Innovative approaches to promote accessibility, adoption, uptake, implementation, sustainability, and scale up of evidence-based practices in behavioral health

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BACKGROUND

Department of Defense (DoD) behavioral health clinicians provide care in an environment shaped by organizational and regulatory complexity, demanding caseloads, and evolving technology. These factors can create unique barriers for providers aiming to keep abreast of and implement new evidence-based treatments. The Practice-Based Implementation (PBI) Network strives to help providers effectively address these and other implementation barriers in order to continue to provide the highest quality care to service members, veterans, and their families.

The PBI Network was established in 2012 to bridge the gap between psychological health research and clinical practice within the DoD and Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Based on the principles of implementation science, it engages clinicians, and leaders in initiatives to increase adoption and sustainment of evidence-based treatments and other emerging best practices.

PBI Network operations and strategies incorporate proven implementation frameworks, including the Integrated Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services (iPARIHS) and the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR). Experts working within the PBI Network tailor these frameworks and other emerging strategies to the DoD environment, testing and selecting for use those that best address the specific implementation barriers these providers face.

The PBI Network has successfully collaborated with a broad array of stakeholders (e.g., Military Health System (MHS) leaders, the Services, research teams) to design a dissemination and implementation infrastructure that can effectively improve access to and implementation of evidence-based treatments for providers and their patients.

PBI NETWORK SERVICES

The PBI Network provides a range of dissemination and implementation services to a variety of stakeholder groups to support the uptake and adoption of evidence-based practices. Each of these services is designed to foster collaboration with key stakeholders and enhance sustainability of implementation efforts in the DoD.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment
The PBI Network designs, administers, and analyzes comprehensive needs assessments to gain an understanding of the clinical facilitators and challenges faced by MHS behavioral health providers. Data is collected from stakeholders using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The results of these assessments identify clinical gaps and implementation barriers, and will be used to inform future implementation efforts.

Implementation Consultation
The PBI Network provides subject matter consultation to individuals and organizations in need of help with the planning and/or implementation of practice change efforts as well as general implementation science assistance. PBI Network assistance can range from providing information to assisting with integration of implementation models into project efforts.

Implementation Pilots
Each year, the PBI Network identifies research-based policies, programs, and practices that, if adopted, could enhance behavioral health care for service members, veterans, and their families. The PBI Network collaborates with senior enterprise and clinic leaders to identify a subset of Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) in which to pilot the identified policy, program or practice. The network then directly engages clinic leaders, champions, and providers in piloting the selected evidence-based or promising practices, programs, and policies. This pilot process allows the DoD to test behavioral health practice changes and determine how they should be modified prior to investments in broader dissemination throughout the MHS.

Strategic Problem Solving
The PBI Network collaborates with senior enterprise leaders and clinical leaders to develop strategic, innovative solutions to challenges and barriers identified during the execution of implementation pilots. Such solutions may involve local or system-wide changes in structure, process, or policy.

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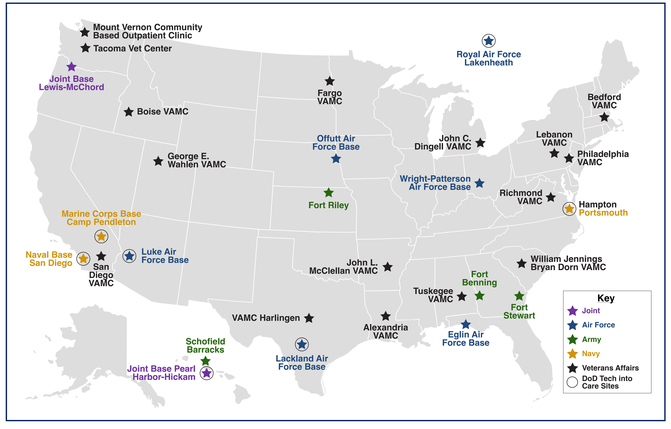
PBI NETWORK
PRACTICE-BASED IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION PILOTS

- **PTSD Checklist**
  - The training and facilitation providers received significantly increased the frequency of screening tool use to monitor PTSD treatment outcomes at Air Force, Army, and Navy clinics
- **Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)**
  - SBIRT was found to be a feasible evidence-based approach in the DoD Primary Care Mental Health setting to address alcohol misuse screening and management
- **Technology into Care (TiC)**
  - The TiC tailored training and facilitation providers received prepared them to use mobile apps as an adjunct to psychological health treatment, and many providers felt more comfortable integrating mobile apps into care after the pilot
- **Cognitive Processing Therapy-Trauma Specialist (Current)**
  - The aim is to increase adoption and sustained use of the Cognitive Processing Therapy Trained Trauma Specialists care delivery model for PTSD treatment to increase access to evidence-based care

LESSONS LEARNED — EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The PBI Network has found the following implementation strategies, selected from Powell et al's (Powell et al., 2012) compilation of implementation strategies, to be particularly relevant and effective for implementation within the DoD:

- Continuously collaborate with stakeholders across multiple groups and leadership levels
- Use the results of enterprise-wide and local needs assessments to inform implementation efforts
- Use a formal implementation blueprint and tailor strategies to address the needs, readiness, and barriers of the local environment
- Engage subject matter experts, internal and external to DoD in the identification of evidence-based practices for implementation
- Assess for readiness and identify barriers and facilitators
- Identify, train, and prepare local champions to lead implementation efforts
- Develop effective educational resources
- Obtain formal commitments and approvals from all participating stakeholder groups
- Monitor and evaluate implementation processes and outcomes, and provide feedback to clinicians and administrators to facilitate behavior change

LESSONS LEARNED — IMPLEMENTATION BARRIERS IN THE DOD

The PBI Network has identified factors that impact the success of implementation efforts within the DoD and is working with enterprise leaders to develop and initiate solutions. Lessons learned include:

- Time constraints impede providers' participation in implementation activities and the adoption of practice changes. Providers need both protected time for implementation activities and temporary reductions in Relative Value Unit (RVU) generation requirements
- The MHS does not have coding practices that document engagement in process improvement or implementation efforts
- Objectively measuring providers' uptake and adoption of practice change is critical to the evaluation of implementation success

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