

A Veteran's Relationship with a Service Animal

by

Laura-Anne Parks

Submitted to the School of Liberal Studies and Continuing Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

Purchase College
State University of New York

December 2021

Instructor: Ursula Heinrich

© 2021

Laura- Anne Parks

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

Background: Our nation's Veterans face many difficulties once returning home and back into civilian life after active duty. Until recently, the focus has been heavily directed to physical disabilities and the rehabilitation process. However, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a serious mental health disability that affects many Veterans upon returning home and has become a growing health crisis.

Objective: This study aims to research the effectiveness of animal-assisted therapy as a treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and its effectiveness Veterans enter back into civilian life after discharge from active duty.

Design and Method: The research method is based on peer-reviewed literature consisting of scholarly articles, journals, and online articles, and the research performed is qualitative. Veteran's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms were studied to evaluate the positive effects of animal-assisted therapy on resolving symptoms and aiding in positive transition into civilian life. The main research question is: What effect does partnership with a service animal have on a veteran's overall mental health?

Results: The significance of this study is that animal-assisted therapy has very positive outcomes in helping Veterans' overall mental health. Several benefits have been resulted, such as reducing anxiety and reliving night terrors or flashbacks, which are some primary symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Conclusions: For a Veteran seeking mental health support that doesn't include traditional resources such as prescription medication, animal-assisted therapy is an effective alternate. Options include both animals like canines which can be kept in the home, and others like horses can be used outside the house when needed. Finding options for Veterans to receive help with their mental health and bringing awareness to the topic is essential for the continued success of our military members coming home.

Keywords: *Veteran's, Mental Health, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Animal Assisted Therapy, Military.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction.....	5
CHAPTER TWO	
Literature Review.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Reasons for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Alternate Treatments.....	9
Importance of Treatment.....	9
Service Dogs as Treatment.....	10
Obstacles Returning Home.....	10
Caregivers Relationship with Service Dogs.....	11
Equine Therapy as Alternate.....	12
Conclusion.....	13
CHAPTER THREE	
Methods.....	14
CHAPTER FOUR	
Results.....	17
CHAPTER FIVE	
Discussion.....	20
So, What- Future Research.....	21
CHAPTER SIX	
References.....	23

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

If you search Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on government websites, you may be surprised by what facts are available. When someone chooses to enlist in the armed services, it is explained by their recruiter, "*When you are in the military, you may see combat*" (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2021, para. 1). When returning home, these men and women hear their superiors say, "*You may have been on missions that exposed you to horrible and life-threatening experiences, and these types of events can lead to PTSD*" (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2021, para. 1) Government agencies have conducted studies that evaluate the number of reported cases of PTSD in a given year. Statistics show those who reported symptoms. About 11%-20% of Veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, 12% who served in the Gulf War, aka Desert Storm, and 15% who served in Vietnam, have PTSD. Service members spend the majority of their time away from family and friends, which can drastically change their lives. Once deployment ends, these men and women need to reenter civilian life, presenting many challenges. Some of these Veterans have physical injuries, but many face invisible challenges with mental health. Mental health is a growing public health issue that carries its own set of problems, but mental health in veterans is a subject that has not always been openly discussed.

In more recent years, government agencies, amongst other health care providers, have been focusing on the mental health of our Veterans and the treatment they receive for these problems. The first obstacle is getting these men and women to admit to experiencing a mental health problem. Many do not report for fear of being judged, and others may not see that point because treatment options have been less than stellar. However, times are changing, and more

individuals recognize and come forward to seek treatment for mental health illnesses. Treatment options have also grown to more than just prescription medication.

Our nation's military personnel sacrifice greatly to serve their country, and their families do as well. Personally, my own family has had many serve active duty Army, and these men in my family have often spoken about their return to home. I always assumed that since they did not show too many signs and symptoms of PTSD, they did not have it; however, I began to see that probably was not the case as I got older. My father, Staff Sargent Special Forces Heavy Weapons Platoon, United States Army Green Beret, who served two tours of active duty in Vietnam, once told me a story of his return home from battle. I expected this story to be happy once American citizens welcomed home the troops in a time where a war was being highlighted all over the media, but it was not. These poor men came home to protests, name-calling, and an overall unsupportive nation. There were no mental health benefits offered; there were jobs in trade work and left to fend for themselves. While my father ended up being very successful working for over 40+ years for the same company that offered him a job when he returned home, others were not as fortunate. Many succumbed to mental health problems and ended up on the street homeless with no jobs because of flashbacks and overall major mental health sicknesses. My father's story and the stories of others always stuck with me, and I support our nation's Veterans no matter what.

