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Study of Employment Retention Veterans (SERVe): Improving Reintegration of Oregon National Guard and Reserves in the Workplace

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Study of Employment Retention for Veterans (SERVe)

Improving Reintegration of Oregon National Guard and Reserves in the Workplace



Gil Brady, B.Sc. – Graduate Student, Applied Psychology
Leslie Hammer, PhD – Principle Investigator

5-year DOD Funded Project

2/8/13-2/7/18

- U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC)
- U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA)

Today's Objectives

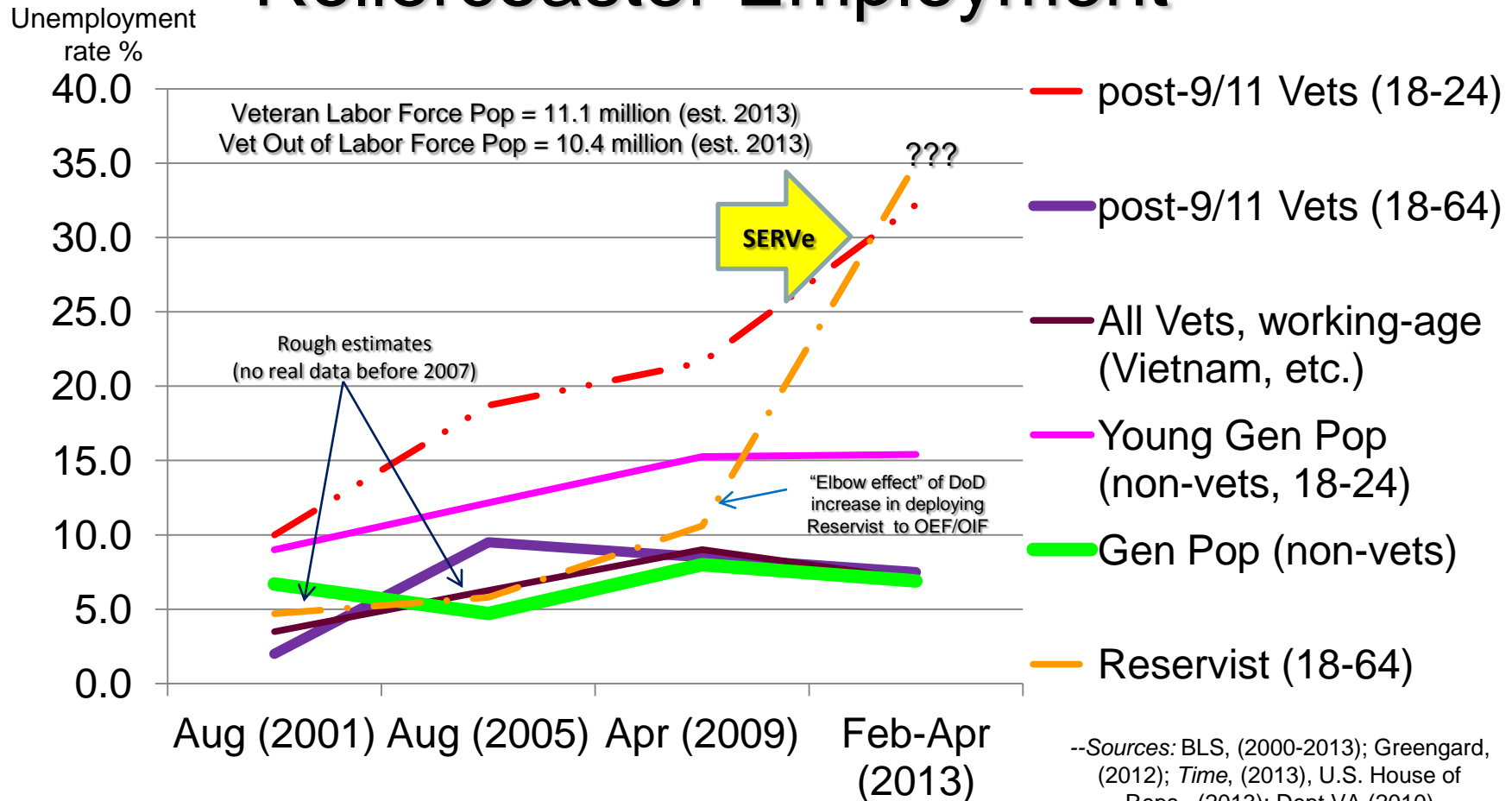
- Provide an overview of the challenges of reservist veteran reintegration into society
- Illustrate mechanisms of Social Support on Stress Reduction
- Provide an overview and timeline of the project

