

D&A News

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Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention: Meeting the Needs of OIF/OEF Veterans

Most D&A and mental health professionals have received professional training in working with military veterans. But until recently professional development workshops have focused on the needs of Vietnam era vets. Veterans of recent and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East face different challenges than veterans in the past and it is important for human service professionals to understand these needs. More than 2 million men and women have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. As of 2009, over one million were eligible for VA services. This number will increase dramatically as more finish their tours and separate from the service.

Keitha Beamer, MSN, is a clinical nurse specialist in the Addiction Recovery Unit at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center. She shared her insights on the following questions:

What are some of the new issues being experienced by OIF/OEF veterans, especially pertaining to addiction?

“Due to technology, we have many veterans surviving injuries they may not have survived in the past. We have traumatic blast amputees. We’re also seeing a lot of traumatic brain injuries. With those



injuries sometimes comes chronic pain. Also, soldiers may be returned to duty after injuries while given pain medications. Since opiates are fantastic anti-anxiety drugs, sometimes they start to get abused. In addition, we’re seeing OEF/OIF veterans who have back pain caused by the weight of their packs and equipment. This could be 60-150 lbs, and then jumping out of humvees, trucks, off of embankments, out of helicopters. This is putting a lot of stress on their backs.”

Keitha continues, “The OEF/OIF vets are presenting for pain treatment, not realizing they have a substance use disorder or PTSD. Frequently they are presenting to the primary care practitioner or pain clinics

What is OIF/OEF?

OIF stands for **Operation Iraqi Freedom**. It is also known as “the Iraq war,” and it began on March 20, 2003.

OEF stands for **Operation Enduring Freedom**. It is a multinational military operation and its main goal is dismantling terrorist groups. Much of this war has been fought in Afghanistan. It began on October 7, 2001 in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks.

first. We are doing screenings on everyone coming into the system, but sometimes veterans do not disclose everything.”

Many of the OIF/OEF vets also have young families. There are more women serving than ever before. What family issues do veterans face?

“Family is so important in the recovery of veterans. The dynamic changes that occur during and after deployment are amazing. Both the active duty soldier and the family at home are moving forward, but no longer on the same trajectory. The soldier is off doing a job, putting him/herself in harm’s way. Meanwhile, on the home front, the economy has gone to pot and the spouses are now fulfilling two roles if there are children in the family. The spouse has to manage every-

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Early in 2012, Lancaster will begin a Veteran's Court, using a model similar to the other two specialty courts in Lancaster, Drug Court and Mental Health Court. The D&A Commission was involved in the development of all three specialty courts, and our staff will continue to participate in these courts as team members and assisting in the delivery

of substance abuse treatment. So far, our experience with Drug Court and Mental Health Court is very rewarding. We are seeing people entering a recovery program for their mental health issues and/or addictions. Lives are getting back on track and these graduates are usually not coming back into the court system. Outcomes are looking very promising.

The highest priority of these courts is public safety. They are very careful not to select people who are at risk for jeopardizing public safety. The specialty courts are very demanding, and they provide intense oversight and services to the participants. When people graduate from these courts, they have really accomplished a lot.

We also recently partnered with Compass Mark to acquire the gambling grant from the Department of Health. Dave Bender and his staff at Compass Mark will integrate these prevention and education services into many of their existing programs. We should also see some good results with these efforts.

We had some major funding cuts in the past few years, and we expect the fiscal year beginning in July 2012 to be another tough budget cycle for the D&A field. My office has cut our staff down to ten employees, and have made cost saving changes in many of our programs. More cuts will dig deep into our treatment and prevention services. We are running out of tricks of the trade to weather out these cuts, and at the same time keep the valuable services operating and producing good results.

We look forward to 2012 and wish you and your family a healthy and prosperous new year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Kastner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

D&A NEWS

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Problem Gambling Initiative Funds New Programs for Youth and Adults

This article was written by Jean Gerdes, Coordinator of Gambling Services at Compass Mark. Prior to taking a position with Compass Mark, Jean was a Family and Consumer Science teacher for more than 26 years in the Donegal School District.

In July I was offered a job to coordinate a grant about gambling. At the time I was looking for a new challenge, knew Compass Mark to be a great organization, and was very impressed with everyone I had met, but I did not understand why gambling was a concern. When I first heard my title, Coordinator of Gambling Services for Lancaster County, I thought it sounded like I would be organizing bus trips to Hollywood Casino. As I started to research the subject I understood why I have a job. According to the Pennsylvania Youth Survey:



- The average grade for Lancaster County children to place their first bet is 6th grade.
- Rates of gambling among Lancaster County 10th graders exceeded the state level in four of the seven areas measured while 12th graders exceeded in three of the seven measures.
- One Lancaster County community had rates twice as high as the state average.
- 4,130 Lancaster county youth grades 6-12 gambled for money 30 days prior to the survey. During the previous year, approximately 1,530 bet through the internet and over 6,600 bet on table games.
- If national statistics hold in Lancaster County, we can estimate that 1,400 of our gambling youth are doing so compulsively.

