

# TRECK/KAHBH Fall 2006 Newsletter

TRECK & KAHBH  
Teams

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## Primary and Secondary Traumatic Stress in Couples

The current TRECK research study seeks to obtain an empirical understanding of the systemic effects of traumatic events on adult interpersonal relationships. Trauma research traditionally has focused on how traumatic events impact the individual trauma victim. Literature on the long-term couple and family system effects in adults previously exposed to traumatic events has been limited. This study fits the School of Family Studies and Human Services Targeted Excellence Area, "Strengthening Individuals, Families, and Communities: Systemic Trauma and Family Crises," and seeks to expand the empirical work on trauma in

couples. In addition, this research project provides a unique educational and research opportunity by including both graduate and undergraduate students in the Trauma Research, Education, and Consultation at K-State (TRECK) Team, who are actively involved in learning and conducting the research methodology.



## The current research project consists of 3 phases

Some of you may have been around for the beginning phases of this project or for those who haven't been involved for a while, here is a recap:

Phase 1: Beginning in June 2002, this phase focused on the secondary effects of trauma in couples where one or both partners had been exposed to a previous traumatic event. Qualitative and quantitative data have been collected and analyzed for 14 couples through the KSU Family Center and other community contacts. Qualitative analysis was completed in January 2005 and three manuscripts resulted from this data.

Phase 2: Beginning in August 2004, Phase 2 specifically includes 50 military

couples from Ft. Riley, Ft. Leavenworth, and around Kansas to understand how their recent deployments in Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF) are affecting soldiers, their partners, and their couple relationship. This phase will provide an additional demographic facing important current trauma-related issues in the country. To increase recruitment, grant funding was received specifically for participant incentives. Data collection ended in September 2005, with a total of 50 participant couples.

Phase 3 description located on page 2...

Lizette Vargas has devoted a tremendous amount of time to both the TRECK and KAHBH programs over the past year and a half. Between TRECK transcription, putting together KAHBH trainings, and many other tasks, she has contributed over 400 hours! Thank you Liz!

*"At first I didn't know what to expect from KAHBH and TRECK. I was a little nervous about being on two teams that dealt with such important issues. Once I settled in, I realized I could be a valuable part of both teams. I've grown so much in the last year and a half, just by simply being in TRECK and KAHBH. I love working with these people and love coming to work every-day. I can't think of anything I'd rather be doing."*

- Lizette

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## TRECK Alumni Updates:

- Tiffany Wine—currently at Wichita State getting her M.Ed. in Counseling and is a GRA.
- Ryan McElhaney—currently a Youth Prevention Specialist at Tri-County Mental Health Services in KC, MO
- Erin Brandenburg—has applied to the Peace Corps and is living and working in Manhattan.
- Doug Smith—completed his dissertation and doctorate in June. He is also working at Antioch University New England in their MFT Program.
- Una Henry—is a first year Master's student at Syracuse in MFT.
- Ryan Peterson—recently began working at the University of Central Missouri (formerly Central Missouri State) in Warrensburg, MO and is completing his dissertation work for his PhD from the University of Georgia.
- Kami Schwerdtfeger— is completing her internship and dissertation at Texas Tech University and plans to graduate in May '07.
- Stacey Blalock-Henry— started her PhD internship and supervision at Pine Grove back home in Mississippi, where she moved with her husband in May.

## Phase 3 of the current TRECK project

Phase 3 began in early 2006 when the data collection was changed to a web-based survey method. The same instruments and some of the key qualitative questions are included in this survey. The survey has been advertised through a national website to obtain a broader, more diverse sample of soldiers from across the US.

We are currently in the process of applying for grants to fund this phase. We have submitted an application to the Kansas Health Foundation for a Recognition Grant for \$25,000.

The current proposal involves the development of two components:

1) Providing 4 one-day workshops around Kansas to approximately 120 returning OIF/OEF Kansas Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers and their spouses.

2) Online TRECK research data collection with the approximately 120 participating soldiers and their spouses.

According to the Kansas Adjutant General's Department Annual Report 2005, "approximately 2,200 Kansas National Guard soldiers and airmen were working around the world for operations connected with the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Of that number, approximately 950 soldiers and 620 airmen deployed in 2005 for duty with OIF, OEF, and other U.S. military efforts at home and abroad." The Kansas National Guard currently has 1,380 Soldiers deployed for the GWOT. The proposed project will include data collection with 120 returning Kansas Army Reserve and National Guard (AR/NG) soldiers and their spouses. The same protocol will be followed as in the

previous two phases of the TRECK research to provide an additional database for comparison. However, the previous phase consisted predominately of active duty soldiers. Based on the limited AR/NG data that was collected, it became clear that it is necessary to identify the ways AR/NG soldiers are most impacted by their war experiences and what resources may be most beneficial in their return home. This research data will be collected through an online survey system, which has been approved by the KSU IRB and is currently operating.

The proposed program also will provide an educational program focused on the prevention of traumatic stress, substance abuse, and other psychiatric symptoms, stress management and health related problems, relationship problems, and other issues facing returning Kansas soldiers.



