

TAKE THIS ISSUE HOME!

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8)

VETERANS Health MATTERS

SUMMER 2021

*Award Winning Wellness Magazine for VISN 8 Veterans
in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico & the U.S. Virgin Islands*



Dance/Movement Therapist Brittnei Cleland conducts a virtual therapy session with Army Soldier Bradley Moore. Cleland was conducting the session from James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa while Moore was participating from his home in Georgia.

Concerned About Your
Mental Health?

Healing with Dance

Preparing for Hurricane Season



Scan this QR code to
see a digital version
of this magazine.

MANAGING EDITOR

Jason W. Dangel

EDITORIAL BOARD

Mary Kay Rutan

VISN 8 Communication Manager

Jason W. Dangel

VISN 8 Deputy Manager, Office of Communication & Stakeholder Relations

Michelle Winslow

VISN 8 Program Manager, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (HPDP), and Co-Chair, VISN 8 Preventive Care Committee

Diana Akins

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS)
Acting Veterans Health Education Coordinator & Co-Chair, VISN 8 Veterans Health Coordinators Workgroup

Heather Frebe

Public Affairs Officer, Orlando VA Healthcare System

Kenita Tills

Public Affairs Officer,
West Palm Beach VA Medical Center

Edwin Aviles-Alvarado

Veteran Health Education Coordinator
VA Caribbean Healthcare System

Ed Drohan

Public Affairs Specialist,
James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

.....
Veterans Health Matters is a quarterly health and wellness magazine for Veterans produced by the VISN 8 Office of Communication. VISN 8 is the country's largest network of VA hospitals and clinics serving Veterans in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Your feedback is welcome. If you'd like to comment on the content, please e-mail or write to:

Managing Editor *Veterans Health Matters*
VISN 8 Office of Communication
140 Fountain Parkway, Suite 600
St. Petersburg, Florida 33716

e-mail: visn8communicationoffice@va.gov
Visit VISN 8 on the web: www.visn8.va.gov

To Our Readers



As a Veteran, you may be facing mental and emotional challenges that affect your health, relationships, and other parts of your life. VA is here to help, with resources and support to confront and manage any mental health challenge you have. You are not alone!

The goal of VA's mental health care approach is to support Veteran resilience, identify and treat conditions early on, address acute mental health crises, and focus on recovery. Read more on pages four and five, including the important role that family plays in our approach to care.

VA's Dance/Movement Therapy program helps Veterans with a variety of health conditions, including depression, chronic pain, and PTSD. Learn more about this innovative program on page three. Then, on page six, you will find some useful tips on preparing for hurricane season to help keep you and your family safe as the weather heats up this summer.

Finally, you can practice your word search skills and check out an easy-to-make summer salad recipe on page seven.

Be well and stay safe!

Miguel H. LaPuz, M.D., MBA
Network Director, VISN 8

VA Mobile App Spotlight: PTSD Coach

The PTSD app was designed for those who have, or may have, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). With this app, you can learn about PTSD and get information about professional care. It also includes a self-assessment and ways to find support. Plus, there are tools to help you manage the daily stresses of living with PTSD, such as relaxation skills, positive self-talk, anger management, and more. You can even add your own music and photos.



This free app is available for download, in English and Spanish, at the Apple or Google Play stores. For more information visit **mobile.va.gov/app/ptsd-coach**.

Healing with *Dance*

By Ed Drohan,
Public Affairs Specialist, James A.
Haley Veterans' Hospital

While many people may enjoy dancing as a pastime, at James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa, it is being used for healing as well. The Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) program helps Veterans and active duty service members with chronic pain, headaches, traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Sessions are often offered virtually through VA Video Connect.

Dance/Movement Therapist Brittni Cleland runs the program as part of Creative Forces: National Endowment for the Arts, Military Healing Arts Network. She explained that DMT has been around for a long time. "We are actually embedded in the military population since day one, basically since World War II."

Much more than dancing, this therapy often includes treatments, such as guided meditation, paced breathing, acupressure, and therapeutic self-touch. "Often, when someone has experienced any form of trauma, their expressivity is muted. Part of my job is to help them understand how to match their body language to their vocal tone for better communication," Cleland explained.

