of about 45 organizations working to help our veterans. We are now seen as an important resource by that group and were asked to give more detailed info about services we provide.

We will be at the Quarterly network meeting at the Kent Armory for the Guard on Feb 17th. Our 81st brigade returned in August of 2009 and have really struggled so we are working closely with them and have already connected several of the Guard with The Soldiers Project NW counselors.

Since Jan1 2010 we have provided 6 referrals for counseling, some individual, several for couples counseling. We are looking at about 10,000 returning soldiers to Ft Lewis this year as a result of the drawdown in Iraq. We now have 64 therapists on our roster, primarily in Western Washington, but also a few in the eastern part of the state.

IN ORANGE COUNTY, CA... Susen Key has been working on outreach to the colleges in the Orange County area, and recently she has met with the Academic Counselors of Irvine Valley Community. She presented her information on returning vets and fielded their questions. One main question was about how to handle them when they exhibit anger and frustration.

They are working on making a room available for Susen for an afternoon. Her goal is to be available to the vets, maybe have it evolve into a support group, and possibly do some short (20-30 min) sessions. The next step will be to meet with the psychotherapist interns and their supervisor and discuss her role on campus with them.

Patient Emergencies

Some of our therapists have requested a number to call to send out a PET (Psychiatric Emergency Team). The phone numbers below may be called by anyone. 911 is another way to reach emergency resources. Waiting times have increased (up to several hours, in some cases!) because of funding cutbacks.

Some of you were given emergency phone numbers before, but these are more accurate. However, if you think you may need one of these resources, you may wish to call and confirm exactly what is available *before* you need it - things change frequently for many reasons, including funding cutbacks.

- LOS ANGELES COUNTY - 1-800-854-7771
- ORANGE COUNTY - Centralized Assessment Team 1-866-830-6011
- SAN DIEGO COUNTY- Call 911, and ask for a PERT team (Psychiatric Emergency Response Team). In San Diego, can also call non-emergency 619-531-2000 for PERT team - if you want to ask some questions.
- SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY - 1-909-382-3133
- RIVERSIDE COUNTY - 1-951-358-4500

Monthly Book Recommendation

Courage After Fire: Coping Strategies for Troops Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their Families. By Keith Armstrong, Dr. Suzanne Best, Dr. Paula Domenici, and Bob Dole.

This book is excellent for therapists who are going to be doing therapy with a military service member or loved one. It is readable but covers many topics well. You may find yourself recommending it to your patients, as well. It is available online for approximately \$10.

Update on Military Outreach – Barbara Schochet and Marie Cohen, Chairs

- February 17 - Linda Weber will represent The Soldiers Project at the ISFAC meeting, comprised of nonprofits and military groups that support service members in Southern California.
- March 1 - Barbara Schochet will serve on panel at a joint program with the VA and Los Angeles County Mental Health at West LA VA.
- March 12 - Barbara Schochet will speak, and Thomas Helscher, President of LAISPS, will attend a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program at March Air Reserve Base.

And recently....

- January 3 - Myrna Tenebaum participated in a military outreach at the San Diego Convention Center.
- January 9 - Marie Cohen, Wendy Burke and Barbara spoke to 400 US Army Reserve soldiers and families in Los Angeles.
- January 23 and 24 - Barbara made a last minute trip to Dallas to speak at a US Army Reserve Yellow Ribbon event, to help with speakers.

Any **announcements** or **articles of interest** please submit to lynn@thesoldiersproject.org