*"The Kansas National Guard currently has 1,380 Soldiers deployed for the Global War On Terrorism."*

Trauma Research, Education, & Consultation at K-State (TRECK) Team  
1998—present

Total number involved since 1998: **88**

Current team members:  
**approximately 15 undergraduate and graduate students.**

Total UGRA Combined Hours Since January 2005:  
**1500+**

*I owe a big thanks to Dr. Briana Nelson Goff, as well as the rest of the TRECK team, for allowing me the opportunity to have been involved with such an extraordinary research group. I have told the TRECK story numerous times to professors, graduate students, and other faculty here at WSU who always ask, "What is TRECK?" and always end with, "WOW!"*

- Tiffany Wine

## TRECK Undergraduate Research Assistants

The TRECK Team primarily uses Undergraduate Research Assistants (UGRAs) to help with the project. The UGRAs main duties include transcribing and proofing qualitative interviews, analysis of qualitative data, and assisting with the write-up process for publication submission. Overall, they have transcribed and proofed approximately 100 transcripts (50 couples, 1 interview / partner). The average transcript is 10—20 pages and involves numerous hours for transcription.

Several of the UGRAs are

involved with TRECK through the Developing Scholars Program, the BRIDGES program, the College of Human Ecology Honors Program, or as an independent study class through FSHS 300. The remaining assistants come to TRECK as volunteers looking for research experience.

Phase 2 of the current TRECK project was divided into 2 data analysis teams led by upper level graduate students: The Traumatizers led by Stacey Blalock-Henry and one led by Stacy Hamilton. The Traumatizers have been identifying couples with high

PTSD scores and low Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) scores and identifying couples with low PTSD and high adjustment, then comparing the groups. The Traumatizers have been looking at PTSD symptoms and Dyadic Adjustment as they relate to military deployment trauma. They are currently in the final phases of qualitative analysis. The Traumatizers' final data analysis will be part of Stacey's dissertation, an Honor's Project, and a Developing Scholars Program Project.

Stacy Hamilton's team has

been focused on the reported individual symptoms of deployment (depression, PTSD, and anxiety) and the ways in which they intersect with specific measures of trauma and couple functioning. Her team is using the codes identified in Phase 1 research, and is focused on the individual symptoms described by soldiers and their partners in their individual interviews. This team's analysis will be part of Stacy's masters thesis.

## TRECK Team Member Articles

- Nelson Goff, B. S., Peterson, F. R., Berg, N., Williams, T., & Clark, C. (2006). The single trauma couple: A case review and description of trauma in clinical practice. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*, 5, 59-77.
- Nelson Goff, B. S., Reisbig, A. M. J., Bole, A., Scheer, T., Hayes, E., Archuleta, K. L., Henry, S. B., Hoheisel, C. B., Nye, B., Osby, J., Sanders, E., Schwerdtfeger, K. L., & Smith, D. B. (in press). The effects of trauma on interpersonal functioning: A clinical research study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*.
- Schwerdtfeger, K. L., & Nelson Goff, B. S. (in press). The intergenerational transmission of trauma: Exploring mother- infant prenatal attachment. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*.



## TRECK Team Articles In-Progress or Submitted for Publication

- Nelson Goff, B. S., Crow, J. R., Reisbig, A. M. J., Hamilton, S., & Walker, A. B. (2006). *The impact of individual trauma symptoms of OIF/OEF soldiers on relationship satisfaction*. Manuscript submitted for publication to the *Journal of Family Psychology* (Revise and resubmit).
- Nelson Goff, B. S., Crow, J. R., Reisbig, A. M. J., & Hamilton, S. (2006). *The impact of soldiers' deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan: Secondary traumatic stress in female partners*. Manuscript submitted for publication to the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*.
- Schwerdtfeger, K. L., Osby-Williams, J., Hoheisel, C. B., Nye, B., Nelson Goff, B. S., Reisbig, A. M. J., Archuleta, K., Henry, S. B., Bole, A., Hayes, E., Sanders, E., Scheer, T., & Smith, D. B. (2006). *Individual symptoms reported by trauma survivors and their partners: A clinical research study*. Manuscript submitted for publication to the *American Journal of Family Therapy*.
- Smith, D. B., Henry, S. B., Archuleta, K., Sanders, E., Nelson Goff, B. S., Reisbig, A. M. J., Bole, A., Hayes, E., Hoheisel, C. B., Nye, B., Osby-Williams, J., Scheer, T., & Schwerdtfeger, K. L. (in process). *Trauma and couples: Mechanisms in dyadic functioning*.
- Hamilton, S., Nelson Goff, B. S., Crow, J. R., Reisbig, A. M. J. (in process). *The impact of previous trauma history and trauma symptoms in the female partners of OIF/OEF soldiers on relationship satisfaction*.