Most of Cleland's patients are outpatients who are open to exploring dance or getting better movement in their life. Some inpatients, though, can be a little



Dance/Movement Therapist Brittni Cleland conducts a virtual therapy session with Army Soldier Bradley Moore. Cleland was conducting the session from James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa while Moore was participating from his home in Georgia.

hesitant. "By the end of our sessions, we can get them to a point where they feel comfortable moving, and maybe moving to a beat, whether it's a little sway or a little march," Cleland said. "I always say everyone is a dancer, they just have their own rhythm, and we just need to find what their rhythm is."

One of Cleland's patients started with DMT while going through the Post Deployment Rehabilitation and Evaluation Program (PREP). Bradley Moore is an active duty Soldier stationed in Georgia whose unit sent him to PREP. He is now in the process of retiring. "Just to unpack everything, to better understand everything that's going on with you and how to implement things," Moore said.

"Going into this, I wanted to help my family and how I related to them, but really just understanding me has been immensely helpful. I'm a pretty changed person since the beginning of it."

Another patient, Linda Liautaud, an Army Veteran living in Brooklyn, N.Y., started the program as part of the virtual chronic pain management program. Despite her pain, she is happy that dancing is now part of her life. "Just being able to do something like this is making me more positive. Before, I wanted to be 100 percent, but even going at 40 or 50 percent is better than not dancing at all, so I'm learning to be positive about that."

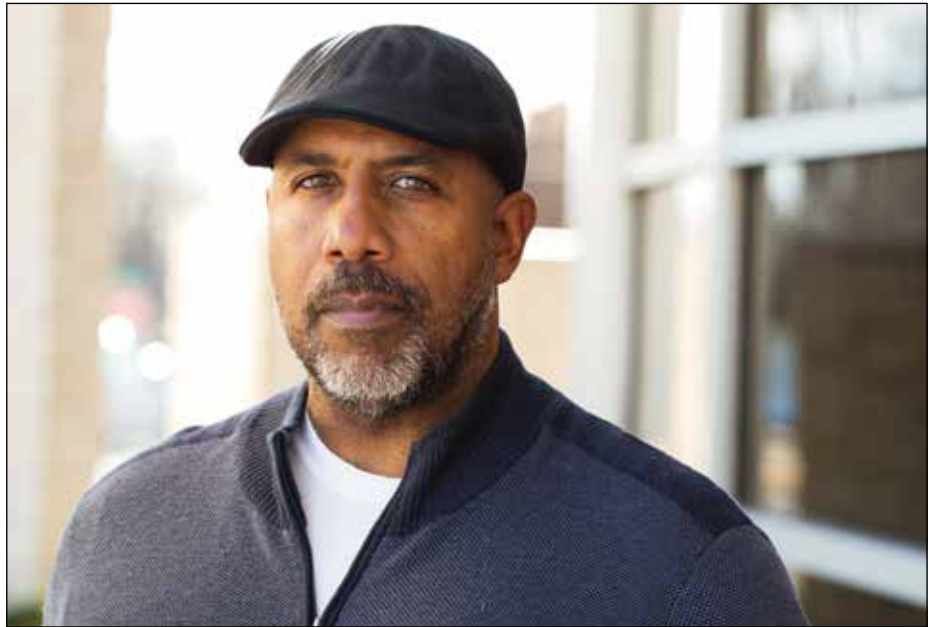
Concerned About your Mental Health?

You are not alone - VA is here to help!

No matter how you served or what you experienced in military or civilian life, you may be facing difficult challenges that affect your health, relationships, and life. But you do not have to face them alone. VA is here to provide and connect you with resources and support to confront and manage any mental health challenge, stressor, or difficult experience that you may face. No problem is too big or too small.

The first step you must take is letting others know how you feel and asking for help. This means seeking information, advice, or options for tackling the challenges that affect your health, daily activities, or relationships. You may start with a family member or friend but also consider talking with others:

- Your doctor. Ask if your doctor has experience treating Veterans or can refer you to someone who does.
- A mental health professional, such as a therapist.
- Your local VA medical center or Vet Center. You can locate VA resources near you by visiting: **www.va.gov/find-locations**.



Mental health care at VA offers the highest quality system of comprehensive treatments and services to meet the needs of each Veteran. This also includes family members who are involved in the Veteran's care. VA's goals are to support Veteran resilience, identify and treat mental health conditions at their earliest onset, address acute mental health crises, and deliver recovery-oriented treatment.

