



Preparing Women to Lead:
Specific Initiatives to Enhance
Opportunities and Success

VA Psychology Leadership
Conference 2019
San Antonio, TX

Today's breakout session

- Presenters
 - Stacey Pollack (on behalf of Cheryl Lowman)
 - Jeanette Hsu

Context for today's presentation

- The gender gap in leadership
- Being *and feeling* ready to lead
- How to address?

VISN 5

Cheryl Lowman, Ph.D., Chief Mental
Health Officer, VISN 5

VISN 5 Mental Health Administration Pre-Doctoral Internship Rotation



Barriers to Leadership Roles For Psychologists

1) Inequitable Access to Key Leadership Positions

Psychologists are not represented equitably in all levels of leadership in the VA's healthcare delivery system.

2) Hybrid Title 38 Hiring Authority

Psychologists remain the only doctoral healthcare providers in VA who are not included in Title 38.

3) Psychologists lack of knowledge of, and access to leadership training programs.

Many staff psychologists are not aware of existing opportunities within their VA and VISN to access leadership training.

4) Limited opportunities for introduction to MH leadership skills within VA Psychology Training programs .

Program evaluation or leadership minor rotations are rare and there is no standard dissemination throughout our VA MH training programs.

Training Solutions

- To address these gaps, the VISN 5 Chief Mental Health Officer developed a minor rotation in VA MH administration based on OPM guidelines for pre-supervisory leadership development programs.
- Development was informed by feedback and review from NCOD, Behavioral Health Leadership Training Program and local VA training directors.
- Content areas map to OPM leadership competencies, designed for emerging leaders with no familiarity with leadership competencies.

Rotation Objectives

- Gain a deeper understanding of the systems-level operation of Mental Health programs throughout the region and the multitude of factors that influence implementation of healthcare policy and impact patient care.
- Gain understanding of the various roles of psychologists as administrators and leaders in VA and the organization of Mental Health in VA Central Office and the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs)
- Become familiar with mental health quality improvement data and key performance measures such as MH SAIL
- Develop and implement a quality improvement project
- Become familiar with program development and implementation from a regional perspective
- Gain a broad understanding of leadership roles and activities outside of mental health
- Gain an understanding of VA Leadership Executive Core Competencies

VA Leadership Competency Model

- The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guides government agencies to hire strong leaders by developing the core qualifications for essential leadership qualifications.
- <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/executive-core-qualifications/>
- The executive core qualifications define the competencies needed to build a federal corporate culture that drives for results, serves customers, and builds successful teams and coalitions within and outside the organization. The ECQs were designed to assess executive experience and potential-not technical expertise.
- The Executive Core Qualifications are required for entry to the Senior Executive Service and are used by many agencies including VA in selection, performance management, and leadership development for management and executive positions.

VA Executive Leadership Competencies

- **Leading People:**
 - Builds High-Performing, Diverse Teams
 - Personal Mastery
 - Organizational Stewardship
- **Building Coalitions:**
 - Drives Integration
 - Builds and Maintains Partnerships
 - Demonstrates Political Savvy
 - Effectively Manages Conflict
 - Interpersonal Effectiveness
- **Leading Change:**
 - Champions Innovation
 - Communicates Vision and Drives Change
 - Flexibility/ Adaptability
- **Results Driven:**
 - Guides and Inspires Others to Achieve Results and Improve Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency
 - Organizational Stewardship
 - Global Perspective
- **Business Acumen:**
 - Demonstrates Exceptional Judgment and Applies Resource Allocation and Management Skills to Optimize Operations and Quality of Service
 - Employs Technology Effectively
 - Technical Skills

