

Finalists for UCF Collective Impact Community Challenge

Project Team: McCormick Research Institute [A partnership between UCF, McCormick, & Osceola County]

Project Title: Equine-Assisted Therapies for Veterans at McCormick Research Institute

1. While PTSD interventions are available, attrition rates remain high, with less than half of military veterans who could benefit receiving intervention. With 16 veterans committing suicide daily, addressing their mental health needs remains critical. Equine-facilitated therapy, grounded in the cognitive processing therapy (CPT) model that the VA endorses as first-line intervention, appears to be a viable alternative for those disinclined to engage in office-based interventions. **The McCormick Research Institute is dedicated to advancing the science regarding these interventions and producing rigorous evidence to support policy change that would open access and deliver valid models for providers across the nation.**
2. Our team draws upon the **unique expertise, strengths, and assets of THREE departments, each with specialized functional and disciplinary areas of expertise, and engages a range of community partners in this endeavor** to change the root cause of accessible treatment for PTSD in veterans. All partners are solidly committed to this project.

UCF Internal Collaborators/Partners	Role (very brief)	Confirmed Participation (Yes or No)
College of Medicine (Drs. Manette Monroe & Sarah Gibson; Mr. Charles Roberts)	Dr. Monroe is team Lead and Investigator; Mr. Roberts is Assistant Vice President for Development at UCF College of Medicine and Vice-Chair of the McCormick Research Institute board. Dr. Gibson is engaged with student research mentorship. COM: Provision of students for participation in the coursework.	Yes
School of Social Work (Drs. Tracy Wharton & James Whitworth)	Dr. Wharton is the PI for the research on trauma related outcomes with Dr. Whitworth. Both have extensive research experience in animal assisted therapies & student research mentorship, & Dr. Whitworth, Lt Col (ret), is a veteran.	Yes
Doctoral Program of Physical Therapy	Physical Therapy has been involved in past research & student training related to physical therapy outcomes as well as with populations beyond veterans and trauma. PT faculty will be available to provide consultation as needed in regards to neuromuscular and postural impairment that might limit the ability of veterans to participate.	Yes
External Collaborator/Partners	Role (very brief)	
McCormick Research Institute & the McCormick Tankersley Foundation	Leadership and facility management, volunteer coordination and training, provision of a licensed mental health provider on staff for the veterans programs, funding for programmatic needs, strategic planning. This community partner has a strong and well-resourced Board of Directors that are very involved with the organization. Funding through Foundation.	Yes
Thomasa Sanchez	CEO of McCormick Research Institute; Mrs. Sanchez is a strong business oriented leader who works closely with her Board of Directors. She is currently working on a Doctorate in Business Administration.	Yes
Dr. Timothy O'Leary, Former Chief R&D Officer for Veterans Health Admin Office of R&D.	Dr. O'Leary is a valuable resource for research integrity and perspective regarding impact on policy change and integration into Veterans Health Administration care models.	Yes
Scott Lippert, Vice President and General Mgr of USAA Bank	Mr. Lippert supports McCormick Research Institute through strategic planning and fundraising assistance. Mr. Lippert is a member of the Board of Directors.	Yes
Robert McDonald, 8 th US Sec of Veterans Affairs; Former Chairman, President & CEO, Proctor & Gamble	Mr. McDonald provides guidance and support for navigating policy changes and planning research for future impact. Mr. McDonald is a member of the Board of Directors.	Yes
Dr. Kimberly Jentsch, Rollins College, Crummer Graduate School of Business	Dr. Jentsch is working with the research team and Ms. Sanchez at McCormick Research Institute to provide support and assistance for research design and implementation for sustainability.	Yes

3. **Work of the McCormick Research Institute Team provides opportunity in all three areas of the UCF mission:**

Research: The research team for the McCormick collaboration is strong, involving both internal and external partners who bring the strength and focus of experience, as well as perspectives from university, government, and business sectors in development of impactful aims and goals; current research includes both proximal and distal outcomes of the interventions.

Education: UCF College of Medicine students have been engaged at McCormick Research Institute where they have received credit for classes; Physical therapy students have provided training and conducted research through this collaboration. Educational programs are expanding across additional disciplines within UCF and continuing education opportunities are available through the partnership for licensed health & allied health providers.

Service/engagement: Team members of this collaboration have provided service and intervention treatment options for over 20,000 clients since 2002. A majority of services are provided at no cost to participants, and no veteran is turned away from services because of insurance or money related issues. The staff provide community education and resources continuously throughout the year, in partnership with UCF.

4. Outcomes primarily relate to improvements in knowledge, skills, and attitudes; impacts involve improvements in academic, cultural, economic, environmental, health and/or social conditions.

The main three outcomes or impacts that we expect by the first 5 years of implementing this project:

Impact – We intend to change VA/DOD and insurance policy.

Outcome - Address the evidence gap regarding equine-facilitated therapy models.

Though much of this initiative addresses knowledge and policy, **the greatest impact and most important outcomes** are the lives and families saved by introducing a viable intervention alternative into the marketplace.

5. **Potential for scaling this project nationally or globally:**

National or global importance:

Veteran suicide rates are unquestionably one of the most salient issues of our time. Principles that drive equine-facilitated therapies can be translated to other populations.

Potential to scale:

This collaboration would be the catalyst for an initiative with international momentum. This includes government agencies, state and national legislators, funders, universities, researchers; **the impact of this project would be to provide a template and evidence base for the 90 plus programs nationwide that use equine intervention, impacting millions of people across the U.S.**

Potential Partners:

Legislative leaders, USAA, McKinsey Consultants, VA, Prof Assoc of Therapeutic Horsemanship Internatl.

6. **Here is how we will incorporate each component for a successful *Collective Impact*:**

- **UCF is the backbone of a strong team** that works closely together to design, implement, and analyze research that has potential for significant and broad impact.
- Our collaboration involves strong community partners with engaged leadership, diverse divisions across UCF, and community stakeholders in the mission to **achieve a common agenda: advancing the science and producing rigorous evidence to support policy change that would open access and deliver valid models for providers across the nation.**
- Our research team works together to **share measurement** across research plans and clinical implementation, allowing us to provide consistency and rigor to the programs.
- This collaboration provides opportunity for **mutually reinforcing activities**, through provision of research partnerships for faculty, clinical services for clients, and teamwork with the community partner Board of Directors for ongoing support of activities.
- Our Team works hard to ensure **continuous communication** among partners, creating a strong and resilient structure for our work together.

7. **External sources of potential funding and RFPs forthcoming from those entities:**

The McCormick Tankersley Foundation pledged \$200K annually for 8 years; Osceola County has two RFP's; Horses & Humans Foundation has ongoing RFPs for equine intervention research, and potential for responsiveness to NIH and SAMHSA RFPs, once we have established reliable and valid pilot data; previous UCF COM grant of \$30,000.

8. **Potential for this project to form an active, productive Cluster:**

Such a robust initiative requires interdisciplinary collaboration and will attract contributors from across the Colleges of the University. There are already working partnerships across several areas of allied health sciences (Social Work, Physical Therapy, Medicine), but adding faculty from Business, Communication, Psychology, and Institutes such as the Center for Public and Non-Profit Management and VARC would provide robust opportunities for productivity in both research and student training.