Today's world is much different, and the treatment and resources available for these Veterans and their families to reintegrate into society have grown tremendously. While there are still some struggles in Veterans reporting their PTSD symptoms, many have come forward for assistance. Another subtopic to highlight is the Veteran's families and how they are affected by

the return home of their family members. Spouses may find themselves now caretakers, and everyone needs to receive resources to help return to everyday life or the new normal.

While prescription medications have been a primary treatment for PTSD, many seek alternate options. Service animals particularly have received attention in more recent years as a form of therapy helping these brave men and women get back to civilian life while keeping their mental health in mind.

The exact purpose of this research will be to show what effect partnership with a service animal has on a Veteran's overall mental health. My goal is to focus on the relationship between military members with combat stress or PTSD and the use of Animal-Assisted Therapy as a potential solution to the problem. Additionally, bringing awareness to these therapy options and showing success may influence others to come forward and seek treatment as well.

Overall, our nation needs to have resources available to those who sacrifice so much to keep our country safe. While we might not always agree with how our government spends our resources, for example, the military, it is still necessary to support our military personnel, especially our Veterans returning home.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The United States Military has been in service since the late 1700s and has evolved tremendously specifically in means to identifying difficulties members may have upon returning home. The U.S. Military comprises six branches: Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force. The men and women who make up these branches make great sacrifices for our nation, both physically and mentally. Owen, Finton, Gibbons, and DeLeon (2016) state:

There has been an unprecedented survival rate of military medicine because in part of advances in battlefield personal protective equipment, immediate trauma care rendered close to point of injury, and rapid evacuation capability. It is particularly important to recognize a significant element of the treatment of wounded warriors requires their enhances reintegration into their families and their communities facilitated by the psychosocial, perhaps even spiritual, or existential, support provided by holistic care. (p. 96)

Our nation's veterans return home from deployment with many obstacles still ahead of them, and integration back into civilian life can be challenging. Veterans return home with several types of wounds, but the signature injuries include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). “It is estimated that 8% of current and former service members who were deployed have PTSD diagnosis” (Owen et al., 2016, p.97). There have been many different methods to treating PTSD as well as TBI, and generally, the two go hand in hand. Recently, the use of service animals has been successful for the reintegration of veterans back into civilian life.

Reasons for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Alternate Treatments

Treatments for PTSD have evolved over the years for many reasons. Success does not always come from clinically proven methods. According to the study by Maguen, Holder, Li, Madden, Neylan, Seal, Lujan, Patteron, Duvall, and Shiner, “Two specific evidenced-based psychotherapies (EDPs), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure therapy (PE), were widely disseminated by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) beginning in 2005 in an effort to treat PTSD effectively. (p. 1) However, these methods of clinically treating PTSD and not always successful. Veterans do not necessarily respond positively to being treated with pharmaceuticals or with traditional therapy options. This particular study was not successful at all. “Of a cohort of 32,780 veterans, 10,664 (32.5%) achieved symptoms improvement and 22,116 (67.5%) did not” (Maguen et al. 2020 p.3). Those are significant numbers, and it is important to show that more than 50% of the participants had no improvement with a traditional approach and would be a potential candidate for alternate therapy such as a service animal.

Importance of Treatment

There are “758,324 Veterans who have service-connected condition and died between the years 2004 and 2014” (Maynard et al. 2018. p.3). That is a bold statement to produce in just one study and significantly important to the entire study of treatments for PTSD. It is incredibly important for society to understand the alarming rates of these service members who come home and should be seeking treatment for injuries, not just physically, that are sustained while actively serving our country. Another alarming statistic, according to Maynard et al., “in 2016, 4.8 million Veterans received \$71 billion in compensation or 21 million disabilities” (p. 4). These disabilities include auditory issues and migraines; however, “... 18.5% are direct to PTSD which

is the third-highest contributor” (Maynard et al. 2018. p.7). Treatment solutions are vital to the healthy survival, or our veterans return home.

