

Wellness Conference-Day II

Conference Attendees' Evaluation Feedback

Prepared for:

**Nebraska National Guard/Adjutant General
Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
and
VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System**

Prepared by:

Alex Barajas-Muñoz, MS

Mid-America Addiction Technology Transfer Center



Wellness Conference-Day II

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This document reports on evaluation data gathered from individuals who attended the Wellness Conference-Day II (**Conference Attendees**). 175 people attended the second day. At the beginning of the day, attendees completed a Pre-Event Evaluation Form (PRE) that collects demographic information on attendees and poses four questions about anticipated usefulness of information, current knowledge, effectiveness and skills in this topic area. We received 115 PRE forms. Conference attendees also completed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) evaluation forms after the training (POST). We received 108 POST forms. A smaller sample of attendees (17) completed the GPRA follow-up (Follow-up) form 30-days after the event.

This report is organized around three general questions:

- 1. Who attended the Wellness Conference-Day II?**
- 2. How did the Conference Attendees respond to the Event?**
- 3. What are Suggestions for Future Trainings in this Topic?**

Part 1. Who attended the Wellness Conference-Day II?

Conference Attendees ranged in age from 21 to 71 years with a mean age of 41.06 ($SD = 11.55$). Sixty percent of the attendees were male and 40% were female. Attendees indicated their race/ethnicity as Caucasian (90%), African American (3%), American Indian (2%), Alaska Native (1%), Asian (1%) and/or Hispanic/Latino (3%). Most attendees reported having earned a master's degree (25%) or a bachelor's degree (28%). Attendees indicated they were employed in a variety of work settings and held diverse job responsibilities. Table 1 summarizes their demographic information.

Table 1. Summary of Attendees' Demographic Information.

<p>Highest Degree Status (n = 115)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3% No high school diploma or equivalent ○ 5% High school diploma or equivalent ○ 24% Some college, but no degree ○ 8% Associate's degree ○ 28% Bachelor's degree ○ 25% Master's degree ○ 6% Doctoral degree or equivalent ○ 2% Other <p>Work Characteristics (n = 115)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discipline/profession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6% Addictions Counselor ○ 9% Other Counseling ○ 6% Education ○ 3% Vocational Rehabilitation ○ 4% Criminal Justice ○ 5% Psychology ○ 13% Social Work/Human Services ○ 1% Physician Assistant ○ 1% Medicine: Primary Care ○ 2% Medicine: Psychiatry ○ 2% Medicine: Other ○ 4% Nurse/Nurse Practitioner ○ 11% Administration ○ 1% None, Unemployed ○ 3% None, Student ○ 32% Other (e.g. Military, Aircraft Mechanic, Mental Health Technician, Dental Assistant, Construction, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Primary Work Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2% Criminal Justice ○ 11% Outpatient ○ 7% Inpatient Facility ○ 7% Educational Institution ○ 1% Residential Facility ○ 7% Private Practice ○ 4% Outreach ○ 6% Substance Abuse Treatment Agency ○ 5% Community Mental Health Center ○ 8% Health/Community Health Agency ○ 4% Student ○ 39% Other (e.g. Military, Aircraft Mechanic, Construction, Pharmacy, Armory, Information Technology, etc.) ● Primary Job Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24% Line Staff (counselors, K-12 teachers, corrections officers, etc.) ○ 11% Supervision of case managers and/or counselors ○ 20% Administration ○ 15% Training/Education ○ 30% Other (e.g. Military, Clinician, Physician, Retention, Physician Assistant, Fire Captain, Inspections for Accreditation, etc.)
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Note. Totals may not equal 100% as participants could select more than one category for each *Work Characteristics* item.