What is resilience and *who* has it?



Background

Economic Effects of Young Veteran Rollercoaster Employment



--Sources: BLS, (2000-2013); Greengard, (2012); *Time*, (2013), U.S. House of Reps., (2013); Dept.VA (2010)

➤ Since 9/11:

- More than 2.8 million U.S. military personnel have served in and around Iraq & Afghanistan.
- They represent 13% of all veterans of any era.
- By 2018, the number of post-9/11 veterans is projected to top 3.1 million.
- Currently, 18% of these post-9/11 veterans have difficulty holding a job and many experience family difficulties.

Other post-9/11 Veterans

➤ Reservists:

- The citizen-soldiers of the Air & Army National Guard as well as other reserve components (i.e., Marines, Navy, & Coast Guard) have been mobilized by their respective branch of service at unprecedented levels to prosecute these decade(s)-long wars.
- Presently, 33% of all post-9/11 veterans – some 874,728 service members & counting – have deployed to various global hotspots as active-duty reservists of the U.S. armed forces.

What do we know about this subgroup of
about 900,000 and counting post-9/11
Reservist Veterans?

Unique Veteran Reservists Reintegration Issues

- Bye-bye active-duty pay!
- When reservists demobilize their active-duty pay of \$3,000-plus/month ends within weeks of returning home. Many reservists are young (18-24), lack transferable job skills and deploy either without a steady civilian job or without secure civilian employment.
- Even with unemployment benefits available upon return, they pose a steep cut in monthly income. The current Washington policy of denying reservists a “soft landing” (i.e., continuation of active-duty pay) for their reintegration phase places added stress on reservists during this critical transition to civilian life as well as increased strain on their families, too.
- Post-9/11 reservists, many having endured multiple deployments, have been referred *twice as much for mental health treatment* (42% NG/Reserves v. 20% Active Component) *during the first year post-deployment* (JAMA, 2007).

Reintegration Challenges: Veteran Reservists

- Unlike active-duty troops, veteran reservists return to few if any community & social supports such as:
 - Problems with steady & secure employment
 - Termination of active-duty pay
 - No paid military base housing
 - No convenient medical care
 - No access to quality child care

Project Overview: *Objective*

- *Develop, implement, and evaluate a civilian-based veteran-supportive supervisor training (VSST) program leading to improved work and home reintegration of Oregon National Guard and Reserve Component servicemen and women*