Service Dogs as Treatment

There has been an increase over the past several years in veterans seeking out treatment options for PTSD. Generally, these requests are coming in because they are having difficulty with civilian life post-deployment. Service dogs, in particular, are commonly used for treatment for these types of mental injuries. According to Yarborough, Stumbo, Yarborough, Smith, and Green (2018), “The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was updated in 2010 and defined service dogs as those which are trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability” (p. 118). Through different studies, there have been positive outcomes proving that service dogs can be a successful treatment not only for the veteran but for their families as well.

Obstacles Returning Home

A veteran can face several different obstacles when returning home, which can be categorized into themes. Commons themes have varied from nightmares, flashbacks, and personal relationships as well as biological impact. For example, “Studies have shown the presence of a dog decreases blood pressure and heart rate. Exposure to therapy dogs results in decreased reported pain” (Owen et al., 2016, p.97). In addition, Yarborough et al. (2018) have shown several different psychological themes that have a positive outcome. Some are:

- “Waking from nightmares improves sleep quality and duration” (p.121).
- “Nudging grounds veterans them to remain present” (p.121).

- “Physical and emotional connection with dogs facilitates reconnection with humans.” (p.121).

A similar study was performed by Nieforth, Rodriguez, and O’Haire (2021), who also had positive outcomes with mental health. Nieforth et al. stated, “59% described the effect of their service dogs on getting out and the emotions connected to be in public places, 29% reported to emotion management was related to anxiety, 14% regard to getting involved in their community and 44% service dog’s ability to help with the interactions they had with their families and friends” (p.4).

The common themes about service animals for veterans were all positive. But that is not to say that challenges did present along the way. Most frequently, the overall care for their dogs and what goes into the care of these animals was not taken into consideration. Some other concerns were the attention a service dog created while in a public setting. Community members may not realize that these dogs are not just pets and approach the animal. The lack of community knowledge about service animals alone can create another anxiety for the veteran battling mental challenges.

Caregivers Relationship with Service Dogs

Caregivers and spouses have their challenges when the veteran returns home. A significant challenge is a reintegration for personal relationships. Once a veteran comes home, some challenges are faced in the home. Whitworth, O’Brien, Wharton, and Scotland-Coogan’s study focused on the spouse’s viewpoint about service dogs. Many spouses felt that they became a caregiver rather than a spouse. When a dog was introduced, dynamics shifted. “Participants stated that the veterans equate this relationship experience to having a battle buddy just as they did when they were in the service” (Whitworth et al., 2020, p. 613). Another participant stated,

“...the veteran, and often themselves benefited from the sense of camaraderie and support obtained by connecting with other veterans and partners within service dog programs”

(Whitworth et al., 2020, p. 614).

On the other hand, other caregivers felt replaced and unimportant in the transition period. According to the study by Yarborough et al. (2018), “...as participants learned to depend more on their dogs, some caregivers described feeling displaced. One caregiver described mixed feelings when a dog usurped her role as primary caregiver” (p.122). Again, more positive results were reported, but it is essential to shedding light on the adverse outcomes.

Equine Therapy as Alternate

Another interesting approach to therapy stepped away from the utilization of service dogs instead used horses. Wharton et al. (2019) state:

Equine-facilitated cognitive processing therapy...includes focused equine-facilitated activities to be completed by the veteran with support of a therapist. As prey animals, horses are particularly sensitive to issues of incongruity, agitation, or increases autonomic activity in other animals (including humans), and trained equine handlers are able to identify the signals of confusion in the animal. (p.270)

While this treatment method differs from service animals you keep in your home like dogs, it was shown to have some success. The methods used expected the participants to travel and interact with the horses in a controlled manner. Another study by Johnson et al. also highlighted the method of Therapeutic Horseback Riding (THR), which is defined as a horseback riding program in which the primary goal is rehabilitation. (p.3) Furthermore, “THR psychological and social benefits may be important factors to facilitate veterans’ coping with PTSD symptoms” (Johnson et al., 2018, p.8). It was proven by Johnson et al. that “participants had a statistically significant decrease in PTSD scores after three weeks of THR and well as a statistically and clinically significant decrease after six weeks of THR” (p.3). Therapists are also involved in this

treatment which may affect the outcome compared to service dogs. Nonetheless, an option may be other animals for veterans who may not have the capacity or facility for a full-time service dog.

