



**Webinar Resources for the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center
Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury
August 2016**

Animal-Assisted Therapy: An Alternative Treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation

The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC), a Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury component center, developed the [Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](#) fact sheet to provide a resource for patients and family members that briefly defines concussion/mild traumatic brain injury mild TBI and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The fact sheet also explains the co-occurrence of mild TBI and PTSD and discusses the recovery process for the individual as well as for family and friends.

The Veterans Health Administration, the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with the Department of Defense (DoD), developed the [VA/DoD Management of Concussion-Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Clinical Practice Guideline](#), updated March 2016, to assist health care providers with improving patient outcomes and management of patients with concussion/mild TBI.

The [Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery \(BUMED\)](#) and [Naval Center Combat and Operational Stress Control](#) conducts research and produces reports on important psychological health issues as they pertain to combat and operational stress in the military. A white paper was written for outcome research as it pertains to animal assisted therapy, [Animal Assisted Therapy and PTSD](#).

The [National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health \(NCCIH\)](#) at the National Institutes of Health acts as the lead agency for the federal government to provide scientific research on complementary and integrative health products and practices. The NCCIH website provides a wealth of information from explaining the [differences among “complementary,” “alternative,” and “integrative” medicine to treating headaches using complementary health approaches](#).

DVBIC's [Management of Sleep Disturbances Following Concussion/Mild TBI: Guidance for Primary Care Management in Deployed and Non-Deployed Settings](#) (June 2014) provides guidance to help primary care managers assess and manage sleep disturbances associated with mild TBI. The suite includes specific [clinical recommendations](#) for managing symptoms of insomnia, circadian rhythm sleep-wake disorder and obstructive sleep apnea as well as a [clinical support tool](#), [training slides](#) and [healthy sleep fact sheet](#). The [Warfighter Sleep Kit](#) is available separately and educates service members about the impact of sleep on mission effectiveness and the importance of obtaining adequate sleep after a mild TBI. The kit contains a sleep mask, earplugs and educational materials.



Additional supporting references:

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Knisely, J. S., Barker, S. B., & Barker, R. T. (2012). [Research on benefits of canine-assisted therapy for adults in nonmilitary settings.](#) *U.S. Army Medical Department Journal*, Apr-Jun, 30-37.

Owen, R. P., Finton, B. J., Gibbons, S. W., & DeLeon, P.H. (2016). [Canine-assisted adjunct therapy in the military: An intriguing alternative modality.](#) *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 12(2), 95-101.

Stapleton, M. (2016). [Effectiveness of animal assisted therapy after brain injury: A bridge to improved outcomes in CRT.](#) *NeuroRehabilitation*, vol. Preprint (no. Preprint), 1-6.

Yeager, A. F., & Irwin, J., (2012). [Rehabilitative canine interactions at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.](#) *U.S. Army Medical Department Journal*, Apr-Jun, 57-60.