



The Veterans Metrics Initiative

Using Program Common Components to Predict Outcomes for the **Mental and Physical Health Domain**, July 2020 Menu 5D



BACKGROUND

- Wave 1-5 participants nominated physical and mental health programs they used since they discharged from the military or deactivated from Active Duty. 7% reported using a program in the health domain at Waves 1 or 2, 5% at Waves 3 or 4, and 6% at Waves 5 or 6.
- Programs with verified URLs and nominated by 3 or more veterans were coded using the common components analysis technique to predict employment outcomes at Waves 2-6.

CONTENT COMPONENTS

Content components assess what a program teaches or what information it provides.

- PTSD - 7%
- Therapeutic arts - 5%
- Stress management & coping - 4%
- TBI - 4%
- 3% - nutrition/weight management, addiction treatment/maintenance, suicide prevention, psychotherapy, yoga/meditation, fitness, physical ability
- ≤ 2%: specific sports training, adaptive sports, relaxation techniques, anger management, complementary and alternative medicine



PROCESS COMPONENTS

Process components assess how a program conveys information or teaches skills.

- Reading online: 0-4% of content
- Mentors or coaches: 0-4% of content
- Direct instruction : 0-2.5% of content
- ≤ 2% of content: interactive online tool, peer learning & social support, socializing casually, outdoor activities, animal contact

COMPONENTS & MENTAL HEALTH

Veterans who used counseling services for mental health at Wave 1 and screened positively for depression experienced a positive change in their depression symptoms at Wave 6. Use of complementary and alternative medicine resulted in a reduction of the number of days of symptoms.

Among veterans with mental health symptoms in Wave 1, use of physical activity programs with a mentor/coach or adaptive sports programs (for veterans with disabilities) with a mentor/coach improved the number of days veterans experienced anxiety symptoms.



IMPROVING HEALTH SATISFACTION

For all veterans, those who used counseling services at one wave improved their health satisfaction at the following wave.

Among veterans with mental health symptoms (probable depression, anxiety, PTSD, alcohol misuse), using any type of healthcare in the VA system — hospital, clinic, or Vet Center — increased health satisfaction from Wave 1 to Wave 6.