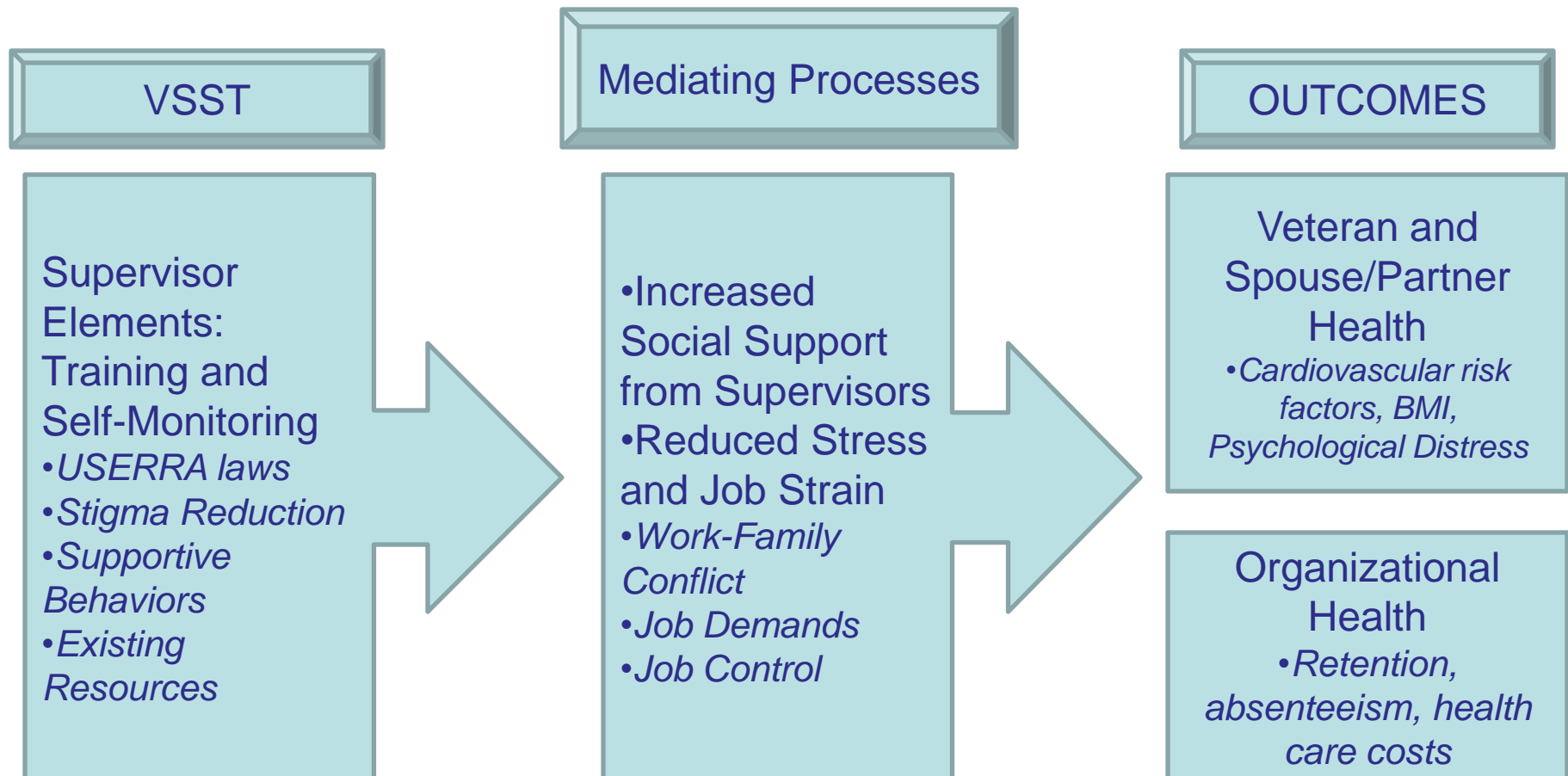
Project Overview: Why is this needed?

- Many programs focus on recruitment and hiring of veterans
- Very little attention is on post-deployment reintegration into the workforce
- *No programs* focus specifically on modifying the workplace to improve veteran reintegration-related experiences
- Good evidence suggests that “resilience” may be innate (*Scientific American*, 2011).

