



# CINDRR Circular

Center of Innovation on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

VA Health Services Research & Development

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North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Gainesville FL  
James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa FL

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## CINDRR Continuing Veteran Initiatives

### Veteran Engagement Council, Recent VEC Meetings

The purpose of the CINDRR Veteran Engagement Council (VEC) is to improve rehabilitation research through a trusted partnership among Veterans' communities and CINDRR investigators. VEC members provide individual viewpoints and non-consensus advice to provide assistance in making CINDRR projects and research ideas more Veteran-centric. CINDRR researchers volunteer to present their research at the monthly VEC meetings.

At the April 19th meeting, Dr. Gail Powell-Cope presented an overview of CINDRR projects. Research topics suggested by VEC members included a need for research on lower functioning Veterans and smaller populations such as Veterans with severe brain injuries, families taking care of injured or ill Veterans and how important the family is to reintegration, and gaps in care during the DoD VA transition. VEC members discussed the difference in culture between the VHA and Vet Centers; VEC members related that their experiences with the Vet Centers are more positive and that the atmosphere and approach to mental health care at Vet Centers are much different than at the VA.

At the May 17th meeting, Dr. Jolie Haun presented information on her Mission Reconnect proposal. Dr. Haun's presentation provided questions

- What do Complementary and Integrative Health or Complementary and Alternative Medicine mean to you?
- Have you used any non-medicinal methods of pain, stress and/or anxiety relief in the past ? Currently?
- If the VA offered you non-medicinal methods of pain, stress and/or anxiety relief, would you be interested in having access to these at home?
- Would you want to participate with a partner, such as, spouse, life partner, or adult child?

The project was well received and VEC members appreciated that Dr. Haun included both physical and psychosocial outcomes in her presentation. One VEC member stated "the very idea that the VA is even considering alternative integrative approaches gives me great hope that the VA is realizing that it is time for new opportunities to come forth." VEC members engaged in an interesting conversation about a more diversified approach to the recruitment process and dissemination of findings which resulted in a boilerplate letter of support from the VEC for recruitment and dissemination.

At the June 21st meeting, Kiersten Downs presented her dissertation research, titled "Beautifully Awful"—Women Veterans Experiences with Transition from Military Service." The points of discussion during the meeting were the most pressing issues facing women Veterans, the kind of research that women Veterans would like to see, how the VA can improve the experience of women receiving services from the VA, and building trust with women Veterans.



Dr. Jolie Haun presenting to the VEC on May 17, 2017