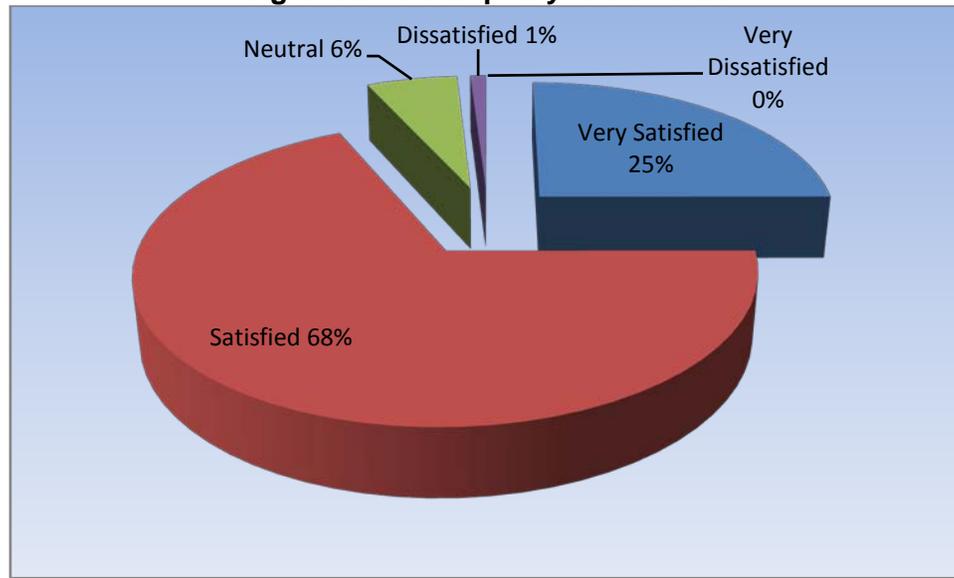
Training Goals Attendees were asked to indicate which out of eight responses captured their training goals for the current event. The majority indicated that they were interested in receiving *Continuing Education* credit (27%) or were at the event for the purpose of *Professional Development* (27%). Additionally, 4% indicated interest in *Addictions Certification (state or other)*, 3% indicated interest in *Academic Credit Toward a Master's*, 5% in *Academic Credit Toward a BA*, 1% in *Academic Credit Toward Licensure*, 12% indicated *Other* training goals (e.g. To help my soldiers, Military, Personal interest, Family Readiness, Information on Assistance Available for Veterans, etc.), and 23% indicated they had *No Current Training Goals*.

Part 2. How did the Conference Attendees respond to the Event?

Conference Content

Attendees were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall quality of the conference on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1—*Very Dissatisfied* to 5—*Very Satisfied*. As noted in Figure A below, most participants indicated satisfaction with the quality of the event.

Figure A. Overall quality of the event.



Note. Responses are from 108 attendees who completed the POST.

To assess attendees' perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of the symposium content, 4 items on the POST form asked attendees to rate their agreement or disagreement with the following:

- (1) The conference enhanced my skills in this topic area;
- (2) The conference was relevant to my career;
- (3) I expect to use the information gained from this conference; and
- (4) I expect this conference to benefit my work with clients

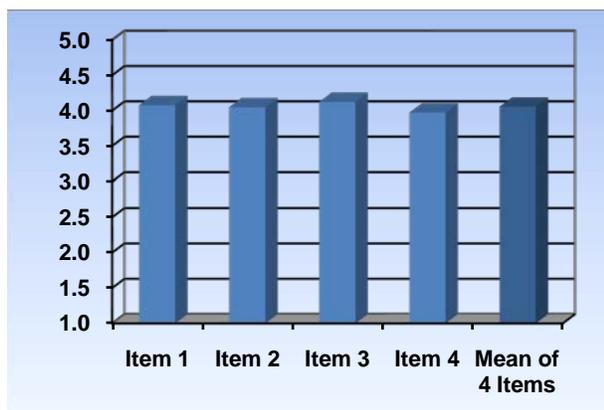


Figure B. Relevance & Effectiveness of Content by Item

Attendees' ratings for each of the five items are displayed in Figure B. The 4 items were then determined to form a subscale with a range of 1 (*low relevance/effectiveness*) to 5 (*high relevance/effectiveness*). Attendees' POST event mean score for relevance/effectiveness of all four items was **4.1** ($SD = .06$) suggesting that, overall, the attendees found the event highly relevant and effective.

Usefulness of Content

Attendees were asked to provide brief responses to the following question: *What about the training was most useful in supporting your work responsibilities?* Thirty-nine (39) of the 108 attendees who completed the POST form and four (4) of the 17 attendees who completed the Follow-up form responded to this question. In general, many attendees reported that new information and awareness on specific issues affecting returning Veterans as well as specific conference content areas were most useful in supporting their work responsibilities. Several attendees commented about the speakers' presentations and how useful it was for them to be provided with networking opportunities during the event. See Table 2 for a list of attendees' comments.