Some of the many treatment options include, but are not limited to inpatient, outpatient, and residential mental health care; evidenced-based psychotherapies; and medication options that may help you manage your symptoms.

Specific areas our trained mental health providers specialize in include:

- Anxiety
- Bipolar Disorder
- Depression
- Effects of Traumatic Brain Injury
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Schizophrenia
- Substance Use Disorder
- Suicide Prevention
- Tobacco and Health
- And more



Immediate Care

Veterans enrolled for care with VA can also receive immediate mental health care and support by visiting any VA or community emergency room, or by contacting the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), press 1 for Veteran. This service is available 24/7/365. The Veterans Crisis Line also has chat and text options. Visit www.veteranscrisisline.net.

Veterans who live in Florida can also access the Florida Veterans Support Line (FVSL) through a partnership between VA, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, and Crisis Center of Tampa Bay. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-844-MYFLVET (693-5838) for emotional support and information about community and VA resources. This no-cost line also operates 24/7/365. Learn more at www.myflvet.com.



Family Matters

In addition to the services available to Veterans, VA recognizes the importance of family in its recovery-oriented approach to care. Services are tailored to the Veteran's phase of illness, symptom level, self-sufficiency, family relationships, and preferences. Various levels of services to meet these needs include:

- Educating the family and facilitating family access to the treatment team
- Involving the family in planning treatment strategies
- Conducting a brief Veteran-centered family consultation
- Providing evidence-based family counseling/therapy programs

VA has a partnership with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to provide Veteran families with easy access to their education and support programs. VA offers several evidence-based family therapy programs, such as:

- Behavioral Family Therapy for serious psychiatric illness
- Cognitive-Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD

Coaching into Care

Because some Veterans are reluctant to obtain the care they need, VA established the Coaching into Care telephone service. The goal is to help Veterans' family members and friends access VA care and provide support for the Veteran. Callers can discover new ways to talk with the Veteran in their lives about their concerns and treatment options. To reach this free, confidential coaching service, call 1-888-823-7458.

To learn more about VA's mental health programs and services, please talk to your VA health care providers, visit your local medical center webpage, or visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov.



Watch the Video!

Check out the video, "Concerned About Your Mental Health? VA is Here to Help" at www.visn8.va.gov/visn8/news/publications.asp.

Hurricane Season

Be Informed. Make a Plan. Be Ready.

Being prepared for hurricane season is critically important. Do not wait until a storm watch or warning is issued for your area to begin your preparations. **The best time to prepare is now!**

PRIOR TO HURRICANE SEASON

Know your area's risk of hurricanes. Sign up for your local community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.

Locate a safe room or the safest area in your home. Consider a small, interior, windowless space on the lowest level possible that does not usually flood.

Become familiar with your evacuation zone, route, and shelter locations.

If you have a medical condition, check with your local emergency management office about a special registration.

If you require life-saving equipment, such as a ventilator, check with your VA healthcare provider or FEMA to see if you qualify for a temporary generator.

Keep important papers in a safe place.

START OF HURRICANE SEASON

Get your hurricane emergency kit together and make sure it is close by.

Make an inventory of valuable items and review insurance policies.

Identify an out-of-state family member/friend so all your family members have a single point of contact. Plan how you will communicate with family members. Sending texts is often more reliable than making phone calls.

Post emergency telephone numbers in a visible place in your home or save them to your cellphone. Make sure your children know how to call 9-1-1.

Talk with your VA healthcare provider about instructions for your health condition. Keep a list of medications handy.

For more information, visit Hurricane Tips for Veterans and Families at www.visn8.va.gov/hurricane_tips.asp.

EMERGENCY KIT

- ☐ Water (3 gallons per day per person)
- ☐ Battery operated radio, extra batteries
- ☐ Bleach
- ☐ Candles and matches or lighter
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Extension cords (heavy duty)
- ☐ Blankets/pillows
- ☐ Rain gear and sturdy shoes or boots
- ☐ Pet food and supplies
- ☐ Extra medications
- ☐ Fire extinguisher
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Toys, books, games
- ☐ Flashlight with extra batteries and bulbs
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Manual can opener
- ☐ Emergency supplies for cooking
- ☐ Ready-to-eat canned and prepared food
- ☐ Valuable papers
- ☐ Driver's license and cash