Conclusion

Mental health, especially in today's climate, is so important to recognize and treat. Unfortunately, veterans are at such a high risk due to the nature of their service to be susceptible to mental health issues, especially post-traumatic stress disorder. These studies are putting forth the work and effort needed to show how well these service animals will serve these veterans with mental health while reintegrating into civilian life.

CHAPTER THREE METHODS

Our nation's veterans collectively have had difficulties integrating back into society after being deployed. There have been many reasons to explore why it is difficult for these men and women to return to their civilian lives, but one major factor is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Service animals are used more frequently to assist veterans back into society. I investigated the benefits of service animals for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. The research was primarily focused on the use of service dogs to treat PTSD not only for the veteran's benefits but their families and caretakers as well. Also explored was the use of other animal therapy, such as equine therapy. The research was conducted exclusively through scholarly journals. Purchase College Library's online database was the primary research tool. The research question is what effect does service animals have on veterans reintegrating back into everyday lives. When research began, I realized that there would be much information on PTSD and mental health concerning veterans. I narrowed down the search to include service animals and was able to find more relevant information. Since all articles were from scholarly sources, I did not need to check these sources' credibility. I found several articles with however many ideas did crossover. To organize the research, I began by reading each journal's abstract and conclusion to decide if the topics would be helpful. Next, I took the top choices and read through them while highlighting key terms and information. Some of the key terms used to conduct the research included Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, Veterans, Service Animals, Service Dogs, Equine Therapy, Traumatic Brain Injury, Combat Veterans, and Mental Health.

To analyze the data, I created a colored-coded system to identify key terms. While reading through the material, I would highlight the terms and information based on color assignment. After all material was color-coded, a grid system was created for key terms. Each color or term received a column, and I began filling the grid with the highlighted information. Once done, I had a clear color-coded picture of the terms and ideas mentioned the most throughout the reading. I realized that canine therapy would become the main topic of my study. Veterans family members and caregivers would become another main topic that affected the integration process that I had initially anticipated. Lastly, using other animals such as horses would be another key term to do further research.

Prior to this research, I had some knowledge of the topic through participation in my employer's Veterans Committee. I was somewhat familiar with the use of dogs as a therapy option; however, I was not aware of many details. Some would say I am biased towards the topic since my family and I are supporters of Veteran foundations; however, I chose this research because Veterans need our help as citizens to bring awareness to complications they face once returning home. Mental health is an increasingly popular topic, but that has not always been the case. In particular, veterans have historically not reported their mental health status once returning from active duty, resulting in many tragedies. Bringing awareness to this specific group of people and highlighting potential therapies is a start to helping these men and women get back to their everyday lives after serving our country so bravely.

This research's scope can be challenging because, as stated before, many of the research ideas do crossover. For example, if time allowed, I would have liked to dive deeper into personal stories and find research that described the veteran's stories' background. Another thought is to

interview or speak firsthand to veterans who may be in this situation. Future research should include personal stories.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS

After interactions with a therapy animal, Veterans' posttraumatic stress disorder scores decrease (Farmer, 2021). Several studies have researched, and the results using both canine therapy and equine therapy show improvement in symptoms. Upon returning home, a Veteran can experience difficulty as they need to adjust to life without the military and begin to deal with repercussions from their service. Some come home to family, others come home to nobody, but regardless, most come home with emotional and psychological difficulty.

RQ#1 What effect does partnership with a service animal have on a veteran's overall mental health?

Upon returning home, a Veteran can experience difficulty as they need to adjust to life without the military and begin to deal with repercussions from their service. Some come home to family, others come home to nobody, but regardless, most come home with emotional and psychological difficulty. A robust support system is essential in the success of the integration back into everyday life. According to Steenkamp et al. (2016), “post-deployment risk factors, perceived poor homecoming reception has repeatedly been shown to be a salient predictor of warzone-related PTSD and may confer risk by discouraging veterans from sharing thoughts and feeling associated with deployment, hindering emotional processing of deployment stressors” (p.719). Studies have shown that “it is estimated that 8% percent of current and former service members who were deployed have PTSD diagnosis.” (Owen et al.-2016, p.97). Several outlets have researched, and the results using both canine therapy and equine therapy show improvement in symptoms and the overall entry back into civilian life.