Rotation Core Components

Rotation Core Components are mapped to the VA leadership competencies

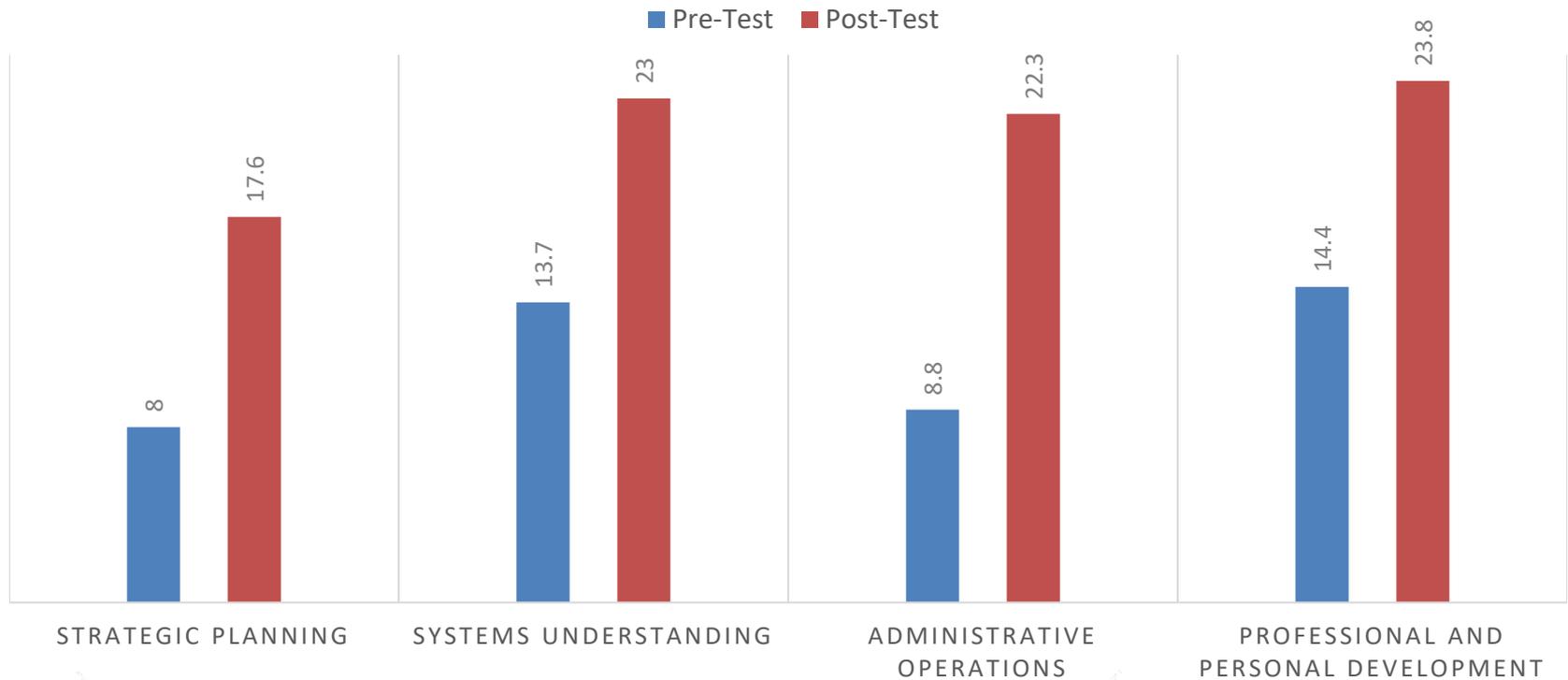
1. **Strategic Planning:** (Leading Change, Building Coalitions, Leading People, global perspective)
 - Review of Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook
 - VA secretary priorities
 - Strategic planning tools
 - Develop an understanding of policy development and implementation
2. **Systems Understanding:** (Global Perspective, Building Coalitions,)
 - Review of organizational structure of VACO, VISN and the facility
 - Understanding of VA mission, strategic priorities
3. **Professional Development:** (Leading People- personal mastery)
 - Complete an individual development plan
 - Review core VA leadership competencies
 - Complete a 360 assessment
4. **Administrative Operations and Program Evaluation :** (Results Driven, Business Acumen)
 - Review of mental health metrics such as SAIL, STORM, SPAN, CRYSTAL
 - Review of mental health access measures (MH 17&18, PACT 15)
 - Review of organizational resources in alignment with strategic direction, priorities and policy
 - Design and implement an administrative project, typically a program evaluation or outcome assessment implemented at a facility

Rotation Results

- The first intern started in 2017 and 6 interns have completed the rotation to date.
- 95% of the interns are planning a career at the VA.
- Satisfaction scores are very high with the rotation.
- Interns complete pre-and post evaluation of their knowledge of and strengths in leadership competencies on a 1-5 scale.