Table 2. Responses to the question: *What about the training was most useful in supporting your work responsibilities?*

<p>General Information & Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced information I had • All the resources; learned a few new avenues to refer the soldiers to • Gain a better understanding of the concerns and needs of military and their families • Having great information and speakers • The information • Possible solutions to real world problems or problems in the Guard. Panel was knowledgeable and answered relevant questions • If I see someone at information center (family) I can guide them up with military resource • This has been the same information that is given out to soldiers and FRG's upon deployment several times. Good information-important-if receiving for the first time • I feel better prepared to deal with the issues in my unit plus I feel I can pass on this information more efficiently • Issues in the military to civilian life transitions • Good awareness! • Knowledge
<p>Specific Content, Materials & Resources Presented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The breakout sessions. Soldiers are hungry to talk with each other and make suggestions for improving transition for soldiers and their families • Breakouts were a good idea; however some military members (specifically unit commanders) were rude and treated soldiers and FRG participants with a great deal of irreverence which did not contribute to open discussion-suggestions • The breakout sessions • Being in small groups and listening to the soldiers • Referral sources • Booth set up very helpful

Table 2. Responses to the question: *What about the training was most useful in supporting your work responsibilities?* (Continued)

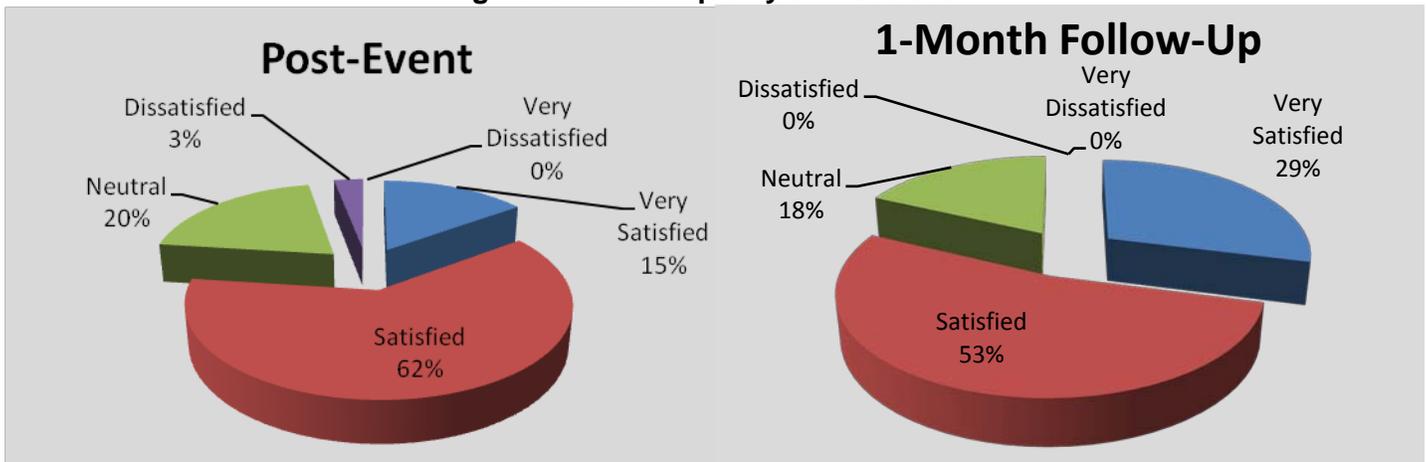
<p>Specific Content, Materials & Resources Presented, cont.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacting with other soldiers to gather information • Resources identified • Great resources! • Resources information • Breakout sessions • The face to face interactions with the National Guard representatives • Take home information • Actual explanation and examples of case studies and how to contact, connect or relate to them • Soldiers' ability to share experience in breakout sessions to identify need and service gaps • Understanding the culture of the reservists and the issues they are facing as they return from the combat theatre • Small group discussion • Information about available resources
<p>Impact of Speakers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think Mr. Toby Canning was one of the better speakers, he was enthusiastic and upbeat. He also gave good examples as well as suggestions for what we should do to help soldiers with problems as well as how to approach talking trouble soldiers. I would definitely like to see him welcomed back next year. I also think the smaller breakout sessions were helpful. The booths were helpful, that is the information and contact numbers we need to have so we can then pass it on to soldiers in need. Bonnie Bessler is also a great speaker and very helpful and should be invited back • Talk by Toby Canning-excellent information and well presented • Dr. Canning's practical presentation • Well thought-out and sourced. The subject matter experts were the top of their fields • New studies identifying the impact of alcohol on returning veterans to medicate their emotional and physical pain
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking in the small groups/talking to the MHC offline • N/A • Needs to be more • This was fantastic! • Good references • Need more, more in depth and more frequent

Note. Responses are from 39 of the 108 attendees who completed the Post-event form and 4 of the 17 attendees who completed the Follow-up form. The statements were taken directly from attendees' written comments with the exception of grammatical corrections for clarity.