According to Purdue University, pathological gambling is linked to a suicide rate four times higher than non gamblers and is also positively correlated with bankruptcy, unemployment, spousal abuse and divorce rates. One source estimated that 65% of casinos' income comes from people 65 years and older, resulting in heavy marketing to a vulnerable group. It is estimated in Lancaster County we have at least 5,300 adult problem gamblers and at least 1,500 problem gamblers 65 years and older.

Because gambling is an accepted and legal form of entertainment, it is easy for people of all ages to get involved and before they know it, some are in too

deep. My job is to find out about the extent and nature of the gambling problem in Lancaster County and find effective and unique ways to reach under-served groups. If you have any information about this I would love to hear from you and talk about the possibility of implementing your ideas with grant money. I am particularly interested in how to help employers and our seniors with this problem. The gambling grant was written to address several areas of this issue and to help as many people as possible. Currently we are offering the following services:

Prevention Programming for Schools

Compass Mark is offering 2—6 sessions of the outstanding unit Positive Choices from our Skill Quest Program. A trained facilitator will tailor the program to meet the needs of each school program while presenting engaging lessons that teach students to make good choices regarding gambling as well as the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. We have at least 100 of

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Would you like to receive the D&A News electronically instead of your printed copy? The D&A News can be sent to your email address as a PDF. In order to receive our newsletter this way, (or to request any other changes to our mailing list) please send an email to Lisa Starr at lstarr@co.lancaster.pa.us. To assist us in managing our mailing list, include the five digit number in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label.



Adult Children of Alcoholics and the College Experience

Family problems don't disappear when kids leave home. Unfortunately, this is particularly true with alcohol and other drug problems. When young adults with alcoholic parents leave for college, they often unknowingly take their issues with them. College students living away from home for the first time experience their first opportunity to "look back" at their childhood and compare their experiences with others. Some are already aware that their growing up years were different than their peers. Others learn this for the first time as college freshman. And while some students are resilient and able to negotiate college life with ease, others carry scars that become more apparent as they get older.

Alcoholism brings chaos to the family system. A problem drinker's emotions and behavior are not easy to predict. To compensate, family members often adopt rigid behavioral roles in order to bring stability to the chaos. Young adults bring these roles along with them into the dorm, the classroom, and the college environment.

John Baltzer, an addictions counselor at Millersville University, shares that there are three unspoken rules in an alcoholic family that contribute to the academic and social difficulties experienced by adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs) in the college setting. The first is the "No Talk Rule". "We don't air our dirty linens in public." Many students have never discussed their experiences before. Some have been fortunate enough to have a confidante who could listen and validate but who didn't know how to help them to detach. The second rule is the "Don't Feel Rule" which makes it impossible to express all but the sanctioned feelings in an alcoholic family. Some students come from families where it's not OK to express any emotions. The third rule is the "Don't Trust Rule". Most ACOAs learn that trust will be violated and sometimes the consequences for putting faith in an alcoholic and codependent family has caused deep, life-altering scars. Collectively, these rules are the backbone of the "crazy making" beliefs and controlling behaviors that dominate the lives of ACOAs.

But there is much help and support available. As John Baltzer shares, "ACOAs need to reach out to those who understand and can help. Once we enter treat-



ment and/or an ACOA group and express ourselves, we begin to break free of the confines of the rules of our alcoholic family, and a new world opens up. It is a scary world at first. There is a painful transition just like other big changes that improve our lot in life. But the diligent will discover there exists a world where we are free to feel what we feel, think what we think. We learn how to connect with healthy and loving people. We see clearly that we are not victims but have great personal power. We take responsibility for our lives. Choices open up that we couldn't see and that we have never imagined. We discover new ways of living where there is less stress, and we use less energy to accomplish more. The constant feeling of toxic shame we experienced is replaced with an accurate sense of our authentic self and of what is important. We experience deep abiding gratitude. We get our life back."

Many thanks to John Baltzer, CAC, for his help and contributions to this article. John is a certified addictions counselor who joined the MU Faculty in 2005 as an Alcohol and Other Drug Counselor and Instructor.

**Do you know a young adult who is experiencing problems because of addiction in the family?
Help is available!**

- Call Al-Anon/Alateen/ACOA at 1-877-298-5027
- Call Compass Mark at (717) 299-2831 or visit their website at www.compassmark.org.



