



**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

Spring 2024 Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter



MVP and TVTV Newsletter

Your newsletter for all important updates related to Military and Veterans Psychology and the Train Vets to Treat Vets Programs.

Welcome to William James College! Whether you are an incoming student or a fourth-year student, we encourage you to take part in the Military and Veteran Program (MVP) if you have any interest working with the military or veteran population. The MVP and TVTV have come a long way over the last several years and we are looking for student leaders to join our team! The available resources in this concentration are valuable to students by fostering leadership skills and preparing you for a career catering to military members. Keep reading to see how you can become involved!



Military Community Members at William James College

Announcements

Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association (MVSOA)

Congratulations are due! On February 8, 2024, Dr. Jenny D'Olympia and Kevin Lambert (OLP MA student) presented to the Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association (MVSOA) during their Mental Health Symposium held at the Leominster Veterans Services office. Their presentations included "Suicide Prevention" and a panel discussion on "Lethal Means Safety."

"Engaging with the VSOs, who are some of the most crucial frontline providers that serve the Veterans of MA, is not only imperative to the future care of our Veterans but also to ensure that VSOs have the knowledge, skills, and resources needed as Veterans serving Veterans."

-Kevin Lambert

Division 19 Poster Presentation on Veteran Suicide and Firearm Storage

Congratulations! On March 7, 2024, Kevin Lambert (OLP MA student) presented an award winning TVTV team poster during the Military Psychology Summit hosted by the American Psychological Association Society for Military Psychology (Division 19). The poster, "Addressing veteran suicide prevention through safer firearm storage: A training implementation and evaluation" was selected to be highlighted and presented during the conference. A special thanks to the team led by Dr. Jenny D'Olympia including Kevin Lambert BS, Angela Taveira-Dick, PhD, Yanxi Liu, MPH, Zachary Ginsburg (Clinical PsyD student), Jordan Lawson, PhD, Jay Ball, M.S., Sonia Suri, PhD, Jacob Kolodney, BS, Zita Tiamuh, PhD and Alex Ford, M.Ed.

"It is an honor not only to have presented on behalf of WJC at

the APA Military Symposium but also to be a part of an amazing team that provides such a crucial training around suicide prevention and safer storage of firearms.”

-Kevin Lambert

We appreciate all your hard work to support veterans.



INTRODUCTION

More than one million program graduates of active per year with increasing expectations for the quality and quantity of training has increased 40% in the past 30 years. In 2013, the US lost 13 veterans to suicide each day and nearly 75% of those deaths were preventable. This fact alone for firearms as a choice of self-harm is consistent with other forms of suicide in that Veterans and their families are at 21 times and 1.57 times more likely to use a firearm compared to non-armed methods. Many of these suicide prevention programs are solely reliant on interventions by mental health providers and work in a vacuum, disconnected from existing or existing in a health care system. These programs may reach a percentage of Veterans however, studies show that approximately 20% of those who do by far are not connected with the mental health system. Research indicates that only a small percentage of providers engage in specific assessment centered on firearms access and safety with clients. It may be that many clinicians lack the basic human cultural knowledge of veteran firearm ownership and comfort level required to address the importance of safer firearm storage during times of crisis. As such, our team felt it was important to create a program to address where possible knowledge of military culture and reach them, the fundamental of all means counseling efforts in training.

During the 2012-13 academic year, a team of veterans at William James College (WJC) conducted an introduction of Firearms Safety & Suicide Prevention training at all adjacent Veterans Affairs culture and the connection between military training and issues of training. In addition, this four and a half hour in-person training provides education on local firearm safety laws, the basics of firearm function, safe handling/storage, and safety storage alternatives that demonstrate an understanding with veterans. Some clinicians working closely with military and veterans had issues with firearm safety. They were required to provide firearms and related components to the training. This training was unique in that it was developed and delivered by three veterans who displayed their own military service.

In understanding the military culture of value of promoting a mission, providers may be able to better engage veterans with their clients which increases their success of safety planning, empowering veterans to develop safer storage practices and add their own resources and access during challenging times. This training is not one size fits all and assessing the applicability of safer storage options for Veterans. These options range from having firearms locked, boxed and kept to controlling the safest possible storage and during the training with a trained soldier. This document serves to "inform" trainees on the way they are in the hopes of extending the broader suicide prevention and safety efforts.