Symposium Speakers

Attendees were asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall quality of the speakers/instruction on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1—*Very Dissatisfied* to 5—*Very Satisfied*. As noted in Figure C, most attendees reported satisfaction with the conference speakers.

Figure C. Overall quality of instruction.



Note. Responses are from 108 attendees who completed the Post.

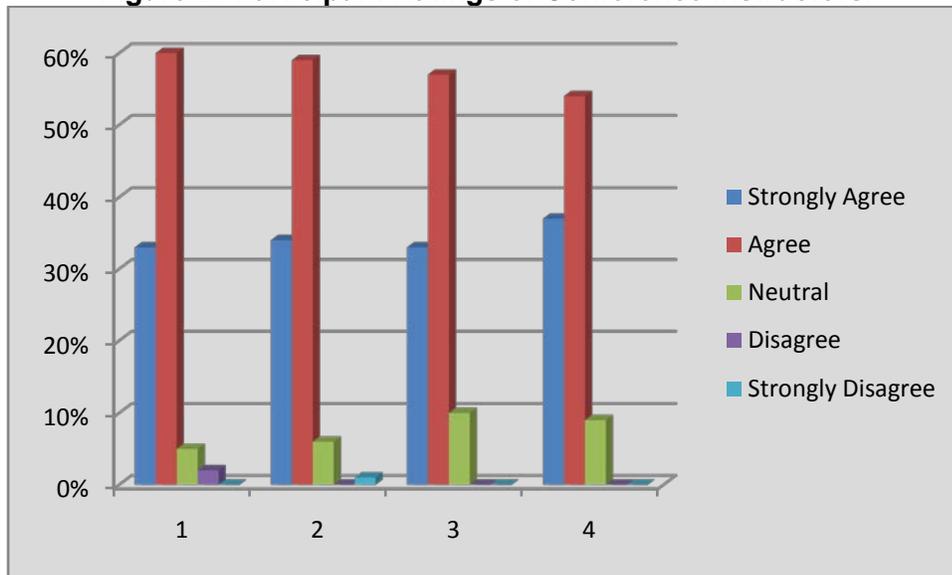
Note. Responses are from a sample of 17 attendees who completed the Follow-up.

Attendees were asked several additional questions related to the instructors/speakers of this event including their agreement with the following sentences:

- (1) The conference was well organized.
- (2) The instructor was knowledgeable about the subject matter.
- (3) The instructor was well prepared for the course.
- (4) The instructor was receptive to participant comments and questions.

Items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1—*Strongly Agree* to 5—*Strongly Disagree*. As noted in Figure D, most attendees indicated agreement with all of these sentences.

Figure D. Participant Ratings of Conference Instructors.



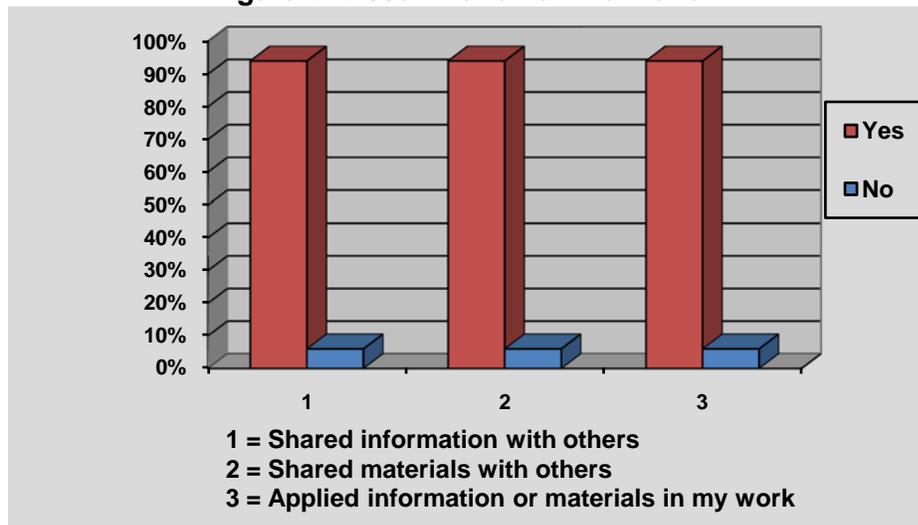
1 = Conference well-organized
 2 = Instructors knowledgeable
 3 = Instructors well-prepared
 4 = Instructors receptive

