PUBLICITY EFFORTS WITHIN THE OKLAHOMA CITY VA

Publicity is essential to the success of this program, and is an ongoing focus. Publicity is done in several ways:

1. Operation Enduring Families Pamphlet
2. Operation Enduring Families Flyer
3. Invitation Letter
4. Reminder Letter
5. Article for Mental Health Newsletters
6. Posting for VA Newsletter

Information is disseminated to several groups of people:

1. Eligible veterans
2. VA Medical Center providers who can refer veterans and share this resource
3. Community, state and federal agencies that work with returning veterans and can provide this group as a referral

Program Information for Veterans

1. Informational letters were sent to all returning OEF/OIF veterans who had received services at the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

2. Welcome packets for returning veterans were distributed to clinics throughout the VA. They include information on the Operation Enduring Families Group.

3. Brief presentations were regularly made in other mental health programs serving OEF/OIF veterans.

4. Flyers were posted throughout the medical center and brochures were distributed to all appropriate clinics before the start of each group.
Program Information for VAMC Providers and Other Referral Sources

1. Invitation letters and pamphlets were distributed to many VAMC providers.

2. A brief overview of the program was presented to the primary care providers at the medical center.

3. Articles were published in various newsletters, including the state psychological, psychiatric, and social work associations.

4. Pamphlets, flyers, and informational packets for returning veterans were distributed to:
   a. All psychology and psychiatry service associates
   b. Primary care teams
   c. Psychiatric nurse specialists
   d. Chaplains
   e. Social workers
   f. Local department of mental health
   g. Service benefits officers
   h. Life support units at local military bases
   i. Vet Centers

5. Flyers were posted in:
   a. Outpatient mental health clinic waiting room
   b. Chapel
   c. Primary care area bulletin boards and waiting areas
   d. Emergency room bulletin board
   e. Elevators

6. Informal, repeated contact with providers reminding them of the program and encouraging referrals is one of the most important components of increasing referrals.

Each site that implements Operation Enduring Families will be doing so within a unique organizational structure. The suggestions above were the methods that worked best in our facility. We encourage those seeking to implement the program to consider the ways in which information is generally communicated at your facility and to modify these suggestions for the particular needs of your setting.
OPERATION ENDURING FAMILIES INVITATION LETTER

Insert Date Here

Dear ____________________________________________

Greetings from the Oklahoma City Veterans Affairs Medical Center. We are pleased that you are coming to our hospital for your healthcare. We know that adjusting to life after deployment and creating new family routines can be challenging. We are here to support you and your family in making this transition the best it can be.

We are writing to invite you and your family members/close friends to a new program called Operation Enduring Families.

This is an ongoing program that will meet every Thursday night, starting on Thursday, July 5th, 2007. Meetings will be held from 5-6:15pm in room 9B 101 (located directly across from the main elevators on the 9th floor).

These meetings for adult family members and veterans are confidential. There is no charge and no need to pre-register. We believe that participating in this program can help you, your family, and your relationships. Specific topics to be discussed include:

- Coping with PTSD and other reactions to trauma
- Improving family relationships
- Communication and intimacy
- Dealing with anger
- Managing depression
- Traumatic brain injury

We hope that you and a family member will consider joining us on July 5th. Please invite other veterans and their families you know who might benefit from this group as well. If you have any questions regarding how to talk to a family member about the group or who you might want to invite, please feel free to contact us. You may call Dr. Ursula Bowling if you have any questions or concerns at (405) 456-5183. We hope to meet you soon.

Sincerely,

Ursula Bowling, Psy.D
Psychologist
Family Mental Health Program

Michelle Sherman, Ph.D
Director
Family Mental Health Program
ARTICLE FOR MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTERS

Operation Enduring Families Program at OKC VA Medical Center

We are launching a new program for veterans and their families. We know that getting back together after deployments can be stressful on families and veterans. Operation Enduring Families offers both information and support.

The goals of this program include: 1) education on a variety of topics related to reunification after deployment such as improving family relationships, facilitating communication and intimacy, dealing with anger, managing depression, coping with PTSD and other reactions to trauma, reducing family stress and self care and 2) mutual support and encouragement.

Weekly 90-minute educational groups will be held each Thursday evening starting in July 2007. Each session has a specific topic such as “Returning to Family Life after Deployment” and “Communication Tips for Post OEF/OIF Family Members and Veterans.” Half of each session is devoted to discussion of participants’ concerns.

Each session is facilitated by Dr. Ursula Bowling, a psychologist with the VA Family Mental Health Program. There is no charge for this program and no reservations are needed.

Any referrals to this program would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Ursula Bowling, Psy.D., of the Family Mental Health Program at (405) 456-5183 if you have any questions. Veterans or family members who want to learn more about the program may also be given Dr. Bowling’s name to contact her directly.