

Become a Certified Counselor on the Warrior Stories Platform

We're looking for experienced and innovative counselors who serve veterans to pilot a digital app.

Many veterans struggle with traditional talk-therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder. We have adapted a digital app and therapeutic approach where veterans create graphic art portraying their trauma experiences. The pilot involves training therapists to use the tool with MST survivors and evaluates that use. We are currently certifying Chicagoland therapists.

Who can participate?

Any mental health professional (counselor, therapist, psychologist, etc.) licensed to practice in Illinois who works primarily work in the Chicago area. Experience with sexual assault survivors and current work with veterans is preferred but not mandatory. Participants must have an open mind and be willing to work with veterans, use creative tools that are very different from talk therapy, and become comfortable using online tools such as virtual meetings and webinars.



What it involves

Your primary role will be to inform us about what works and does not, both with the certification process and in terms of using the application with veteran PTSD/MST survivors.

Why this pilot is so important

Veterans seeking treatment for PTSD related to their MST need interventions that keep them engaged in treatment to improve their chances of recovering from their trauma. Few Veterans with PTSD seek treatment, and of those who do, even fewer remain in treatment past the first session. Even when survivors seek help, clinicians still fail to recognize as many as 95% of MST cases. Clinicians need training about how to work with survivors of MST. No program in Illinois currently meets either of these needs.

How does the Warrior Stories platform address these needs?

We believe the Warrior Stories approach provides a much-needed solution to treating survivors of PTSD and MST. Veterans who use the app describe it as “engaging” and report that they enjoy working with the platform, that it builds confidence, and directly supports their healing goals. Warrior Stories helps survivors visually show their experience which taps into different forms of communication and is a tool that can be individualized to the patient. Notably, Warrior Stories addresses survivors’ “stuck points” commonly encountered in cognitive behavior processing. This suggests Warrior Stories can attract veterans who might not otherwise seek treatment and keep in treatment those who might otherwise drop out.

Participants must

1. Complete a six-hour online certification course.
2. Use the digital application with veterans as directed in the certification manual.
3. Participate in either two or three 30-minute meetings or phone calls to provide evaluative feedback.
4. Respond to post surveys about the perceived reduction in trauma stress in clients who used the app.

Participants receive

1. 6 CEUs
2. Certification
3. Application manual
4. Free access to the application for future use with clients
5. 30 hours of ongoing technical support (how to use the application, how to work with veterans, etc.) from Smart Policy Works experts.

Smart Policy Works is a public policy and consulting nonprofit that works to break down barriers to health and well-being. Our initiatives aimed at Illinois veterans address the roots of behavioral, mental, and physical health. Since 2012, our training and outreach effort to improve the supports available to survivors of MST have become nationally recognized workshops that educate professionals and community members about how to recognize MST, make appropriate referrals, and advocate for survivors. smartpolicyworks.com

Warrior Stories is an application developed for the Department of Defense that lets veterans convey their experience visually, using a library of locations, characters, objects, and symbols to assemble story. Its stylized, powerful representations of weapons, vehicles, explosion effects and other elements have had impressive results helping therapists working with veterans suffering from combat trauma. warriorstories.com

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