What We Hope To Change

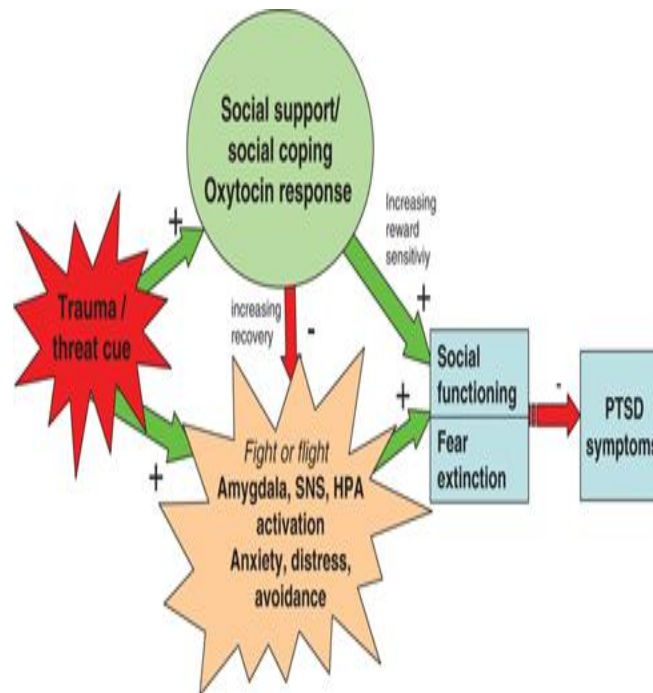
- Increased civilian supervisor support of NG/RC veterans should lead to:
- Decrease veteran job strain
- Increase veteran psychological and physical health
- Increase veteran marital quality
- Increase veteran job satisfaction
- Increase veteran job retention

Conceptual Model of Veteran-Supportive Supervisor Training Intervention, Health, and Work Outcomes



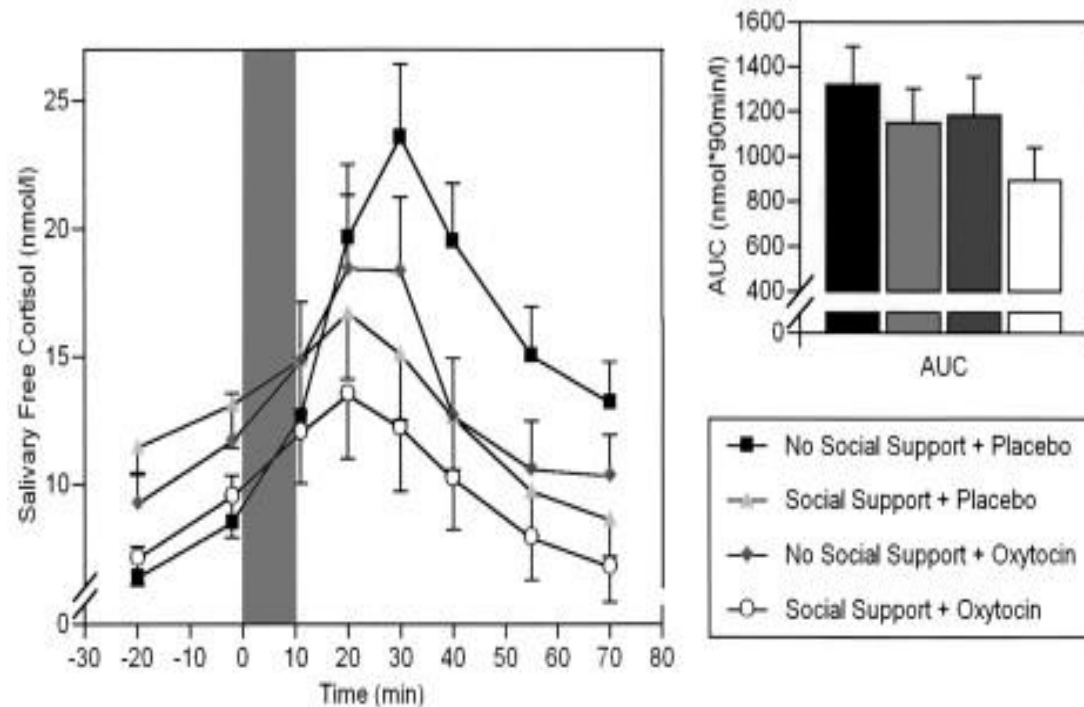
Effects of Social Support & Oxytocin

Model of Social Support as a Mediator/Moderator of Psychosocial outcomes



-- (Olf, 2012)