FIRST AID KIT

- ☐ 20 adhesive bandages
- ☐ 1 conforming roller gauze bandage
- ☐ 2, 3" x 3" sterile gauze bandage pads
- ☐ 2, 4" x 4" sterile gauze bandage pads
- ☐ 1, 3" cohesive bandage
- ☐ 1, 5" x 9" sterile dressing
- ☐ 2, triangle bandages
- ☐ 6 antiseptic wipes
- ☐ 2" wide adhesive tape
- ☐ Cold pack
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ First Aid manual
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal medicine
- ☐ Laxatives
- ☐ 2 packages anti-bacterial hand-wipes
- ☐ 2 pairs non-latex gloves
- ☐ Antibacterial ointment
- ☐ Small, personal scissors
- ☐ CPR face shield
- ☐ Aspirin or pain reliever
- ☐ Antacid medicine for upset stomach

Word Search

Find these words from the stories in this issue of *Veterans Health Matters*. Remember to also look up, down, and backwards. Good luck!

ANXIETY	D	E	P	R	E	S	S	I	O	N	M
CHALLENGES	S	S	B	D	F	F	L	Q	N	P	E
DANCE	T	E	V	A	C	U	A	T	I	O	N
DEPRESSION	P	G	H	N	L	T	P	V	D	D	T
EVACUATION	F	N	J	C	K	P	T	W	Y	G	A
FAMILY	L	E	R	E	C	O	V	E	R	Y	L
HEALING	G	L	O	J	G	N	I	L	A	E	H
HURRICANE	Y	L	I	M	A	F	V	Y	D	F	E
MENTAL HEALTH	A	A	N	X	I	E	T	Y	P	L	A
MOVEMENT	R	H	R	M	M	B	C	F	O	Q	L
PTSD	J	C	K	M	O	V	E	M	E	N	T
RECOVERY	L	U	E	N	A	C	I	R	R	U	H

Mediterranean Chickpea Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice or red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 medium onion, diced (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 (15-ounce) can no-salt-added chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained and rinsed
- 1/2 medium cucumber, diced (about 1/2 cup)
- 1/2 medium bell pepper, diced (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 medium tomato, diced (about 1 cup)



DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, whisk together lemon juice (or red wine vinegar), olive oil, oregano, and red pepper flakes to make a dressing.
2. Stir in onion and garlic, then let it sit for at least 10 minutes.
3. Add chickpeas, cucumber, bell pepper, and tomatoes. Toss to combine and serve.

Nutritional information: (4 servings). Per serving: 145 calories, 9 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 15 g carbohydrates, 3 g dietary fiber, 5 g protein, and 10 mg sodium.

Free Veterans Health Matters Subscription

To request your free copy of *Veterans Health Matters* and how you would like to receive your subscription, visit www.healthyhife.com/SubscribeVHM.

You can also request your free subscription using the following methods: by U.S. mail, email, or phone.

By Mail:

Fill out your information (please print below) and put in a stamped envelope with this address:

American Institute for Preventive Medicine
c/o VISN 8 – VHM
30445 Northwestern Hwy., Ste. 350
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

(Please print)

First Name Middle Initial

Last Name

Address

City

State

Zip

By Email:

VISN8VHM@healthyhife.com
Be sure to include the above information.

By Phone:

(800) 345-2476 – press 5 for English or press 6 for Spanish



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8)

VISN 8 Office of Communication
140 Fountain Parkway, Ste 600
St. Petersburg, FL 33716



Hurricane Season Is Here!

Learn what you can do to prepare.

