What is VETConnect?

- **Assumption:** Many (most) veterans are reluctant to admit, or access behavioral health care until serious issues arise.

- **Premise:** There are many resources available if veterans can be assisted in acknowledging a need for services. If they are supported in developing linkages they will be receptive to receiving needed assistance.

What is VETConnect?

**Program Design:**

- Collaborative partnership with OC Community Resources (Veterans Service Office and the Workforce Investment Board)
- Uses Veteran peer ‘navigators’ for connections and follow-up
- Design based on the ‘Recovery Model’ philosophy
- Veterans Claim officers briefly screen for behavioral health issues and refer to on-site Veteran clinical staff and peer navigators for case management and linkages
What is VETConnect?

- Case Management
- Assistance with locating housing
- Job skill enhancement and training
- Job Search
- Employment coaching
- Linkages to medical and behavioral health care
- Supportive Assistance

Three Phases

First Phase:
- Transition program started Feb 2011 with one clinician
- Nov 2011 hired first 2 peer veteran navigators and 1 peer veteran volunteer
- Feb 2012 two peer navigators located full time employment
- May 2012: one peer and 2.5 clinicians on staff
- July 1, 2012 all staff (contracted and direct); all procedures for supportive assistance will be in place for ‘official start’ of program.

Second Phase:
- Late 2012: Outreach to all of Orange County by peer navigators; development of social media, website and use of Network of Care/Veterans for resource posting

Third Phase:
- Transition to on-going operational model; data evaluation; Private-Public partnerships for long-term program continuation
Barriers to service

- Mental Health Stigma and Military Mind Set
- Lack of ‘self-insight’
- Unable to overcome barriers of mental health or substance use
  - Anger
  - Depression
  - Jail
  - ‘Not-Worthy’
  - Pride/embarrassed

- Anger
- Lethargic
- Poor memory
- Hopelessness

Barriers to service

- Barriers to access services due to
  - transportation
  - homeless
  - no phone, computer
- Lack of knowledge of available resources
- Unable to keep appointments
- Lack of support

‘Kick-Off’

April 12 2012 All Staff orientation ‘Kick-Off

VETConnect Staff:
Veterans claim officers;
VSO office staff;
Workforce Investment Board staff
Behavioral Health Veterans Services Staff—Clinicians and Veteran Peers
Coastline Community College Staff
OCCR/OCCS Management Staff
HCA/BHS Management Staff
* RDA
DATA COLLECTION

Assessment Tools
- Veterans Claims Officer screening tool
- Intake questionnaire
- Bio-psycho-social assessment;
- SBIRT, PHQ-9, PCL-M, and WHOQOL-26

Satisfaction Surveys
- Customized Participant Satisfaction Survey
- Customized Peer Mentor Satisfaction Survey
- Customized Staff Satisfaction Survey

Other Data
- Referral and Linkage Records
- Demographic Data
- Referral Sources Report
- Types of services: informational/consult; case management; outreach; trainings

Challenges
Complex program with many players:
Veterans claim officers;
VSO office staff;
Workforce Investment Board staff
Behavioral Health Veterans Services Staff—Clinicians and Veteran Peers
Coastline Community College Staff
OCCR/OCCS Management Staff
HCA/BHS Management Staff
* RDA
Challenges

• Communication routes
• Most staff are not familiar with Behavioral health approaches and methods
• Coordination between agencies
• Need for continuous training in behavioral health veterans resources and issues

Assets

• Peer Navigators who are veterans and can relate personally with participants.
• Partnerships with VSO and Workforce Investment Board have increased breadth of services.
• Professional, knowledgeable, committed and passionate staff.

Assets

• Management of all agencies in agreement with goals
• Plans for continuous behavioral health training
• Tremendous support from HCA and MHSA Steering committee
• Support from Board of Supervisors; community and veterans resources
Recent Success Stories

How to Refer

- CALL the Veterans Service Office @ 714-480-6555
- EMAIL: Maurobles@ochca.com
- CALL: HCA/BHS/ Veterans Services @ 714-480-6652