

# Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress 2020

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# CSTS

The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS) is part of the Department of Psychiatry in the Uniformed Services University's (USU) School of Medicine (America's Medical School). The Center supports USU, the Military Health System (MHS), and the Department of Defense (DoD).

Since it was established in 1987, the Center has been working to mitigate the impact of trauma from exposure to war, disasters, terrorism, community violence, public health threats, and humanitarian operations throughout the nation and across the globe.

The Center's work encompasses both military and civilian populations, but it focuses on health issues of special interest to the military, including combat, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), suicide and suicide-related behavior, and the impact of death and loss on the families of Service members.

CSTS is comprised of a multi-disciplinary and collaborative team of scientists, educators, clinicians, and leaders who help inform our nation's policies and responses to the impacts of exposure to trauma from disasters, both human-made and natural. The Center is well-positioned to rapidly respond to DoD mission-relevant activities. CSTS sustains national readiness, enhances national security, and serves an essential role for the DoD and the nation.



## COVID-19 Response Highlights

In 2020, CSTS was involved with the DoD's COVID-19 response from the beginning of the pandemic. CSTS Scientists and staff maintained key collaborations with the National Guard Bureau, the New York National Guard, and New York City, among other entities. The Center developed COVID-19 knowledge products on critical topics related to COVID-19, including talking to children about COVID-19, managing grief during the pandemic, and establishing better sleep patterns while working remotely or in new environments. In addition, CSTS was instrumental in helping USU leadership assess the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce through consultation on the USU Operational Resilience survey.

# CSTS Mission

The Center provides leadership, education, training, research, scholarship, service, outreach, consultation, and global health engagement. CSTS informs and educates community, regional, state, national, and global stakeholders in government, industry, healthcare, public health, and academia. The Center's work includes innovative and ground-breaking research that ranges from the micro level in laboratories to the macro level in communities, the nation, and all across the world. CSTS helps to foster community and national resilience, and improve trauma-related care by preparing treatment providers to address the impact of trauma.

The work of the Center also:

- Uniquely combines and integrates military and disaster psychiatry.
- Moves science from the gene to the cell, to the organism, to the person, to the community.
- Applies state-of-the-art approaches to neuroscience and precision medicine.
- Moves from knowledge to action.
- Helps ensure that behavioral health is addressed in the face of public health threats, disaster planning, and disaster recovery.



The Center consists of more than 100 people. In 2020, CSTS directed more than \$65 million in funding through a core grant and 15 external grants.

For more information, visit the CSTS website at: [www.CSTSONline.org](http://www.CSTSONline.org)

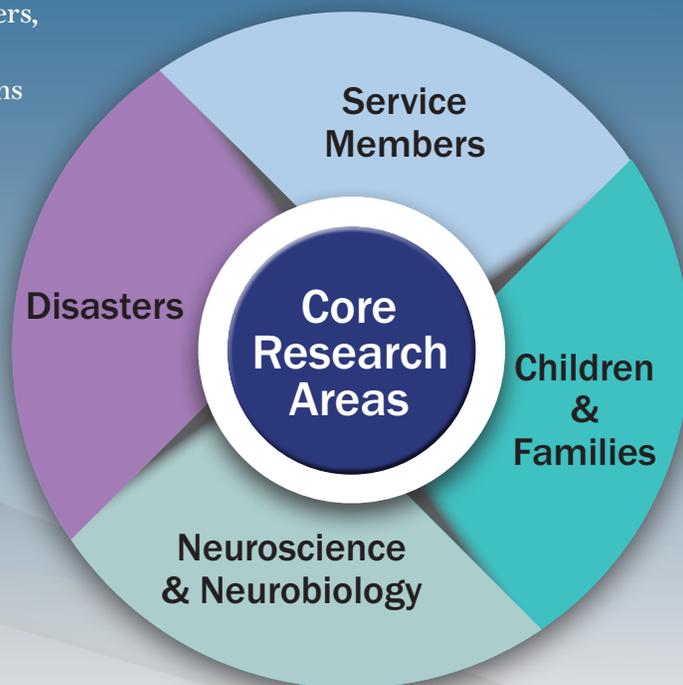
# Research

CSTS research encompasses a broad spectrum both in the laboratory and in the field. All the Center research is designed to support the Military Health System (MHS) in its efforts to provide a medically-ready force to Combatant Commands in both peacetime and wartime, and to deliver integrated, affordable, and high quality health services.

The four core areas of CSTS research are:

- Research on Service members.
- Research on the children and family members of Service members.
- Research in neuroscience and neurobiology.
- Research on disasters and terrorism.

Examples of specific research topics include the causes of suicide in Service members, psychological responses to trauma and disasters, and clinical investigations of the symptomatology and treatment of PTSD.



