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Editor:
Cheyenne Carter

President's Message

I'm writing this the day after I returned from the ACA Institute for Leadership Training in Alexandria. As I met with ACA leaders from around the country, I was reminded of a saying we had in the Air Force – "if you want something done, give it to the person that is busy (you don't have to overcome inertia)." As I look at those who have stepped up to leadership within MGCA, I see the same principle in play. We are all busy folks.

The new division name was very well received by everyone I talked to – among ACA and on Capitol Hill. It was nice to not have to explain the purpose of the division as I discussed Veteran issues with legislative staff. I've include an Action Alert in the newsletter and urge you to follow through and contact your Senators and Representative – simply follow the link and the ACA Government Affairs has it all ready for your use. Of course, this highlights that I'm still looking for someone to take on the Chair of a Public Policy and Legislation Committee. (Remember, the busy fellow?)

The new name has already brought an increase in membership, which I know will only increase. I believe there are great things on the horizon and I'm encouraged by what lies ahead. However, we need membership to become involved in leadership. I encourage you to volunteer – no matter how small the position or the task. As I start this year of my presidency, I will feel I have accomplished much if I leave more people moving into leadership than I found coming in.



Ben Noah, PhD
President
2015-2016

-Ben Noah

President-Elect's Message



Judy Mathewson
President-Elect
2015-2016

Communities Can Make a Difference for our Veterans of All Eras

How do we help identify the small things our clients need from a counseling and humanistic perspective? With the Veteran population, it seems that we sometimes don't realize how important that "personal touch" and help truly is!

My experience with Veterans has been one of asking, "How may I help you?" It's much more than "customer service"- it is showing that you care.

Recently, a 77 year old Veteran died - alone - in his apartment in a large city. He was estranged from his daughter, who identified his body at the Medical Examiner's Office, but no family member chose to attend a funeral or burial for his body. Yet he still deserved a Veteran's send off. After his years of service in both the Navy and Army, my community did just that - -made sure that this Veteran had a crowd to honor him at the National Cemetery. Our Chaplain did the honors and mentioned that because the Veteran had served our country, he deserved the recognition by our community and the Nation. Over 200 people lined the streets and attended the funeral, holding high their US flag. Local Veteran groups guided the funeral hearse to the graveside service; an Army Honor Guard detailed for this unknown Veteran performed the 21-gun salute and presented the flag to the funeral home director.

Every Veteran deserves a thank you at some time during or after their service to our country. For our unknown Soldier, the community came together to wish him "Fair winds and following seas" and a job well done. May we, as counselors, treat every Veteran with the dignity and respect they have earned. They have paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

-Judy



What is Military OneSource?

How can military members benefit from its services?

By Judith Mathewson, MGCA President Elect

Recently, a First Sergeant whom I know well told me about the struggle he was having with his teenage son, and additionally, how he was becoming stressed due to an upcoming deployment. After listening closely, it appeared to me that as a concerned friend, he needed help and support due to his situation. His own health was deteriorating, and he felt out of control in his civilian job, military duties, and as a parent.

I suggested Military One Source non-medical counseling and gave him the number (800-342-9647). He was able to locate a counselor in his local area and realized that it was the healthiest move he had made in a very long time. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Military One Source, a counselor from the local community can be called through the MOS system and the service member can determine (with 12 visits per issue) if it is a good fit for them and is helpful in resolving short-term problems in the service member's life. Military One Source non-medical counseling does NOT encompass ANY substance abuse treatment, services related to Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, Traumatic Brain Injury, nor any mental disorder identified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

All of the above issues are referred to the appropriate medical treatment facility on the service member's installation, TRICARE, the Department of Veterans Affairs or Vet Center, or community mental health provider. Appropriate issues for non-medical, short-term, solution-focused problem solving services include, but are not limited to, subclinical issues such as:

- *Relationships; parenting or communication issues*
- *Relocation*
- *Academic and occupational problems,*
- *Anger management,*
- *Grief*
- *Stress*
- *Adjustment*
- *Deployment*
- *Reintegration*
- *Separation*
- *Phase of life*
- *Decision-making*
- *Life skills*
- *Coping skills*
- *Interpersonal skills*

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Military OneSource (cont.)

