

The conversations at the nursing leaders' summit for Joining Forces yielded many promising ideas and strategies to fulfill the Nurses Joining Forces pledge to "touch every nurse" in the country in an effort to raise awareness of post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. Many organizations and schools indicated they have activities and programs already in place. Where the student scribe indicated which organization or school reported an existing or planned program, I include this information in the detailed account so other interested participants can contact the source to learn more detail. The scribes did not capture who reported many of the activities were not; please share the "ownership" of your programs where they are not acknowledged.

Several recurring themes emerged during the tabletop idea sharing sessions from the 12 participating groups. Many groups identified need for national nursing leadership of the Joining Forces project to sustain momentum. Nearly every group recognized the need for model curricula that integrate the needs of military service members, veterans and their families into existing nursing curricula that spans the progression of educational levels. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the national Veteran's Health Administration (VA) indicated they have a plan cooperatively to develop such a model curriculum. The National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing also reported planning to develop a curriculum. Schools of nursing reported frequent collaboration in research, education, and practice with VA facilities. Schools use VA facilities regularly for clinical sites, which provide students with challenging learning opportunities in veterans' health care. Many schools and support organizations also incorporate scenarios of veterans' issues into their simulation portfolio. Representatives from schools and nursing organizations attending the Summit described many ongoing research initiatives focusing on veterans and military care.

Nurses from organizations described veterans' participation at annual conferences and content presented specific to the needs of military service members, veterans and their families.

Attendees also discussed how to build their activities around expanded use of Internet technologies. They readily agreed to the critical need for a central repository website for sharing resources, with a searchable database that includes resources for veterans, nurses, and other clinicians. A centrally shared site could also provide opportunities for blogging, twitter feeds, and sharing of apps and games used for educational purposes (for nurses and clients). At a minimum, many of those present agreed that nursing organizations and schools of nursing should prominently display the Joining Forces logo on their landing webpage with links to additional resources.

The importance of spreading the Joining Forces message to the general public and non-nursing policy-makers was a prominent theme at several tables. Nurses can exert political pressure on agencies and organizations to hire veterans and reduce the stigma associated with PTSD and depression. Public service announcements, web-based videos, and full-length documentaries to educate the public (including nurses) that advances in science and knowledge mean PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury are now recognizable and treatable, unlike the late 1960s and early 1970s of the Vietnam War.

Summary from the Joining Forces Nurse Leadership Summit, April 11, 2012

Respectfully submitted by Laura Brennaman, MSN RN CEN, ANA Intern

Many of the ideas that participants generated in the brainstorming sessions at one table are already pilots or ongoing programs reported by participants at other tables. A detailed account of ideas begins on the next page. (Note: To avoid redundancy, brainstorming ideas were not included if they already are part of current or planned activities reported at the summit and listed in the current or planned sections.)

There was an incredibly high level of participation and engagement of attendees during the Summit. The similarity of ideas generated by the varying organizations and specialties of the nurses participating highlights the likenesses and connections that we all share in nursing. This foreshadows enhanced collaboration as this project moves forward.

One next step will be a plan to evaluate the progress the nursing community makes toward the goals of Joining Forces and toward the goal of building collaborative community capacity within the nursing profession. This evaluation plan will be available early summer 2012.