



US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

# BLAST INJURY RESEARCH PROGRAM COORDINATING OFFICE

## Neurocognitive and Psychological Health Treatment Strategies

### Enhanced Cognitive Rehabilitation to Treat Comorbid Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD and TBI are frequently observed co-morbidities in Service Member and Veteran populations. Traditional Cognitive Process Therapy (CPT), which is often used as a treatment for PTSD, can be limited in efficacy within this population because skills used by the patient in CPT may be inhibited due to chronic cognitive deficits from the TBI. With funding from CDMRP, researchers at the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Medical Center in San Diego are evaluating an adaption of CPT, referred to as SMART-CPT, which more specifically targets the cognitive deficits often observed after TBI. SMART-CPT is a hybrid training program which combines traditional CPT with Cognitive Symptom Management and Rehabilitation Therapy (CogSMART), a manualized treatment approach used to teach Veterans strategies to compensate for cognitive difficulties. The researchers are conducting a randomized trial of the new SMART-CPT therapy in Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans with mild or moderate TBI and PTSD and comparing it to traditional CPT. During FY16, the investigators were focused on recruitment and data collection for this trial; however, they did observe a preliminary finding where participants in the SMART-CPT group tend to stay in treatment longer than those in the CPT control group. This hybrid treatment has the potential to treat Service Members and Veterans with comorbid PTSD and TBI as opposed to treatment of PTSD and TBI independently. This can potentially lead to changes in clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) and increase efficiencies in clinical care of affected populations.