The following types of non-medical counseling support are available on or off military installations:

Face-to-face:

A traditional 50-minute non-medical counseling session in an office setting with a Military OneSource provider located in the community within 30 minutes of the client

By military and family life counselors on assignments on military installations up to 180 days (duration of sessions varies greatly depending upon the need of the participant); access counselors at the following locations:

At military and family support centers, child and youth programs, schools and youth summer programs

Embedded within military units

Surge non-medical counseling support for up to 90 days for units returning from combat

On-demand support for up to three days for the National Guard and Reserve Components to support pre-deployment, deployment and reintegration events for service members and their families

Throughout the community

Telephonic and online:

A traditional 50-minute non-medical counseling session available telephonically or online with a Military OneSource counselor

Counselors possess a master's or doctorate degree in a mental health field and are licensed or certified in a state, territory or the District of Columbia to practice independently.

Counselors are mandated reporters of situations that include harm to self or others, domestic abuse, child abuse or neglect, violence against any person and any present or future illegal activity.

Eligibility

Confidential non-medical counseling sessions are available at no cost to active-duty service members, National Guard and reserve service members (regardless of their activation status) and their family members through Military OneSource and the Military and Family Life Counselor Program worldwide. Department of Defense civilian personnel designated as civilian expeditionary workforce members and their families are also eligible for Military OneSource and MFLC counseling.

This experience does have a happy ending. The teenage son sees a difference in his father – and chose to attend counseling, as well. Dad is much more confident that his stressors won't overcome him and he is learning resilience strategies to survive and thrive. And it is located very close to home for very convenient, face-to-face support.

Call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 or go online to:
www.militaryonesource.mil for more information about resources, non-medical counseling services, and how to sign up to become a provider for Military One Source.

Past President's Message

Hello All,

Well, it has happened, our good and trusted friend, ACEG, has tipped his hat, bid fond farewells, and drifted off into history, making way for our new, and much anticipated friend, MGCA! As of July 1, 2015, we are the Military and Government Counseling Association. After many years of discussions, we took the bold steps to change our name to more aptly fit with our roles as counselors connected with the Military and keeping our Government ties. Congratulations to us all! This past year has been exciting and challenging. We have moved forward with many new processes, a new name, new by-laws, a new Student Representative position, and there is still much more ahead. Wishing all the best to our new President, Ben Noah! I will be lending any assistance he may need, in addition to our new President Elect, Judith Mathewson.

One of the projects that is still in the planning stages is MGCA's ability to produce and offer Webinars with CEUs free to all our members. We have the plan but are desperately in need of a Web Master to head this much needed project. If any of our members would like to find out more information about this project, or are interested in being our Web Master, please contact me, anytime, at lynnameadows1@gmail.com. We will welcome you with open arms and much appreciation.

Did You Know?

Recently, at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, in Huntsville, Alabama, sponsors and volunteers held an "Honor Walk". The event incorporated a labyrinth walk under the Pathfinder Space Shuttle, in which participants entered the labyrinth and picked up stones on their walk, releasing them in the center of the 60x60 structure. Some participants carried names of loved ones to remember and music was provided by local musicians. It is an individual concept of letting go of the pain of experiences in the military such as PTSD. The labyrinth is a simple path leading in a circular fashion to a center and then back out again, as a symbol of relieving a burden.

Participants could also honor service members, first responders and veterans, and was done to raise awareness and serve as a springboard for local citizens to "pay it forward". Several local chaplains were available to support the walkers through the emotional event. Although this was the first year, there are plans for this to become an annual commemoration event at the Space & Rocket Center. Still Serving Veterans was a major sponsor of the event.

This is something that each of you, if interested, could organize in your community. There is an organization that will help you with the laying out and production of a labyrinth for your event. You can get more information at the following website: <http://www.turningpointconsultants.com/>

Hope you are having a great summer, and hopefully are taking some well-deserved time out to renew and refresh yourselves. After all, as you know, counseling is not for the faint of heart! Take care of yourself first, so that you will be able to take care of others!
Looking forward to another fabulous year with MGCA!!



