

CREATIVE FORCES: NEA MILITARY HEALING ARTS NETWORK

About Creative Forces

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



“I would continue making paintings of my hauntings, and each time I see them less, or not at all...”

—from *Art therapy for PTSD and TBI* research report



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Creative Forces

VIDEO »



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Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network serves the special needs of military patients and veterans who have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health conditions, as well as their families and caregivers.

Made possible by a unique collaboration between the National Endowment for the Arts, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, and state arts agencies, Creative Forces is a network of caring people who believe in the transformative and restorative powers of art.

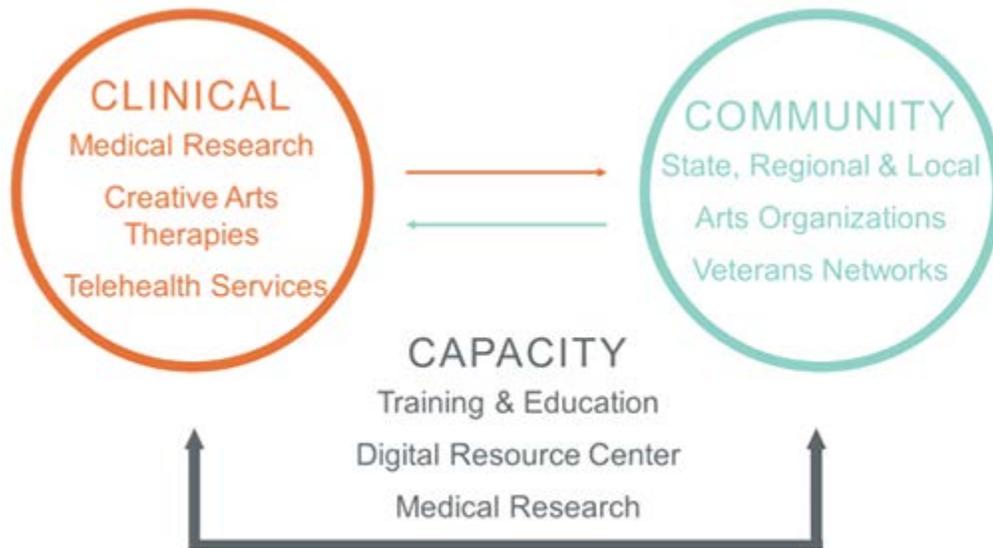
We are creative arts therapists, musicians, painters, potters, writers, woodworkers, dancers and doctors, military service members and veterans, community leaders and policymakers. Some of us work on military bases. Some of us work at hospitals. Some of us work at community art centers.

All of us have the same mission: To help military personnel and veterans return to their homes, their missions and their families whole, mentally fit and emotionally ready for whatever comes next.

CREATIVE FORCES NETWORK

We are building a national network of care for our injured service members, whether they are active duty or veterans, in medical treatment or transitioning back home to their bases and communities.

The program has three components: Creative Forces is placing **creative arts therapies** at the core of patient-centered care in military medical facilities, as well as a telehealth program for patients in rural and remote areas; provides increased **community-based arts** opportunities for military and veteran family populations around clinical site locations; and invests in **capacity-building efforts**, including the development of manuals, training, and research on the impacts and benefits of the treatment methods.



THE NEED

There is a growing need in our country to address TBI and PTSD:

TBI:

1.7 MILLION
New cases per year

PTSD:

8 MILLION AMERICANS

Growing levels of anxiety, depression, sleep deprivation

**MORE THAN
500,000
SERVICE
MEMBERS
AND VETS
ARE LIVING
WITH TBI
OR PTSD**

More than 500,000 men and women of our armed services are living with TBI or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including 10-20% of all service members deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. TBI and PTSD are known to contribute to depression, and to the estimated 20 suicides committed by veterans each day.

We have seen how creative arts therapies have helped service members deal with trauma as part of an integrated care model. And when they return home, these interventions make a difference in people's lives that medicine alone could not achieve.

PROGRAM HISTORY

Since 2012, this military healing arts partnership has supported creative arts therapies for service members with traumatic brain injury and associated psychological health issues at two military medical facilities in the Washington, DC, area—the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at Walter Reed Bethesda in Maryland, and the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital in Virginia. The President and Congress recognized the success of the program at these facilities, and believed the program could do more. In fiscal years 2016 and 2017, Congress appropriated a nearly \$2 million budget increase each year for the NEA, specifically allocated to expand this military healing arts program. In 2017, the Department of Veterans Affairs also joined the network. Congressional support for Creative Forces was cited in the agency's FY 2018 appropriation.