

# Implementation, Adoption, and Adaptation: Next Steps for the Ending Self-Stigma Intervention

Presenter: Anjana Muralidharan, PhD

VA Capital Healthcare Network (VISN 5) Mental Illness Research,  
Education, and Clinical Center



# “Beta” Sites

- Limited use agreement with providers interested in offering ESS within their clinical program
  - Provide manual and supplemental materials
  - Initial call
  - Continued support as needed
  - Updates to materials/supplemental information
- Feedback regarding their experience conducting the group and implementing the program

# “Beta” Sites

- 60 total sites, representing 26 different states + Australia
- 52 are VA clinics or programs, including some peer led or jointly led (peer / mh prof)
- 74% plan to offer ESS again or are offering on a regular basis
- 49 have conducted at least one full class, 3 are just starting up

# Provider Acceptability

- No explicit recruitment of beta sites – all word of mouth (e.g., conferences, conference calls, webinars)
- Providers want this intervention
  - free and accessible
  - balance between structure and flexibility
  - providers perceive this topic as important
  - service systems perceive this topic as important

# Fidelity

- Tension between fidelity to the intervention and local need
- Sites tend to put their own “spin” on the intervention
  - Length
  - Open versus closed
  - Add/expand sections
  - Swap out exercises
  - Supplemental modules

# Sustainability

- Providers report that they like the intervention, and that consumers like the intervention
- Majority of sites are continuing to offer the intervention
- Reasons sites stopped:
  - personnel turnover (i.e., “champion” of intervention leaves)
  - consumers not asking for it

# Two-way street

- “Beta sites” provide feedback about real life implementation
- Some “beta sites” created supplemental modules for the intervention – we collected these and sent them back out to everyone

# Next Steps

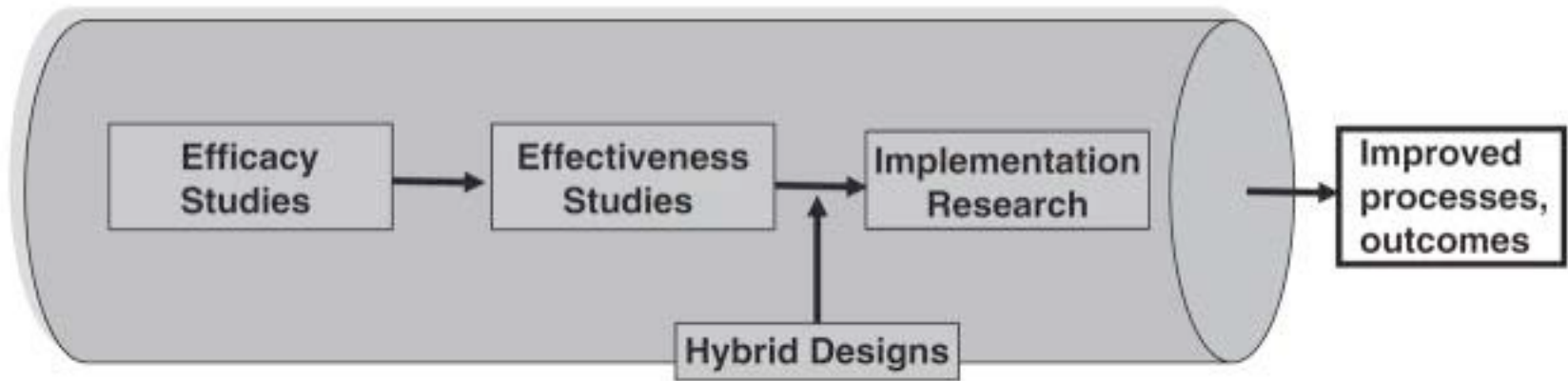
- Development of additional materials
  - formatted manual
  - supplemental modules
- Dissemination through a website – users can register for free to download the manual
- Formal implementation research



# Implications for Implementation Research

- “Crowd sourcing” model of intervention development
- Naturalistic way to inform implementation

# Implications for Implementation Research



“Hybrid” model?

-examine naturalistic uptake, fidelity, and sustainability simultaneously with intervention testing

# ESS for PTSD

- Ongoing, funded, 2 year project
- Conducted a series of interviews with Veterans with PTSD to learn about their personal experiences with stigma
- Used the data collected to make modifications to the existing ESS protocol
- Currently recruiting for a small RCT/feasibility trial, in which ESS for PTSD is being compared to enhanced treatment as usual

# ESS for PTSD

- Common themes in qualitative interviews:
  - 1) Stereotypes around violence and dangerousness
  - 2) Common coping behaviors such as confronting the source of stigma and withdrawing from social situations
  - 3) Stigma related to the Veteran identity

# Stigma Training for Mental Health Staff

- Discussion
- “EASE” Stigma Principles
- Application
- Action plan





ducation



wareness



hift perspective



mpower

*Stigma Training*

*Principles*

# Who we reached...

- Since 2013 presented to over 280 providers
- Multiple disciplines and background
- Over various facilities:
  - 10 programs at VA CT
  - 3 community agencies in CT
  - 2 programs at VA MD
  - Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
- Multiple treatment settings:
  - Inpatient mental health
  - Community mental health
  - Residential facilities
  - Assisted living facility



Thank you!

For more information, contact:

Anjana Muralidharan, Ph.D.; [anjana.muralidharan2@va.gov](mailto:anjana.muralidharan2@va.gov)



Many thanks to the many people who made this work possible:

ESS Study Team

Erin George  
Eryn Bentley  
Melanie Charlotte  
Cindy Clark  
Bruce DeForge  
Samantha Hack  
Loren Jaeschke  
Elizabeth Lertch  
Kelly Lloyd  
Audrina Mullane  
Anjana Muralidharan  
Ashley Prince  
Arthur Sandt  
Camille Wilson  
Mary Brigid Walsh  
Katrina Vorce

Amy Drapalski – VA PI & Team Leader  
Alicia Lucksted – UM PI & Team Leader  
Jennifer Aakre – VA PI on ESS for PTSD  
Clare Gibson – Leader on Stigma Training  
for Staff

Data Management and Analysis

Clayton Brown  
Li Juan Fang  
Belinda Kaufmann  
Lan Li  
Deborah Medoff  
Jeanette Robinson

And special thanks to the programs and  
their staff and clients who hosted and  
took part in these studies and trainings!