Pre/Post changes in Administrative Competencies

CHART TITLE



Intern Comments

“This rotation has opened my eyes to the broader picture of what we do, and can do, in VA, and has changed my trajectory within VA from being an obedient follower of policy, to an informed and involved VA psychologist. Going forward with this understanding, I will be able to engage with leadership and policy in a more effective and collaborative nature, ultimately benefiting my Veterans and the clinics in which I serve.”

Intern Comments

“The VISN-5 Administrative Minor is a truly unique training opportunity that offers incomparable access to aspects of the broader VA system that trainees – and even full-time staff – rarely have. From the meetings and from my involvement in a number of day-to-day VISN meetings and initiatives, I gleaned a much better understanding of the macro-level functioning of the VA, and of the VISN’s distinct role in implementing top-down policies from VACO and communicating bottom-up needs and initiatives from the VA hospitals. This experience provided me with greater appreciation for the complex system in which we work, all the good the VA system can and does do, and the ongoing process to continually improve the VA in the pursuit of providing the best possible care to veterans.”

Intern Comments

“During the VISN (5) rotation I learned a lot regarding the intricate structure of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). I will forever hold a new lens to view how the VA works at higher levels of leadership and how policies and decisions are made utilizing multiple performance dash boards and knowledge of systems. This lens was partially developed through meeting and interacting with the different professions in leadership positions in at the VISN and seeing how each position contributes to the care of veterans. It was also helpful to ask each person how they got to their leadership position. Listening to the varied stories and trajectories helped me to navigate my own professional trajectory. I believe this experience made me a better clinician, government employee, and emerging leader in the field of psychology and healthcare.”

Intern Comments

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A mentoring program for women interested in developing as leaders

- Development of mentoring program in coordination with AVAPL's ECP existing mentoring program
 - Survey questions to gain information to match potential mentors and mentees
 - Anticipated mentor match in 2020
- Development of WIL webinar series

Webinar Series

- First webinar on November 29, 2018
 - Panelists – Jennifer Boyd, Gayle Iwamasa, Jillian Shipherd, Antonette Zeiss
 - Over 160 attendees
- Timing and frequency – twice yearly?
 - Intended to build a foundation of knowledge about women's leadership development in VA and to support the mentoring of early and mid-career women psychologists within VA
 - Open to all VA staff and trainees

Summary of November 2018 webinar

- Leadership skills
- Facing barriers to leadership
- Owning authority and credibility
- Setting priorities
- Balancing family responsibilities
- Kinds of mentorship needed
- Final advice
 - “Do what you care about and what you are passionate about”
 - “Show good work and be prepared”
 - “Find allies and mentors. Look for allies above you or ahead of you with more privilege who can vouch for you and make space for you, and then BE that person later on.”

Next 2019 Webinar – VA Leadership Competencies

- Leading People – inspiring continual learning/developing and building high-performing, diverse teams
- Leading Change – communicating vision and driving change
- Results Driven – fostering accountability
- Business Acumen – managing resources, employing technology
- https://www.valu.va.gov/content/pdf/va_leadership_competency_model.pdf

Webinar Series Future Directions

- Suggestions for future topics?
 - Focus on women's leadership styles
 - Chin, J.L., Lott, B., Rice, J.K., & Sanchez-Hucles, J. (2007). *Women and leadership: Transforming visions and diverse voices*. Blackwell: Malden, MA.
 - Dr. Antonette Zeiss in *Psychology Today* on Top 5 Leadership Skills for women: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/new-look-womens-leadership/201901/healthcare-leader-s-view-the-top-5-leadership-skills>
 - Balancing professional demands, family responsibilities, and self-care
 - Other topics?



What *more* could we do?



Thank you for joining us!

We have a listserv specifically to address issues related to women psychologists in leadership roles in VA. In order to be added to the listserv, please send a request to Jeff Burk at webmaster1@avapl.org. The name of the SIG is *Women in Leadership*.