Canine therapy has shown positive impacts therapeutically, biologically, and psychologically. According to the study by Owen et al. (2016), “the presence of a dog decreases

blood pressure and heart rate and results in less autonomic physiological reactivity with a pet than when only a friend is present” (p.97). Therapeutically, this is an essential factor because physically feeling good is the first step to mentally feeling good. According to the same study by Owen et al. (2016), “a 30 minutes session with a research assistance and a dog significantly lowered the individual’s state of anxiety” (p.98). Canine-assisted therapy had benefits in a controlled study run by a research assistant. Veterans have the opportunity to participate in training their service animals, keeping them at home. This type of therapy presents a different kind of result. One particular example found in the research was “waking from nightmares improves sleep quality and duration. Dogs brought relief from frequent nightmares, and poor quality and quantity of sleep took a psychological toll on veterans” (Yarborough et al. 2018, p.121). One particular Veteran gave a statement of his direct experience that really can show the amount of stress placed upon returning home with PTSD. The Veteran stated:

When I wake up, I’m pouring sweat, I’m crying. I still smell jet fuel. I still smell black powder...once the dream starts, I know I’m moving in my sleep. And I know I’m yelling out. And that’s what he reacts to. He’s like, wait a minute, something’s wrong. And he’s putting his cold nose on my neck, and it wakes me up...I went from less than two and a half hours [of sleep] to close to five...I can relax. (Yarborough et al., 2018, p.121)

The benefits of canine therapy extend to the Veteran returning to everyday life and benefit the Veteran’s family. A service member’s life is not the only one affected by time away. Many families feel the effects of missing a part of their family. Upon returning home, struggles can occur within the household, and everyone needs to get back to a daily routine that had been very different while the Veteran was deployed. Whitworth et al.'s (2020) study showed results from participating spouses as well “many participants stated that they and the Veteran were able to have more socialization with friends and family after participating in the training program and incorporating the service dog into their lives”(p. 616). Benefits were apparent for the spouse as

well as the Veterans. Canine therapy has proven to be an asset to aid the Veteran to integrate back into civilian life.

Other options are present for Veterans who do not necessarily want to participate in a canine program. Equine therapy has also proven to succeed as an intervention for PTSD in veterans. According to the study by Wharton et al. (2019), “there is a solid body of evidence supporting the use of EF-CPT for treatment of trauma in military veterans, and providing evidence of improved symptoms” (p.273). EF-CPT, Equine-Facilitated cognitive process therapy, is not the only option. Therapeutic horseback riding can also be an excellent solution for someone who may want more leisure therapy. Veterans who participated in this type of therapy and completed “three weeks of therapeutic horseback riding showed a decrease in PTSD symptoms, while 18 out of 19 (94.74%) showed a decrease between baseline and week 6”(Johnson et al. 2018, p.23). Results like these could not be argued that something as simple as horseback riding can significantly help reduce symptoms which ultimately helps a Veteran return to everyday life.

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the benefits of Veteran using animal-assisted therapy as a treatment for PTSD to improve their overall lives better while entering back into civilian life. Veterans often struggle especially with mental health when it is time to go back to their everyday lives, and it's essential to have options for treatment. Several options have been studied, and each has its own set of success stories, but the ones that included animals seemed to impact the Veterans in ways the others did not significantly. The relationship and connection that can be made between a person and an animal cannot be compared with other treatment methods. Yes, anyone can take a prescription drug and seek help from a mental health counselor and succeed; however, each comes with its downfalls. Prescription drugs can be highly addicting and can cause a problem while fixing another. Addiction is real, and this is a problem faced by Veterans returning home. While mental health counselors are a great option and a good start, they can be even more helpful when used with animals. Therefore, it was important for this study to find alternatives outside the traditional treatments that have positive benefits.

As expected, I had found research on countless stories involving canines and most having success and positive outcomes. Dogs play a huge role in the military, not just for therapy options. What I did not expect was the level of intelligence they hold. These dogs can sense when their caretaker is experiencing things like night terrors, social anxiety, and flashbacks, to name a few. The animal intelligence, to me, is incredible and far exceeded my expectations for this study. While researching, the topic of Equine therapy came up several times, and I thought this would be interesting to include as it's a less popular topic however not less effective. While the research was not as plentiful as canine therapy, it still showed several successful options.