Note. Responses are from 108 attendees who completed the POST form.

Dissemination

Attendees were asked several questions about what they did with the information provided during this event. Sample questions include: (a) whether the attendee shared information from the training with others, (b) whether the attendee shared materials from this training with others, and (c) whether the attendee applied any information or materials learned from this training in his or her work. See Figure E for a summary of responses.

Figure E. Dissemination of Information.

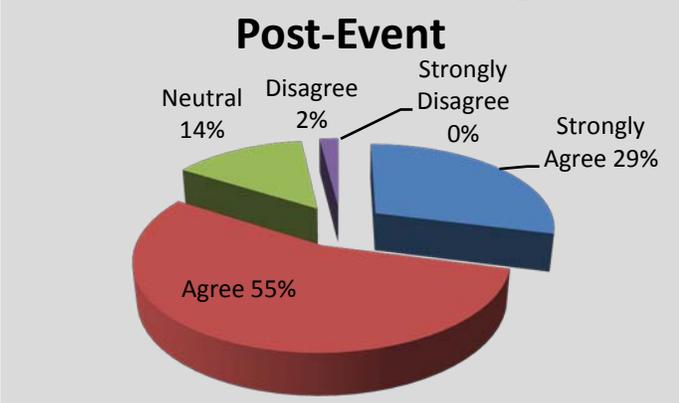


Note. Responses are from a sample of 17 attendees who completed the Follow-up.

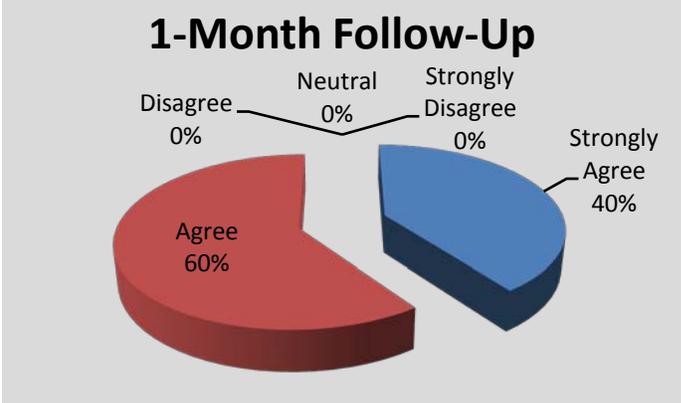
Recommendation

Finally, attendees were asked to rate the degree to which they would recommend the training to a colleague on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1—*Strongly Disagree* to 5—*Strongly Agree*. 84% of the attendees agreed or strongly agreed immediately after the event, and 100% agreed or strongly agreed one month after the event. See Figure F for details on the degree to which the attendees would recommend the event to colleagues.

Figure F. Recommendation of Event.



Note. Responses are from 108 attendees who completed the POST.



Note. Responses are from a sample of 17 attendees who completed the Follow-up.

Part 5. What are Suggestions for Future Trainings on this Topic?

Conference Attendee Suggestions

Conference attendees were asked how future events of this kind could be improved. Many of the suggestions offered concerned conference content and logistics. Many of the respondents' comments, however, did not focus on recommendations; instead they focused on positive experiences during the conference. Table 3 provides a list of attendees' suggestions.

Table 3. Conference Attendee Suggestions for Improvement.

