The Dynamic Diffusion Network (DDN) QUERI Program expands evidence-based practice among later adopters of innovations in diabetes and moral injury for affected Veterans. In partnership with the VHA Innovation Ecosystem and VISN 19, the DDN QUERI will use practical strategies to demonstrate evidence for successfully spreading complex clinical evidence-based practices beyond early adopters of innovation.

Building Networks to Innovation Diffusion

Healthcare systems consistently seek to ensure access to evidence-based care to meet unique patient needs. Implementation science has frequently focused on organizations that are early adopters of evidence-based practices (EBPs). While this prior work has been very important in understanding facilitators and barriers to implementing EBPs, more efforts are needed to identify practical strategies that can successfully foster implementation within later adopting sites/facilities. These later adopters often face suboptimal implementation conditions, and thus have unique challenges and needs.

In 2018, the VHA Innovation Ecosystem through the Diffusion of Excellence identified 2 promising practices out of Durham, NC for initial diffusion – Advanced Comprehensive Diabetes Care (ACDC) and Mental Health/Chaplain-led Moral Injury Groups.

The DDN QUERI is partnering with the VHA Innovation Ecosystem to build on the successes of these 2 practices by evaluating a practical implementation strategy known as the Dynamic Diffusion Network across 20 VA facilities.

WHAT IS ACDC & MORAL INJURY GROUPS?

ACDC: A nurse-administered telemedicine program for Veterans with advanced diabetes. The program uses standard telemonitoring services to deliver diabetes self-management support and clinician-guided medication management. Slated to start late 2022.

Moral Injury Groups: A network of mental health/chaplain-led sessions for Veterans experiencing moral injury. The network uses shared core components (e.g. co-facilitation, social trust, etc.) and psychotherapy principles to deliver care to affected Veterans.
EPIS Framework: A Phased, Multi-level Approach to Implementation

Guided by the Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, Sustainment (EPIS) framework, the DDN QUERI will carry out hybrid type 3 randomized trials of ACDC and Moral Injury Groups. Each trial will compare the implementation strategy Dynamic Diffusion Network (DDN) for operationalizing EPIS to technical assistance among a group of later adopter sites.

The DDN QUERI will also carry out a mixed-methods evaluation using the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) to examine factors influencing trial outcomes at each EPIS stage; and a budget impact analysis to establish the business case for the practices.

Diagram 1. EPIS Framework

Dynamic Diffusion of Promising Practices Across VHA

Selected as promising practices by the Diffusion of Excellence and Office of Rural Health, ACDC and Moral Injury Groups have a history of reaching VA facilities across the nation, supporting sites in enhancing the delivery of care in diabetes and moral injury.

ACDC...

- ACDC has been implemented at 9 VA sites; first implementation occurred at the Asheville, NC VA in 2017.

- In a population of 230 Veterans, ACDC led to a mean HbA1c reduction of 1.43% at 6 months (p<0.001); much of this benefit persisted out to 18 months (1.08%, p<0.001)

Moral Injury Groups...

- To date, 7 VA sites have participated in the Moral Injury Groups DDN.

- In a sample of 64 Veterans who participated in groups in Oklahoma, PCL-5 scores decreased from an average of 61.9 to 31.5 over the duration of the group.