Social Support and Oxytocin Interact to Suppress Cortisol and Subjective Response to Psychosocial Stress



--(Heinrichs et al., 2003)

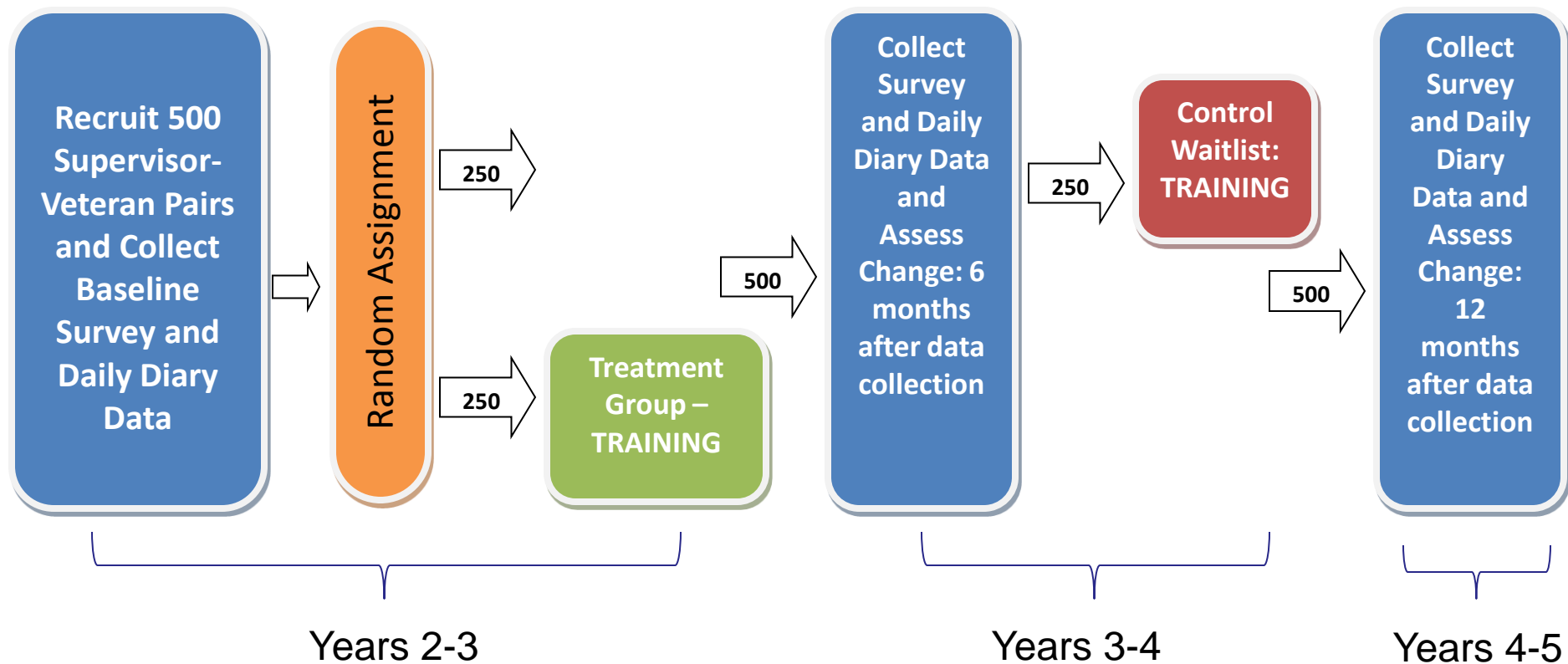
Research Plan: Overview

1. Conduct Focus Groups with 16 ONG/RC Veterans and 16 Supervisors to inform the training
2. Recruit and collect survey data from 500 PAIRS of ONG/RC Veterans and their civilian supervisors at 3 time points: Baseline, 6 months, 12 months
3. Collect Family Daily Diary data from subgroup of veterans and spouses
4. Develop and administer a Veteran Supportive Supervisory Training (VSST) to civilian supervisors