<p>Conference Planning and Logistics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make training longer so there is more time to discuss issues and ask questions • More breakout time • Switch up breakout groups (i.e. Saturday morning group one way, Saturday afternoon new grouping, and Sunday morning new grouping). By mixing people, the same negative commanders wouldn't ruin the discussion for the same group of people • Adhere to schedule, some speakers were a little longwinded • Give more time to breakout sessions. The soldiers were more open in small groups when professionals were not mixed in the group • I think more time for questions for panels. Look into childcare for parents coming to conference • Combine breakouts and not have them on a 19th floor • Separate training, counselors vs. family members. Offer relaxation training, massage therapists' demonstrations for officers, etc. to experience the benefits and gain knowledge • Add more family members into audience as well as individuals that have experienced symptoms • More networking with private providers • Allow more time for discussion. Those sessions went very well • More soldiers stories and time to process with each other. Less talking heads. The hotel was cumbersome
<p>Conference Content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please, please, please have different slides than the ones used repeatedly for demo! It's so repetitive throughout the military. Get us involved more. Have other sources and maybe not slide shows that have minimal information. Have soldiers stand up and explain experiences, more real life stories or more videos...keep us informed and awake. Thank you! • Trained facilitators in the breakout sessions-to deal with dominating personalities, with repressive officers as well as efficient use of time • Bring soldiers back as a group to process this reintegration. Perhaps do groups on Sat morning since they are already there. Groups need to be facilitated by mental health professionals, and E5, E6 (who are very respected by line soldiers). Be more flexible in agenda. Could have put all presentations together and given more time for breakouts. It is good for the breakout to remain in the same throughout. Today I would have liked more time for Dr. Canning's case studies but it was cut short so we could travel to 19th floor, where we waited for whole groups to make it, where the group was cut short so we could come down and mill around. Frustrating! Talking heads only so-so effective. Would have preferred each breakout reporting their ideas and talking heads listening and figuring out how to implement

**Conference
Content, cont.**

- Breakout sessions need to be longer. Our questions were not answered by panel, so we were discouraged in asking more. Could have military personal share experience of asking for help
- Have someone here to explain VA education benefits, especially with the new bill benefits starting next year
- More specific info and practical information
- It would be helpful to have soldiers tell their stories and their journey to get treatment
- Allowing time for all groups' questions to be answered by the panel
- Provide solutions to possible problems/Make it easy for soldiers to access help
- Breakout sessions need better focus by facilitator. Questions should be clearly identified and limited as breakout sessions are very time limited
- Can only learn so much from the same slide show. Not learning any extra information, or walking away with better knowledge. Have more detailed presentations
- A number of the soldiers indicated the information was very general and repetitive. They indicated some more practical applications would be helpful
- Need new info. build on this information
- Some of the information is preaching to the choir. I think folks want to know what to do rather than what has been done, or be told what deployment and reintegration is like (they already know)
- Have longer breakout sessions
- Longer breakout sessions
- PTSD and TBI—we have beat the hell out of these subjects. Eisenhower room breakout conversation leader was not prepared and did a poor job facilitating discussion. Also, all the time was spent going up to the room and then back down.
- Better breakout sessions longer. Takes 10 minutes to get questions and we only have 15 min total. I was in the Eisenhower group and the sessions were not led the best
- Need to have more information from private resources. Need information from NAMI
- Put more emphasis on the small group discussion and less on presentations
- More breakouts
- Need more time for breakout sessions. this is where the magic is happening, and people are sharing experiences
- More interaction/advisory guidance from senior NCOs, civilians can't grasp the combat zone mentality. I continually hear and say civilians don't understand, if you haven't been there (or in a similar combat experience) they'll never understand
- Do tracking-ask participants to provide information to get a handle on how many soldiers they are seeing who escaped identification upon discharge for whatever reasons. At least a more accurate count could be made. What is out there that is on no one's radar. I am seeing it at our little CC-much more than ever I had imagined-MS
- Breakouts with a more clinical perspective for mental health professionals because we already know the basics of anxiety/depressive disorders (i.e. what type of interventions work best for them)
- Don't just read off the slide show. I can read. Dig into personal experiences
- Continue to pinpoint groups who are struggling with this and then provide relevant insights

**No Future
recommendations**

- N/A
- NADA, great conference, let's do it again!
- More
- Keep having them with all of this information
- Have more of these!
- Not sure
- More

Note. Responses are from 43 of the 108 attendees who completed the Post-event form and 4 of the 17 attendees who completed the Follow-up form. The statements were taken directly from attendees' written comments with the exception of grammatical corrections for clarity.

Report prepared by:
Alex Barajas-Muñoz
Project Manager of Evaluation
Mid-America Addiction Technology Transfer Center
(816) 482-1199
barajasmunoz@umkc.edu