



## News & Announcements

It has been a busy spring for Emory Healthcare Veterans Program and May shows no signs of slowing down. We have several events planned for the upcoming month such as our recent visit to Fort Benning, an educational excursion that helped our clinicians better understand the context of our warriors' memories.

- The Wounded Warrior Project® Brain Health Suite is officially open! The space expansion allows EHVP to double the number of warriors we treat as well as accommodate more families and couples through the FOCUS (Families OverComing Under Stress) and Relationship Checkup programs. Virtual Reality treatment now has a room of its own, allowing for more state-of-the-art features to be added to the experience. Be sure to follow us on Facebook @EmoryVeteransProgram and Twitter @EmoryVeterans to see pictures of the ribbon-cutting on Monday, May 20th.
- May is Mental Health Awareness Month. EHVP is committed to transforming lives every day by healing invisible wounds, and we would like to thank our program partners for making this mission possible. We would also like to thank our warriors for trusting us through the treatment and being champions of the program for future warriors.
- EHVP was at the Braves Game on Saturday, May 18th for the Braves Military Appreciation Night. Our Veteran Outreach Coordinators were there to promote the program and pass out information.



# News & Announcements (cont.)

## Preventing Veteran Suicide

We are committed to supporting veterans nationwide and are proud to work closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to help prevent veteran suicide.

VA recently released “From Science to Practice,” a series of literature reviews, and we are pleased to share them with you today. Designed to help clinicians across the country put suicide prevention research into action, these summaries pair findings on suicide risk, protective factors, and related topics with practical steps for serving veteran patients. The “From Science to Practice” series describes a number of suicide risk and protective factors. No single risk or protective factor on its own causes or protects against suicide.

“From Science to Practice” is a tool for applying the latest suicide prevention research findings to your daily practice with veterans. Topics include how loneliness can affect a veteran’s mental health, how trauma experienced before military service can increase a veteran’s risk for suicide, and how military sexual trauma is a distinct risk factor for suicide, even after accounting for comorbid mental health conditions.

To learn more about the series and read the reviews, visit [https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/resources.asp](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/resources.asp).

*Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, can contact the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential crisis intervention and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, text to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Chat).*



# Stories of Impact



This month, we had the opportunity to speak with Trent Burgess, a recent graduate of our intensive outpatient program (IOP). Before joining the Naval Civil Engineer Corps at age 19, Trent had worked for his family's construction business. "I went from pouring concrete for my dad to pouring concrete for Navy," said Trent. While on deployment in Iraq, Trent witnessed an incident that made going home to civilian life difficult.

"We were in a small town in Iraq working on security and doing construction work. At one point, someone yelled for us to take cover, but I didn't know what was going on at the time. I saw a child walking down the street, and there was a bomb strapped to his body. I watched as he was shot and killed."

Despite being surrounded by people that day, Trent never spoke about what had happened. "I never talked about it, my unit never talked about it, the guys who watched it happen never talked about it. My phone call to apply to Emory Healthcare Veterans Program's (EHVP) intensive outpatient program (IOP) was the first time I ever spoke about what I saw that day."

Trent attempted to hide the fact that he was struggling with PTSD by distancing himself from his family and friends. "I tried to fight through the problems and convince myself that I was okay, but the moment came when I knew that I couldn't keep doing what I was doing and feeling the way that I felt." The stress from his divorce served as a catalyst, and after trying, unsuccessfully, to "fix" the issues stemming from PTSD and depression on his own, Trent sought help at EHVP. There was no hesitation when the day came to enroll in the two-week treatment program. "The sooner, the better," he said.

Trent remembers being with the other program participants in the Warrior Room (the program lounge) as they waited for the first therapy session of the program to begin. "We were all worried that this wasn't going to work out, we were scared about what was going to happen. The social workers told us that everyone begins the program feeling this way and the first few days suck, but we were going to be okay, and they [EHVP clinicians and social workers] knew what they were doing."

The in vivo sessions had the most significant impact on Trent. "The therapy sessions were great, but the exercises that required me to get out there and put my new skills into practice affected me the most." During the in vivo sessions, Trent and his clinician created settings that would normally cause him high anxiety, such as driving through traffic and walking through crowds of people. But Trent would experience these anxiety-producing activities while implementing the tools he learned during previous in vivo sessions. "Having to go to a restaurant and sit with my back towards the door was the most effective for me. I just went to a concert the other weekend and had no problems being there, something that would have never happened before IOP treatment."



Trent enjoying a night out.

Since graduating from the program, Trent still utilizes the coping skills he learned. “I meditate every morning and evening now, something I would have never done previous to treatment because I thought it was hippie stuff.” He notes that meditation is useful during times that normally induce high anxiety, “Fireworks would always get me, but now I know how to meditate and remind myself that I am in Georgia, not Iraq, and that it is the 4th of July.”

When asked to describe the difference he has seen in himself after treatment, Trent replied, “The difference is night and day. Before IOP, it was tough for me to be around people. I didn’t like going out and being away from home, but I also didn’t like being at home. I was anxious, constantly looking over my shoulder. Now I am social again, and I enjoy being with my family and friends. I am back to being me.”

## 2018 By The Numbers

15

TBI cases  
treated

337

warriors treated  
outside of  
Georgia

724

warriors  
treated

1,281

phone calls  
recieved

# Clinical Corner



EHVP has launched Relationship Checkup, a service for military couples. The model is backed with over 20 years of experience in helping military relationships thrive through research from Clark University and Arammu, the founders of the program.

All too often, couples view counseling and therapy sessions as a last resort rather than a service to keep their relationships on the right track. To remedy this assumption, EHVP is excited to introduce Relationship Checkup, a brief, semi-annual assessment of the relationship to identify strengths and pain points.

The new offering works in the same manner as a dental cleaning— a brief session completed twice a year to “checkup” on the relationship and provide personalized feedback for next steps and healthy practices moving forward. Just as a dental checkup catches cavities before they become major problems, the Relationship Checkup can catch small issues before irreversible damage is done.

The 60-90-minute session can be completed either in person or virtually through telehealth. We can happily accommodate for families of a deployed service member when both partners have internet access.

Couples who are residents of or are stationed in Georgia and are interested in scheduling a Relationship Checkup may do so by calling 888-514-5345.

# In Case You Missed It

social media highlights



**Emory Healthcare Veterans Program**  
 April 1 at 12:30 PM · 🌐

We would like to thank Col. (ret) Jack Howard Jacobs (Medal of Honor recipient, NBC News Military Analyst) for coming by and learning more about our program and how we save lives every day.

NBC News  
 #healinginvisiblewounds  
 #veterans



👍❤️ 35

1 Comment 5 Shares

**Emory Healthcare Veterans Program**  
 March 26 at 12:33 PM · 🌐

March is #SocialWorkMonth and we want to give a round of applause to our incredible team of social workers! They are passionate about #healinginvisiblewounds and EHVP wouldn't be the success that it is without them.

"If the world is cold, make it your purpose to build fires."

Horace Traubel



**Emory Healthcare Veterans Program**  
 Yesterday at 7:00 AM · 🌐

We have officially seen warriors from all 50 states! We are proud to serve our heroes from all across the nation as part of the #WarriorCareNetwork.

#healinginvisiblewounds

Emory Healthcare Veterans Program has treated warriors from all 50 states!



**Emory Healthcare Veterans Program** @EmoryVeterans · Mar 21  
 #throwbackthursday to when our Veteran Outreach Coordinator @ShaunLewis joined @RWB at @HomeDepotBackyard for #WorldYogaDay



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