Family Study: Daily Diary

- Goal: To better understand issues faced by veterans and their families
- Data collected daily over two weeks via a web based survey
 - Examining daily experiences that impact health, well-being and reintegration
 - Target is 180 veterans and spouses recruited from larger study participants

Study Design: *Randomized Control Trial*



Timeline: 5 Year Plan

	YEAR 1	2	3	4	5
Development	Focus Groups, Training Development, Development of Study Protocols				
Baseline Data		Collect Baseline survey and daily diary data (250 dyads Y1; 250 dyads Y2)			
VSST Training - Treatment		Implement to Treatment Group			
6 mos Data			Collect 6 mos. survey and daily diary data		
VSST Training – Waitlist Control			Implement to Waitlist Control Group		
12 mos Data				Collect 12 mos. Survey.	

So, what challenges should we expect from employers?

Potential Employer Resistance

A Fresh Perspective from Interviews to On the Job
Accommodations

**I don't think they have
the skills to do what
we do here**

I can't figure out what they
know how to do from
reading their resumes

I need someone with
more technical
experience

**My positions require
certain certifications
or credentials**

Why bother? They're
just going to get called
up anyway



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We're more focused
on women &
minorities right now

**They don't have a
college education**

I need someone
who can lead, not
just follow orders

I don't have the budget
for niche job sites or
placement firms

**I'm not risking bringing
PTSD into my
workplace**

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Our Team –

- **Portland State University**
- Leslie Hammer, Ph.D. - Principal Investigator, Project Oversight
- Krista Brockwood, Ph.D.– Research Associate and Project Manager
- Cynthia Mohr, Ph.D. – Co-Investigator and lead on Family Diary Sub-Study
- Sheldon Levy, Ph.D. – Senior Research Associate and Organizational Liaison
- Todd Bodner, Ph.D. – Co-Investigator and lead on Statistics and Research Design

Our Team –

– VA Medical Center/OHSU

- Kathleen Carlson, Ph.D. – Co-Investigator, Veteran Specialist lead Epidemiologist
- Ryan Olson, Ph.D. – Co-Investigator, Training Development, Behavior Tracking (OHSU)

– NWeTA (North West Educational Training Assoc.)

- Kent Anger, Ph.D. – Co-Investigator, Training Development, Computer-Based Training
- In addition, a number of PSU Graduate Students and Undergraduate Students will be assisting on the project

Our Team-Consultants/Advisory Board

- Ellen Ernst Kossek, Ph.D., Purdue University
- Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth, Ph.D., Purdue University
- Robert Sinclair, Ph.D., Clemson University
- Thomas Britt, Ph.D., Clemson University
- Deborah Kashy, Ph.D., Michigan State University
- Paul Evans, U.S. Air Force; Air National Guard
- LTC Dennis McGurk, Ph.D., Chief, RTO, Walter Reed Army Institute for Research (WRAIR)
- Julie Merrill, M.S., Research Psychologist, WRAIR
- Brig Gen (Ret) Bill Doctor, Chairman Emeritus, Oregon Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve-ESGR
- Gary Dominick, M.S., State Veteran's Program Coordinator
- Col. David Greenwood, Oregon National Guard
- LTC, Chaplain, Daniel Thompson, Oregon National Guard
- COL, Chaplain, Terry Larkin, Oregon National Guard
- LTC Tim Deckert, Oregon National Guard

Questions?

THANK YOU!