Lynna Meadows Morton,
MS, SLPC, NCC

-Lynna

Congressional Action Alert

Get out of the way VA! Hire Counselors now!

In 2006, Congress empowered the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to hire Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) to work in the Veterans Health Administration. Despite that law being in effect for seven years, LPCs still only make up less than one percent of the VA's total mental health workforce.

The barriers that LPCs face are the result of self-imposed VA restrictions, which impede the hiring of counselors. For instance, counselors are not integrated into a VA training program for health professionals. The VA has not called on the Office of Personnel and Management (OPM) to create what is known in the federal government as an "occupational series." This means that agencies (in this case the VA) cannot and will not create job announcements because there is no position description. If an LPC does get hired, they may end up being placed into a sub-clinical position, which means they can't actually counsel the veterans who need help.

The VA needs to be held accountable for their actions and they need to act NOW. By their own estimates, our nation loses 18 veterans a day to suicide. How many of those veterans died without receiving the care they needed and deserved? How many veterans will we lose before the VA decides to act?

Congress must exercise its oversight authority and force the VA to act!

Contact your folks on Capitol Hill. A sample email to your Senators and Representative:

<https://www.votervoice.net/COUNSELING/Campaigns/36622/Respond>

Next Generation Conversations...

A column for MCGA Grad Students

It's that time of year again. With the upcoming school year upon us, the hustle and bustle is about to begin. But how do we go about the heavy demands of our daily life along with all of the coursework? The key is to find the balance that works for you. "Excellence is not an act, but a habit" – Aristotle.

Time management! I find it particularly helpful to use some sort of calendar system. As soon as the syllabi touch my hands, I write down important information in an academic planner to include readings for the week, assignment due dates, project preparation, the list goes on and on. It is useful to set aside a certain amount of time each day where you can focus on schoolwork. This could typically be after the work day and after the kids are in bed!

To-Do Lists. I swear by these! I have my daily lists, weekly lists, monthly lists, etc. The important thing to remember is to not overload your lists or you may become overwhelmed. These can be very helpful not only for school, but in other aspects of every day life. With the fast paced world that we live in (and the uncertainty of life in the military!) it can be easy to forget something you wanted to accomplish that day. It may also be helpful to rank these items in order of importance, and then start at the top. That way if something nonessential does not get accomplished, it can be moved to the next day.

Be flexible. Life happens. Maybe you had to work late, or your kids put off going to bed an extra hour. I tend to build an extra hour into my schedule to make up for the unexpected, which is usually bound to happen.

Have a separate work space. I am lucky enough to have an office in my house where I can work on my school work. It is in the back corner of my house and is [mostly] free from any distractions. Have you ever tried to sit on a couch to do homework? I bet your eyes divert to the TV more than once. How about sitting on a bed? I've tried that and woke up several hours later with my book in my lap and not a single page turned. Minimizing anything you know will distract you will help to focus on your to-do list in the most time-effective manner.

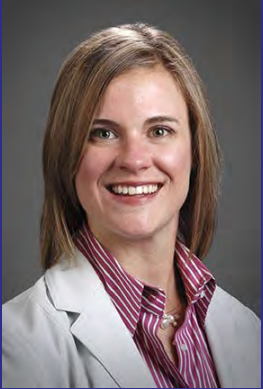
Self-Care. I cannot stress the importance of this enough. If you are tired, malnourished, stressed, it will impact every area of your life. Make sure you build some time into your schedule to also take care of yourself. Hit the gym, do some gardening, go shopping, get a massage, whatever helps you relax.

Wishing everyone a fabulous school year! Semper Fi.

Andrea Sloan, Grad Student Representative

Meet Your New Editor!

Leigh Green, PhD has been with MGCA since Sharon Guild-Stitt recruited her at the American Counseling Association Annual Conference in San Francisco. She's volunteered to become the new editor of the newsletter after serving as a ACEG Board member. She brings a growing knowledge and passion on the subject of veteran and military support.