Meeting the Needs of OIF/OEF Veterans

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thing while they are away. When the soldier comes home, he thinks he/she can just pick up their previous roles, but the roles have shifted, and they don't know it. The spouse expects that they are getting the same person home...and they don't. That leaves space for a lot of issues.”

What resources are available for veterans and their families? Family Readiness Groups provide much needed support in some communities, but they are not available everywhere. Keitha also shares the following list of resources for veterans and their families:

- **Returning service members:**
<http://www.oefoif.va.gov>
- **Veteran self help site:**
<http://www.militarymentalhealth>
- **Veteran /family/ community assistance:**
<http://careforthetroops.com>
- **Veterans in crisis:**
<http://veteranscrisisline.net>
- **National PTSD Website:**
<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/index.asp>



Coming in January 2012: Lancaster County Veterans Court



Lancaster County’s Veterans Court is a treatment court based on proven national research and program models of Drug Courts, as well as successfully implemented Veterans Courts in jurisdictions nationwide. This provides the participant an opportunity to pursue appropriate treatment, while productively addressing associated legal problems.

The Lancaster County Veterans court is open to any current or former member of any branch of the military, including the Reserves and National Guard. Referrals will be accepted after criminal charges have been filed and the case has been forwarded to the Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas for further disposition. Any felony or misdemeanor charge will be considered, with the exception of homicide or Megan’s Law charges. Referrals will also be accepted for criminal defendants who are before the Court of Common Pleas for alleged violations of existing probation/parole sentences, or as a condition of an Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD).

Participation in Veterans Court is voluntary. Informed consent will be obtained for evaluation and consideration by the Court Team and again at the point of acceptance into Veteran’s Court. The Lancaster County Veterans Court has two possible tracks: 1) predisposition/ARD or 2) post sentence/probation violation.

For participants whose cases are either predisposition or ARD, sentencing will be deferred pending completion of the Veterans Court program. Upon successful completion of the Veterans Court program, including payments of fines, costs, and restitution, the participant’s charges may be reduced, dismissed, or the District Attorney’s Office will seek to expunge the pertinent charges as previously agreed, subject to Court approval.

For participants who are post-sentence/probation violation, successful completion of Veterans Court may result in the reduction or termination of any remaining supervision; however these records cannot be expunged.

Once accepted, program participants can initially expect weekly contact with the Veterans Court Judge, and frequent contact from their probation officer, treatment providers, Veterans Justice Outreach worker, and the Veterans Court team. Participants will proceed through three phases of engagement, with no minimum or maximum required time commitment; the content and duration of Veterans Court will be determined on an individual basis.

Accepted participants will be assigned a Veteran Mentor. Veteran Mentors are veterans of the armed ser-

Problem Gambling Initiative

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these sessions free of charge for area schools. These programs have been very well received in the past and meet the state standards for drug and alcohol education.

Presentations to Retirement Communities and Health Fairs

Compass Mark will present information and activities at health fairs as well as provide presentations about gambling to residents of retirement communities.

Presentations to Key Points of Intervention

Coaches, Parents, Employers, Probation Officers Student Assistant Program (SAP), Clergy etc...

Compass Mark will provide a dynamic speaker for presentations that range from general awareness to full training in screening and referral to treatment.

Workplace Presentations

A survey of Gamblers Anonymous members found that 44% had stolen or embezzled funds from their employers to support their gambling addictions. Compass Mark will provide engaging workplace presentations about the risks, warning signs and treatment for gambling.

Speakers for Community Organizations and Service Clubs

Compass Mark will provide informative presentations for service clubs, agencies and other community organizations that would like to learn more about the issue of gambling.

At this point, there are no outpatient programs certified to treat problem gambling. For this reason we are looking into sponsoring certification training in the area. If you are a therapist interested in becoming certified in this field, please contact me for more details.

Our goal at Compass Mark is “to meet you where you are and help you reach your new destination.” Can we help you with this gambling grant? You bet ya!!

Many of these programs can be offered at no cost to your school or organization. If you are interested in any of these programs, have any questions or have ideas or information to share, please contact Jean Gerdes at jgerdes@compassmark.org or 717-299-2831.

Veterans Court

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vices who volunteer their time to assist participants in the Court. Veteran Mentors are part of the Court’s team and provide advice, personal experiences, recommendations and guidance to veterans involved with the legal system.

