



NEWS RELEASE

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ERMC prepares clinicians for PTSD, mTBI.

HEIDELBERG, Germany – Soldiers fighting the War on Terrorism are at risk for developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI). Both conditions are treatable when correctly diagnosed, but diagnosis can be difficult, and the best available treatments are rapidly changing.

For those reasons, the Europe Regional Medical Command (EMRC) recently offered intensive training on the identification and treatment of PTSD and mTBI for mental health clinicians who provide direct care to Soldiers.

“Our intent was to provide continuous and pertinent education on best practices for our mental health providers,” said Col. Angela Pereira, ERMC’s chief of Soldiers and Family Support Center in Heidelberg.

Pereira said the U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School in San Antonio put together online training and distributed it Army-wide. While the chain teaching program on PTSD and mTBI was for leaders in the chain of command, ERMC leadership felt it was important to provide more in-depth training to those who would actually treat Soldiers identified with PTSD or mild TBI.

“ERMC offered this conference as a supplement to the original training to address the needs of active-duty and civilian professionals,” said Pereira. The conference included 160 social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and other providers. Participants came from Army medical treatment facilities in four European countries.

The participants were no less diverse than the guest speakers, which included psychiatrists and psychologists ranging from the Veterans Administration to the Royal Dutch military.

One speaker, Dr. Kate Chard, a clinical psychologist from the Cincinnati Veterans Administration, addressed the screening and treatment of PTSD and related issues. She has authored a treatment manual of cognitive-processing therapy for veterans and active-duty

military. Her treatment for PTSD is one of two treatment programs recently endorsed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“Comments on the two European training sessions were incredibly positive,” said Nancy C. Bernardy, Ph.D, a clinical psychologist and director of the Army Community Service at U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen, Netherlands. “Because of this, Dr. Chard plans a return to Europe in the spring to conduct a two-day training session for behavioral health providers in cognitive-processing therapy.

Pereira said ERMC’s goal is to insure that all providers are well-trained in recognizing and treating PTSD and mTBI.