Leigh Green, PhD

Tell us a little about yourself.

I've been an assistant professor at West Texas A&M since 2012. I graduated from Texas Tech University with my PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision in 2012. I received my MEd from Texas Tech University in Counselor Education, my MEd from Middle Tennessee State University in Higher Education Administration, and my BS from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in Sport Management. I am a licensed professional counselor in Texas and a national certified counselor with NBCC. I teach many of the counseling courses at WTAMU and have contributed with publications and presentations on the topics of veterans transitioning to college, veterans and career decision making, veterans and family dynamics, and veterans and TBI. I live in Lubbock with my partner, Wade, our daughter Ali, and our three dogs.

What is your background with veterans?

My family has a long tradition in the military. My husband is an Iraq (OIF) Army veteran, my father is a Vietnam Army veteran, and most of the rest of my immediate and extended family have either served directly or as a family member or spouse. My interest in the military has spanned the course of my life. I started researching veterans as part of my dissertation process and have continued ever since. I had the opportunity to work with veteran's and their spouses at a Vet Center in Lubbock, Texas.

Tell us about your passion for veterans.

Since the two most important men in my life are veterans of the Army, I have the greatest respect for their service and sacrifice for me and our country. Each of them experienced a different tour of duty and homecoming but the lessons of support, compassion, and grace are central themes to their successful transition. It's that concept that brings me to know that it 'takes a village' of support for everyone involved in our culture. My research and work are a small token of my appreciation for their service.

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How do you see the newsletter evolving in your tenure?

I want to continue the traditions of sharing the most up to date information about MCGA and the world of our members. In the spirit of 'it takes a village', I want to encourage each member of MCGA to share their experiences and insight working with veterans, military, and families. I find it one of my greatest gifts to share the stories and provide information and resources for all.

What types of articles are you looking for in upcoming issues?

My first edition of the newsletter will be Fall 2015 to be published late November. November is Military Family Appreciation Month, so I would like to highlight articles surrounding military and veteran families. If you work with military or veteran families, or want to share a personal story, I encourage you to submit your article for publication. Articles are due by October 2nd for Fall 2015 publication.

Any closing thoughts?

I am honored to be a part of MGCA as the newsletter editor. Having served on the Board, I am constantly amazed with the dedication of the leadership and members to enhance our understanding and increase advocacy for the military, veteran, families, and supporters.

ACEG Newsletter Fall Edition Deadline

Oct 2

Please contribute to your newsletter!

Email articles to Leigh Green

legreen@mail.wtamu.edu

The purpose of MCGA is to encourage and deliver meaningful guidance, counseling, and educational programs to all members of the Armed Services, their family members, and civilian employees of State and Federal Governmental Agencies. Encourage development of professional monographs and convention/conference presentations by any of these agencies. Develop and promote the highest standards of professional conduct among counselors and educators working with Armed Services personnel and veterans. Establish, promote, and maintain improved communication with the nonmilitary community; and conduct and foster programs to enhance individual human development and increase recognition of humanistic values and goals within State and Federal Agencies.

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2014-2015 Executive Committee

President – Ben Noah

Benjamin.noah@capella.edu

President Elect– Judy Mathewson

judith.mathewson@ang.af.mil

Immediate Past President – Lynna Meadows
Morton

lynnameadowsmorton@comcast.net

Secretary – Jennifer Sztalkoper

innocencelost7@hotmail.com

Treasurer – Linda Parker

Linda.Parker4@va.gov

Governing Council Representative – Sharon

Guild-Stitt sseesl@msn.com

Grad Student Representative– Andrea Sloan

adsloan10@gmail.com

Parliamentarian – Miles Sakaguchi

miles.t.sakaguchi.civ@mail.mil

Directors

Grey Edwards grey.edwards@us.army.mil

Tracy Luoma tluoma7@msn.com

Tom Watson tiwatson@argosy.edu

Michael Keim mkeim@westga.edu

Eric Price EricPrice@my.unt.edu

Tammy Romines
tromines@westsideschools.org

Kevin Vance kevance@bresnan.net

Reneé Foyou renee.foyou@gmail.com