Visit www.visn8.va.gov/hurricane_tips.asp

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

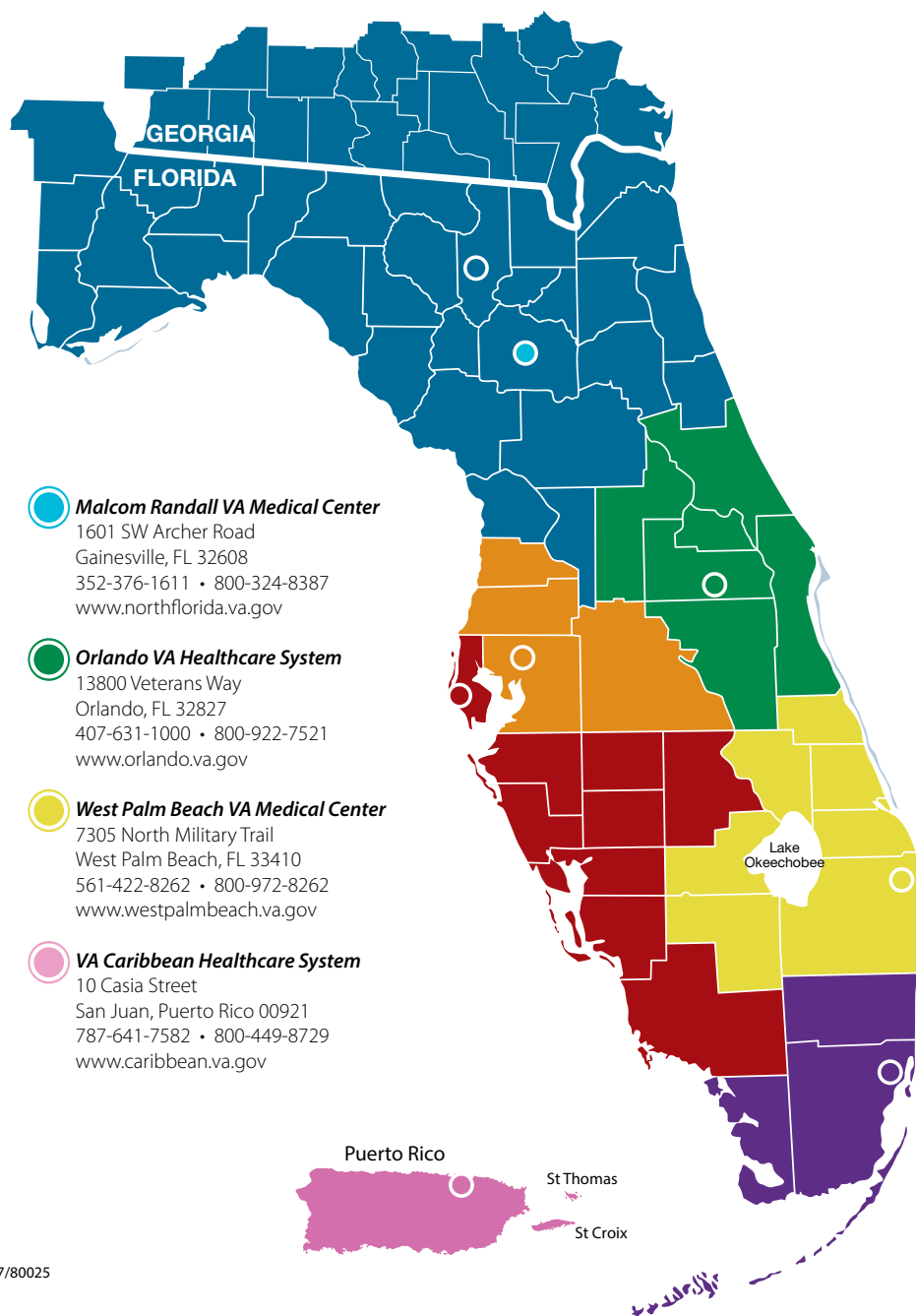
www.visn8.va.gov



at all Medical Centers

Find a VA hospital or clinic near you:

www.va.gov/health/FindCare.asp



Bruce W. Carter Dept. of VA Medical Center

1201 NW 16th Street
Miami, FL 33125
305-575-7000 • 888-276-1785
www.miami.va.gov



C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center

10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744
727-398-6661 • 888-820-0230
www.baypines.va.gov



James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612
813-972-2000 • 888-716-7787
www.tampa.va.gov



Lake City VA Medical Center

619 South Marion Avenue
Lake City, FL 32025
386-755-3016 • 800-308-8387
www.northflorida.va.gov



Malcom Randall VA Medical Center

1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608
352-376-1611 • 800-324-8387
www.northflorida.va.gov



Orlando VA Healthcare System

13800 Veterans Way
Orlando, FL 32827
407-631-1000 • 800-922-7521
www.orlando.va.gov



West Palm Beach VA Medical Center

7305 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
561-422-8262 • 800-972-8262
www.westpalmbeach.va.gov



VA Caribbean Healthcare System

10 Casia Street
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00921
787-641-7582 • 800-449-8729
www.caribbean.va.gov