The biggest question is why this is important, and the short answer is that mental health is a serious issue. More often than not, our nations Veteran's experience some type of PTSD, and treatment options need to be available other than drug dependence. Often PTSD can go undocumented, especially with our veterans, and having options like animal-assisted therapy is a way to treat without necessarily expressing feelings. It has been proven that Veterans often do not report their PTSD because of the stigma or embarrassment of seeking help, but animal-assisted therapy can change that.

On a personal note, this topic means a lot to me, and I wish more people, including our government, spent more time focusing on the mental health of our Veterans. Studying a topic like this one, I hoped to bring awareness to civilians and possibly veterans who have not sought out mental health assistance. My father served in Vietnam, and in that era, mental health was never spoken about, and I often wonder how differently things could have turned out for some of this was a topic of concern then. In today's climate, mental health seems to be a much more popular topic, but specifically, Veterans are often not thought about in terms of their mental health needs. Bringing awareness and discussing the issue openly could save the lives of those struggling.

So, What- Future Research

In terms of future research, the analysis points to the need for early detection of PTSD protocol and removing stigmas surrounding the need for treatment of PTSD. A large percentage of Veterans often do not admit to signs and symptoms that they are facing mental health issues solely because they are embarrassed. Also, the military is usually not involved with the process of detection and does not offer many options for treatment once discharged. Detecting PTSD early with the possibilities of something like animal-assisted therapy being advertised before

being discharged from active duty, I feel, could have a tremendous effect on the mental health crisis that is being faced. Another option that I think could be interesting for further study is what happens if the military facilitates that therapy. Lastly, further research can be done on the success of the current study of how having animal-assisted therapy has been shown to help Veterans successfully enter into civilian life.

REFERENCES

- Johnson, Rebecca A., et al. "Effects of Therapeutic Horseback Riding on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Military Veterans." *Military Medical Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211, USA, 2018, pp. 3–3, doi:10.1186/s40779-018-0149-6.
- Nieforth, L. O., Rodriguez, K. E., & O’Haire, M. E. (2021). *Expectations versus experiences of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) service dogs: An inductive conventional content analysis*. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.purchase.edu/10.1037/tra0001021
- Owen, R., Finton, B., Gibbons, S., & DeLeon, P. (2016). *Canine-assisted adjunct therapy in the military: An intriguing alternative modality*. *Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 12(2), 95–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2015.09.014>
- Steenkamp, M. M., Schlenger, W. E., Corry, N., Henn-Haase, C., Qian, M., Li, M., Marmar, C. (2017). Predictors of PTSD 40 years after combat: Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans’ longitudinal study. *Depression and Anxiety*, 34(8), 711-722. doi:http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.purchase.edu/10.1002/da.22628
- U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2021). PTSD: National Center for PTSD. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_veterans.asp
- Yarborough, B., Stumbo, S., Yarborough, M., Owen-Smith, A., & Green, C. (2018). Benefits and challenges of using service dogs for Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 41(2), 118–124. <https://doi.org/10.1037/prj0000294>
- Yount, Rick, M.S., L.S.W., Ritchie, Elspeth Cameron, M.D., M.P.H., St. Laurent, Matthew, MS,

OTR, Chumley, Perry, D.V.M., M.P.H., & Olmert, M. D. (2013). The role of service dog training in the treatment of combat-related PTSD. *Psychiatric Annals*, 43(6), 292-295.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.purchase.edu/10.3928/00485713-20130605-11>

Wharton, T., Whitworth, J., Macauley, E., & Malone, M. (2019). Pilot testing a manualized equine-facilitated cognitive processing therapy (EF-CPT) intervention for PTSD in Veterans. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 42(3), 268-276.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.purchase.edu/10.1037/prj0000359>

Whitworth, J., O'Brien, C., Wharton, T., & Scotland-Coogan, D. (2020). Understanding partner perceptions of a service dog training program for veterans with PTSD: building a bridge to trauma resiliency. *Social Work in Mental Health*, 18(6), 604

622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332985.2020.1806181>