Virtual Care
QUERI Program

Improve Access to Care for Rural Veterans

Virtual Care (VC) QUERI supports clinical operations partners in the roll-out of evidence-based practices (EBPs) that incorporate virtual care technologies to improve access to high quality care for rural and remote Veterans receiving care at home and in Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs).

Technology Facilitated Evidence-Based Care

Overview

- Nearly three million Veterans living in rural areas receive VA health care in over 1,000 CBOCs.
- Mental health EBPs developed for large VA Medical Centers are often not feasible to deploy in CBOCs due to staffing constraints and lack of resources.
- The VC QUERI program will develop implementation strategies for challenging deployment settings.

Key National Operational Partners

- Office of Rural Health (ORH)
- Office of Connected Care (OCC)
- Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP)

Key Regional Operational Partners

- VISN 20 Northwest Network
- VISN 23 Midwest Health Care Network

Measurement Based Care (MBC)

Systematic administration of symptom rating scales and use of the results to drive clinical decisions.

Adoption by telemental health providers remains low due to the logistical challenges and lack of informatics support.

Written Exposure Therapy (WET)

Brief trauma-focused therapy developed at the OMHSP National Center for PTSD.

Ideal to deliver in the context of Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI).

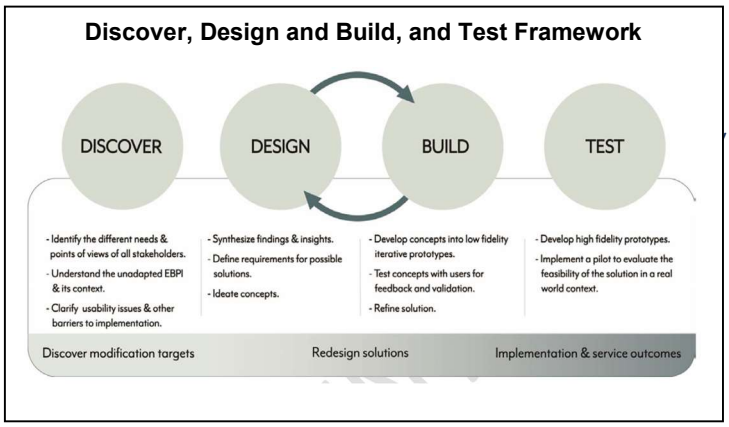
Critical to develop workflows for electronically sharing written trauma narratives.

Implement and Evaluate Technology Facilitated Evidence-Based Care

Implementation Strategies

Our implementation approach has two steps.

1. **EBP Adaptation Step** uses *User Centered Design* methods to improve EBP usability.
2. **EBP Deployment/Test Step** uses implementation strategies (e.g., external facilitation) to deploy the adapted EBP at a larger scale.



Anticipated Impacts on Veteran Care

The VC QUERI Program supports VA priorities related to Modernization, including:

- *Delivering 21st Century Whole Health and Mental Health*
- *MISSION Act*, which focuses on virtual care, improving access and quality of care in medically underserved areas, and coordinating VA and non-VA care

The VC QUERI Program also supports the *Network Directors Performance Plan*, including the following goals:

Goal 1a: *Spread innovation & best practices*
Goal 3b: *Telehealth Clinical Resource Sharing*, which is satisfied if the VISN establishes/expands a telehealth Clinical Resource Hub that provides staffing for primary care and mental vacancies within or between VISNs.
Goal 5c: *Access & Focus Resources*, which is satisfied if >1.5% of Veterans have received at least one telehealth encounter in their home or at non-VA setting by the end of FY 2020.

For more information, check out:
https://www.queri.research.va.gov

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