- OUTCOMES**
- Results support the ability of training implementation and effectiveness.
 - Training addresses need for increasing knowledge, competence, comfort engaging in discussions regarding safety with veterans.
 - Mental health providers are more confident and comfortable addressing safer storage and firearms ownership with exposure to firearms and focused training.

REFERENCES

Chenault, E. E., Auer, J. A., & Lambert, K. A. (2013, July 14). Firearms safety and suicide prevention training: A review of the literature. *Journal of Military and Veterans Health Care*, *19*(2), 1-10.

Chenault, E. E., Auer, J. A., Lambert, K. A., & Lambert, K. A. (2013, July 14). Firearms safety and suicide prevention training: A review of the literature. *Journal of Military and Veterans Health Care*, *19*(2), 1-10.

Chenault, E. E., Auer, J. A., Lambert, K. A., & Lambert, K. A. (2013, July 14). Firearms safety and suicide prevention training: A review of the literature. *Journal of Military and Veterans Health Care*, *19*(2), 1-10.

Addressing Veteran Suicide Prevention Through Safer Firearm Storage: A Training Implementation and Evaluation

D'Olympia, J., Pay-D, Lambert, K., Taveira-Dick, A., PhD, Liu, Y., Ginsburg, Z., Lawson, J., Ball, J., Surt, S., Ph.D., Kolodney, J., Tammah, Z., Ph.D., & Ford, A.

"This is a great course! Full to the brim with experts and specialized information that will not only help counselors become more comfortable discussing these topics while building their knowledge, but will also save lives." Participant with 20 years experience in the mental health field.



CHALLENGES

There were several challenges to the creation and implementation of this specific type of training involving self-defense counseling. An important one of the training involved an opportunity for attendees to be in the physical presence of a firearm so that they may learn more about the parts of a firearm and gain hands on experience. It is not a challenge finding training sites that would accept firearms in and possibly the liability and access for this type of access. Initially we partnered with law enforcement and field-based training of police stations. However, we were ultimately able to engage in this training at WJC with necessary permissions, specifically with the permission from the local police station, and regulatory in relation to firearms they provided the liability of this training program in some locations through the course and must be considered the development phase of the program.

Suicide Prevention for Military and Veterans Through Lethal Means Counseling

Topic	Instructor
0900 - 1045	Massachusetts Law Related to Firearms Safety, Mental Health, and Interactions with Law Enforcement Presented by Sergeant, Jay Ball
1045 - 1145	Discussing Firearms Function, Safe Handling and Storage Presented by Mr. Kevin Lambert
1145 - 1300	Firearms Exposure and Risk Presented by Dr. Jenny D'Olympia
1300 - 1345	Subject Assessment and Safety Planning Presented by Dr. Jenny D'Olympia
1345 - 1410	Military and Veterans Firearm Culture Presented by Dr. Kevin Lambert
1410 - 1440	Universal Safer Storage Discussion and Risk Reduction Presented by Training Team
1440 - 1515	Crisis Intervention Using the Chronological Assessment of Suicide Events (CASA) Method Presented by Dr. Jenny D'Olympia

Participant Professions

Profession (N = 146)

Social Worker	25 (17.1%)
Psychologist/Psychologist	10 (6.8%)
Student	2 (1.4%)
Law Enforcement	3 (2.0%)
Veteran/Volunteer Support Leader	1 (0.7%)
Chief Financial Officer	1 (0.7%)
Healthcare Professionals	5 (3.4%)
Senior Educational Administrator	1 (0.7%)
Jail Diversion	1 (0.7%)
Research Professional	1 (0.7%)

Introduction of Trainers



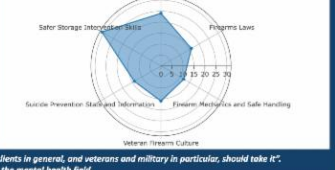
SAFER Storage



Program Objectives & Participant Feedback



Qualitative Participant Responses (N=67)



"One of the best trainings I've ever taken. Everyone serving mental health clients in general, and veterans and military in particular, should take it." Participant with 25 years in the mental health field.

Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) Scholarship

What is this? The Army, Navy and Air Force HPSP Scholarship covers up to four years of graduate school tuition and provides a monthly stipend for living expenses as well as compensation for books. In return, recipients pursuing graduate education at William James College commit to a length of active-duty service as psychologists. Once each student earns their PsyD, the Army and Air Force will promote the graduates to the rank of captain.

HPSP
RECIPIENTS

**WE ARE
LOOKING
FOR YOU**

The Student Affairs
Committee is seeking HPSP
recipients (all branches)
interested in serving as a
mentor to students who are
applying



More info
studentaffairs@militarypsych.org

Get Involved!

Experiential Groups

It's not too late to join! Experiential groups remain an excellent way for connecting and networking with fellow students who share an interest in working with the military and veteran community. Since the inception of the program in 2009, these groups have served as welcoming space, as well as a valuable opportunity to engage in a supportive learning community, comprising non-military, military, and veteran students alike. Gathering weekly throughout the semester, we tailor discussions to the interests and inquiries of participants. For example, during the 2023/2024 academic year, topics ranged from assisting veterans in accessing support services, transitioning from military to academic life, to exploring gender and diversity within the military, as well as discussing the emerging research on psychedelic-assisted therapy. We want to thank all of you who have participated over this past academic year and look forward to welcoming new members in the fall.

On 4-29 @ noon in room 311, we will have our final experiential group meeting for the year, shining a light on some of the many accomplishments that are students, faculty and staff are engaged in, as well as the growth of the military and veteran community. If you have any questions please contact, Dr. David

Consider joining us for Fall 2024!

“I’m thankful for this group as it provides me with a safe space to feel connected with other military and veteran students.”
—student feedback

MVP Experiential Group Zoom Link

Division 19- Society for Military Psychology



What is Division 19? The Society for Military Psychology (Division 19) encourages research and the application of psychological research to military problems. WJC has many student members who are HPSP military scholarship recipients or are interested in working with the military as a civilian practitioner. Division 19's WJC chapter has done extensive work presenting at local and national conferences, assisting in military and veteran research, and educating local clinicians about military clients' needs.

APA Division 19 Link

Recent Engagement

Student Veteran Engagement and Impact. Explore where our students have been and how they have made a difference!

We are happy to announce how much of an impact our students are making in the Veteran community. From August 2023 to January 2024, WJC students have logged over 11,000 hours of support and 5,500 hours of direct service with over 600 Veterans across 17 Veterans sites nationwide!

56

Total Military and Veterans Enrolled Fall 2023



24

New Veterans Enrolled in 2023



14

Veteran Student Graduates June 2023



2023 Veterans Day Event

Community Reflects on Veterans Day

Members of the William James College community gathered in November of 2023 to reflect on what Veterans Day means to them. The event featured a slideshow honoring community members, family, and friends who have served as well as personal reflections from many in the audience. The event was hosted by the Dean of Students Office and the Military and Veterans Psychology Concentration. A 2019 study by the Cohen Veterans network showed that over 50% of younger Veterans feel uncomfortable when people say "Thank you for your Service." This year's event gave students, faculty and staff an opportunity reconsider other ways to share their gratitude and appreciation to community veterans.

Contact Us!

Still have questions about the MVP/TVTV programs?

Watch our recent MVP/TVTV informational video and get to know Dr. Jenny D'Olympia, Associate Chair and Assistant Professor in the Counseling and Behavioral Health Department, and Director of the Military and Veterans Psychology and Train Vets to Treat Vets Programs. Dr. D'Olympia shares her personal experience as an Air Force Veteran, and provides information about our Military and Veterans Psychology program for military, veterans, and civilians. The program will provide students with the tools, hands-on experiential learning, and cultural awareness to deliver services to the military, veterans, and their families. For more information, please visit www.williamjames.edu/mvp

[Watch the Video Here!](#)

Connect with Us on LinkedIn

Join our Military and Veteran community on by following us on LinkedIn!

[Follow Us Here](#)

If you are interested on how to become a part of our military programs at WJC or have any inquires, please view the MVP and TVTV points of contact below or email mvp@williamjames.edu

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We hope you will join us for our future training events. We provide quarterly newsletters, so please stay tuned for our next edition. Thank you for following us and being a part of our community!

[Visit our MVP Website!](#)

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