While in court, a Mentor will be assigned to a veteran participant (offender) and discusses any ongoing problems or issues of interest to the participant. They work to problem-solve existing issues and bring to the attention of the Court any issues that the Court can assist in resolving. This relationship promotes and fosters, through encouragement, a “can do” attitude in the participant; the participant becomes motivated to accomplish his or her goals in treatment, feels that he or she is not alone, and knows that the Mentor and the Court are there for them. Accepted participants will also be expected to participate in and complete numerous pro-social, treatment-oriented activities based on an individualized treatment plan. Typically, these may include but are not limited to: meetings with Veteran Mentors, AA/NA Meetings (or approved alternatives), group and individual therapy, medication management/psychiatrist appointments, regular appointment with a Veterans Justice Outreach worker, weekly court appearances, community service, probation appointments, and random drug testing.

A participant can expect to receive a sanction if they violate the Veterans Court Program rules or fail to achieve certain Phase requirements. Sanctions may include: essays, loss of incentives, demotion in phase, fines, curfew restrictions, incarceration, and termination from the Veteran’s Court Program. If the participant maintains purposeful and positive participation in the Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas Veterans Court, the participant may receive appropriate incentives as well. These incentives will be determined by the Veteran’s Court Team and specific rewards will depend on available resources.

Veterans Court is scheduled to begin on January 19, 2012 in Court Room 5 at 1:30 PM. For more information, contact Nevin Warner, Coordinator of Drug and Veterans Courts, Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas, at (717) 735-1580.

Many thanks to Nevin Warner for his contribution to this article!

Lancaster County Drug and Alcohol Commission
150 N. Queen St.
Lancaster, PA 17603
(717) 299-8023

Fact Sheet:
MIXING ALCOHOL AND ENERGY DRINKS

Mixing alcohol and energy drinks is a trendy practice that can have dangerous consequences. This fad is particularly popular among high school and college students who see it as a way to stay up later and enjoy more party time. While combining the feeling of intoxication with energy appears to be a recipe for fun, in reality, it is more often a recipe for disaster.

“Energy drinks” are so named because they contain high amounts of caffeine and other stimulants like guarana and ginseng. They often contain large amounts of sugar as well, to cover the naturally bitter taste of the stimulants. They are sometimes marketed as health or sports drinks. Popular combinations include vodka mixed with Red Bull, Full Throttle, or Rockstar. There are also premixed energy/alcohol malt beverages, such as Sparks, Tilt, and Joose. Although these are not sold in Pennsylvania stores, they may be purchased in other states and brought to parties here.



Why is mixing alcohol and energy drinks dangerous? People who mix these drinks tend to drink more and stay out later. This means their BAC (blood alcohol content) will be higher when they leave the party or bar. According to a study published in *Addictive Behaviors* journal, those who combined alcohol and energy drinks were more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as drinking and driving and unplanned sex.

Doesn't caffeine counteract the effects of alcohol? Only in the movies. In reality, it has no benefit. In fact, it may aggravate intoxication, according to researcher Bruce Goldberger, director of toxicology at the University of Florida. Caffeine reduces drowsiness, which makes drinkers think they are less drunk than they really are. While the drinker thinks that he or she is sober enough to drive, motor skills, depth perception, and reaction time are still highly impaired.

Are there any other negative consequences? Yes, these drinks really pack on the calories. A serving of Full Throttle mixed with a jigger of vodka contains about 320 calories. That is equivalent to an extra sandwich or dessert!

Stay safe and be a good friend! If you know someone who needs help, call Compass Mark at (717) 299-2831. Visit www.compassmark.org.

LANCASTER COUNTY
DRUG AND ALCOHOL COMMISSION
150 N. QUEEN ST.
LANCASTER, PA 17603

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

LOOKING FOR OUR OFFICE?

We are located at 150 N. Queen St.,
Lancaster, on the fourth floor.

For the most updated and
comprehensive list of local D&A trainings
and events, please visit
www.compassmark.org.

Don't forget to check out the
interactive calendar! It helps you search for
the workshops and events that interest you!

Treatment Service Provider Meetings

Meetings will be held: March 6, May 8, September 11, and
December 4, 2012. Meetings are generally held at 3:00
PM at 150 N. Queen St. in the 5th floor conference room.
Call (717) 299-8023 to confirm details.

For more information about events, contact the
D&A Commission at (717) 299-8023.

The D&A Commission will be closed for the following County holidays:

January 2, 16; February 20; April 6; May 28;
July 4; September 3; October 8;
November 12, 22, 23; December 25, 2012.

Single County Authority (SCA) Meetings

Meetings will be held January 23, March 26,
April 23, May 21, July 23, September 24,
and November 19, 2012.

Meetings are generally held at 6:00 PM
at 150 N. Queen St., Lancaster.

To confirm meeting times and locations, call
(717) 299-8023.

For emergency and weather-related closings
and delays of Lancaster County offices,
please tune in to local radio stations or watch
WGAL-TV8. Emergency closings are also an-
nounced on the Lancaster County website at
www.co.lancaster.pa.us.