## Research Highlights in 2020

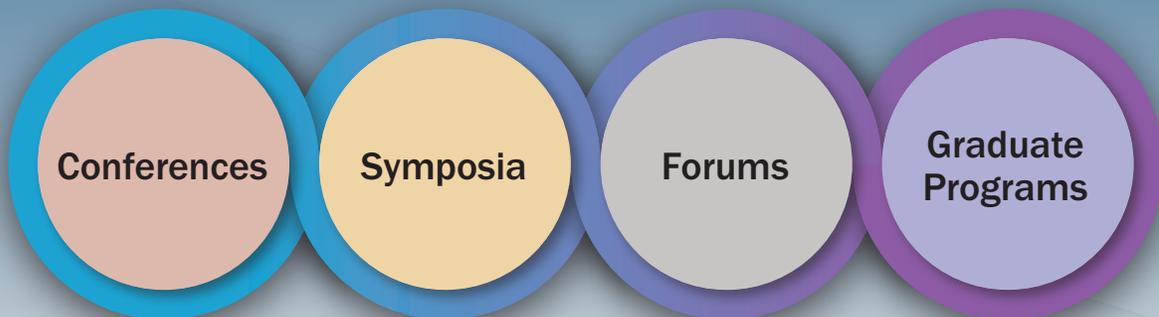
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CSTS worked with the National Guard Bureau (NGB) to help the New York National Guard (NYNG) develop a rapid public health surveillance assessment to inform NGB leadership and provide recommendations.
- The Center's Child and Family Program (CFP) consulted with public health organizations regarding COVID-19 preparedness, and developed a number of child and family informational resources to address the impact of COVID-19.
- CSTS assisted in the development of an operational assessment of resilience of students and personnel working at USU.

# Education and Training

The Center provides educational resources to interagency organizations (including DoD and other federal entities) as well as state and local agencies, professional associations, and others. Center Scientists educate and train USU medical students committed to service in our nation's Army, Air Force, Navy, and Public Health Service. The Center provides education to interagency and private sector leaders and other personnel.

The Center advances the field of military and disaster psychiatry through publications, presentations, outreach, and training. CSTS sponsors and participates in conferences, seminars, symposia, workshops, and collaborations with educational and training objectives across the U.S. and internationally. The Center also educates and expands knowledge through public health efforts and interventions during and after disasters.

CSTS disseminates educational materials to stakeholders, including healthcare providers, community leaders, families, first responders, teaching professionals, and policy makers. The Center creates and disseminates customized, easy-to-read, just-in-time educational fact sheets to assist stakeholders in effectively managing the adverse effects of traumatic stress through enhanced preparation and response to disaster events.



## Education and Training Highlights in 2020

- Transitioned an eight-week Neuroscience and Behavioral Module entirely online; the Module received the 'Teaching with Technology' award for this successful transition to distance learning.
- Developed more than 30 new COVID-19-specific facts sheets that were widely disseminated to other organizations early in the pandemic.
- Provided ongoing consultation and remote training for medical personnel in the Puerto Rico Veterans Administration healthcare system.
- Provided educational resources and support to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, and district branches of the American Psychiatric Association in support of the devastating wildfires that affected the western United States, as well as the aftermath of Hurricane Laura.

# Consultation

The Center develops relationships with, and provides consultation to, many agencies and organizations throughout the DoD and other federal agencies, as well as with state, local, and national agencies, professional associations, and international organizations.

Since its inception, establishing and maintaining consultative relationships have been cornerstones of CSTS's work, and include a wide variety of organizations both inside and outside government, and internationally. These collaborations build bridges that provide opportunities to contribute Center resources and expertise in the service of others and to monitor real-time needs of other organizations.



## Consultation Highlights in 2020

- Provided review, input, and consultation on the California Disaster Behavioral Health Plan, at the request of the State of California.
- Provided valuable contributions to the development of a five-module resilience training program that was delivered to more than 1,000 personnel within the New York City (NYC) healthcare system. This was at the request of the NYC Mayor and USNORTHCOM Commander during the spring COVID-19 surge that affected NYC.
- Completed the second edition of the Curriculum Recommendations for Disaster Health Professionals: Disaster Behavioral Health. This was a joint effort between CSTS and the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health.

# Knowledge Dissemination

## CSTS disseminates knowledge through a variety of means, including:

- Publishing research findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- Publishing books, volumes, and newsletters.
- Making presentations at scientific meetings and conferences, and other events.
- Giving briefings and interviews.
- Developing and disseminating fact sheets.
- Conducting educational campaigns.
- Posting information and other resources on the CSTS website.
- Developing pocket cards to address leader support for Service member activations during mortuary affairs and pandemics.

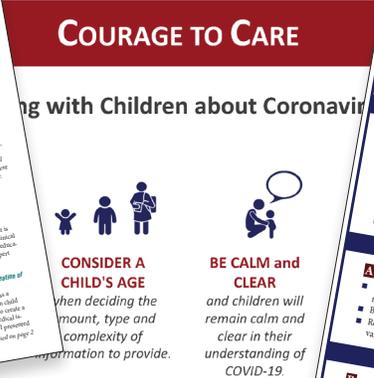
Health Education Campaigns

Publications

Online Presence

Newsletters

Disaster Education Fact Sheets



Access the full fact sheet, "Discussing Coronavirus with Your Children" Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress | [www.cstsonline.org](http://www.cstsonline.org)

## Knowledge Dissemination Highlights in 2020

- 37 publications.
- 52 presentations at scientific or professional meetings, conferences, and symposia.
- 32 new COVID-19 related fact sheets.



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