## Recent TRECK Team Member Presentations

- Nelson Goff, B. S., Osby-Williams, J., Schwerdtfeger, K. L., Hoheisel, C. B., Nye, B., Reisbig, A. M. J., Archuleta, K., Henry, S. B., Bole, A., Hayes, E., Sanders, E., Scheer, T., & Smith, D. B. (2005, November). *Systemic Traumatic Stress: Primary and Secondary Trauma in Couples*. Poster presented at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS), Toronto, Canada.
- Nelson Goff, B. S., Crow, J., Reisbig, A. M. J., Hamilton, S., Schwerdtfeger, K. L., Smith, D. B., Archuleta, K., Henry, S. B., Osby-Williams, J., Hayes, E., Hoheisel, C. B., & Sanders, E. (2005, October). *Trauma in military couple relational systems*. Poster presented at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Kansas City, MO.
- Nelson Goff, B. S., Smith, D. B., Henry, S. B., & Schwerdtfeger, K. L. (2005, October). *Systemic traumatology: Skills and implications for MFTs*. Workshop presented at AAMFT, Kansas City, MO.
- Schwerdtfeger, K. L., & Nelson Goff, B. S. (2005, October). *Exploring trauma and maternal prenatal attachment*. Poster presented at AAMFT, Kansas City, MO.

TRECK has published 5 articles, 5 articles are in-progress or submitted and 17 presentations have resulted from the TRECK Team

## TRECK & KAHBH Teams

School of Family Studies & Human Services  
College of Human Ecology  
Kansas State University  
243 Campus Creek Complex  
Manhattan, KS 66506

Email: [treck@ksu.edu](mailto:treck@ksu.edu)

Trauma Research, Education, &  
Consultation at K-State

[www.ksu.edu/  
treck](http://www.ksu.edu/treck)

Kansas All-Hazards Behavioral  
Health Program

[www.ksu.edu/  
kahbh](http://www.ksu.edu/kahbh)

## A Message from Briana Nelson Goff

Hi everyone! I am still the faculty coordinator for the TRECK Program. This year, I am continuing half-time as Interim Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Human Ecology, with the other half of my time devoted to the KAHBH and TRECK Projects and to serving as major professor and on committees of graduate students. However, in February, I'll be starting a new full-time job... as "Mom." I'm not sure how I will balance it all, but I'm looking forward to having a 5th Generation K-Stater!

Thanks to all the students who have contributed to making TRECK and KAHBH great programs!!

## A Message from Erin Sanders-Hahs

Hi, I am currently Briana's GRA for TRECK but have been involved with the program since the summer of '04. I graduated from KSU in psychology in '04 and am now a second-year Master's Student in Marriage and Family Therapy here at K-State.

I would just like to say congratulations to all of our alums who have gone on to success and happiness. It has been a great pleasure to create this newsletter for all of you, former and current TRECK and KAHBH volunteers alike. With each round of recruits, these programs will grow stronger and continue to thrive.

I would like to give Briana a special thanks for creating two creative, supportive, and important programs and allowing us all to take part. **Thank you, Briana.**

And thank you all for reading. Happy TRECK-ing and KAHBH-ing wherever you are.

## Kansas All-Hazard Behavioral Health Program

With a history of natural disasters and the events of 9/11, the U.S. government has urged states to develop programs designed to help people cope and manage their emotional and psychological health in times of crisis. When many people think of a disaster occurring, they may think "how will we get our homes back?" "what just happened?" "who isn't here?" and "when will things get back to normal?!" But disasters also have a deep impact on people's behavioral health as well.

The KAHBH program was developed through a contract between the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Kansas Mental Health Authority (KMHA) of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS), and the Kansas State University School of Family Studies and Human Services. KDHE and SRS have provided funding of \$90,000 for the past 2 years to develop the KAHBH program through K-State.

The KAHBH program has been working since January 2005 to develop a com-

prehensive behavioral health plan for the State of Kansas. The KAHBH Team has been researching and developing the core and specialty trainings, preparing and translating disaster behavioral outreach materials for community mental health centers (CMHCs), providing technical assistance and all-hazard behavioral health information to Kansans, developing the KAHBH Standard Operating Procedures and Training Manual, KAHBH Plan, Kansas Emergency Operations Plan Annex, and developing the KAHBH website.

To aid in the preparation of our team members for disaster response, we have developed core and specialty trainings focusing on disasters and disaster response. The information in these trainings follow the FEMA/SAMHSA CMHS Crisis Counseling Program as the primary model. This model is based on "best practice" nationally recognized material. Our goal is to have individuals across the state who are trained to respond to the behavioral health needs of individuals in disas-

ters and are indigenous to the areas in which they will respond. To date, we have conducted 11 trainings around Kansas with approximately 260 people completing the KAHBH Core Training since November 2005.

The KAHBH program has also developed a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures and Training Manual to accompany our trainings. In addition, we have developed behavioral health services excerpts to the Kansas Emergency Operations Plan which has been submitted to KDEM for approval, and a KAHBH Plan, which is currently being reviewed by SRS Mental Health Administrators in Topeka.

