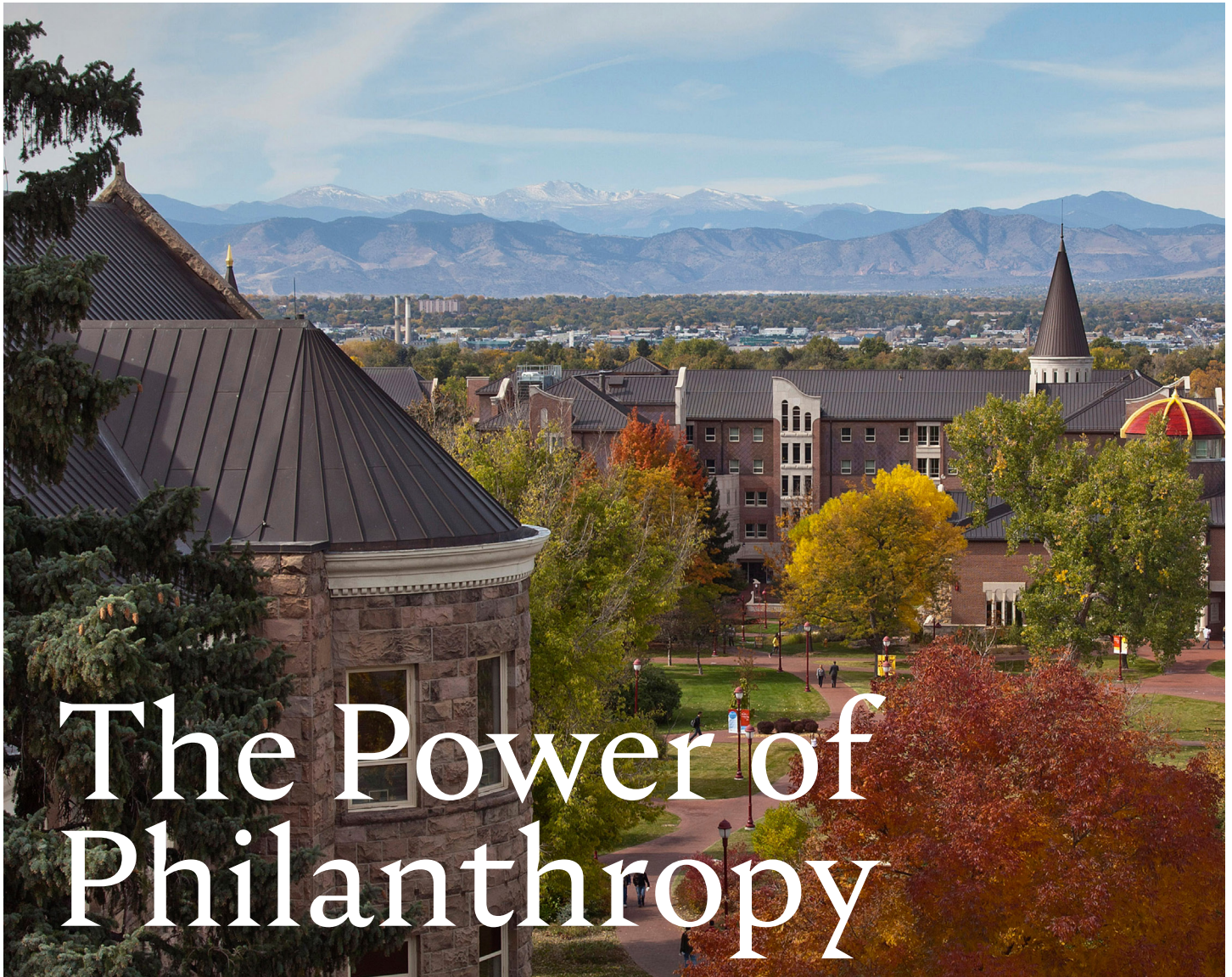




Military Psychology
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



The Power of Philanthropy

University of Denver donors are making behavioral health care accessible for Veterans, Service Members and their families.

A special impact report for donors of the University of Denver's Graduate School of Professional Psychology.



A message from Dr. Torrey Wilson

Dean of the Graduate School of Professional Psychology

Thank you for supporting the University of Denver's Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP). This year marks the 7th anniversary of our Military Psychology specialty program. As someone with a personal background in working at the VA, I understand the importance of our military-specific programs, and I am deeply moved by the generosity our donors have shown to Veterans, Service Members, and their families.

Since joining the department as Dean in July of 2022, I have witnessed firsthand, the impact of private funding on the momentum of our Military Psychology specialty program and the Sturm Center. Your contributions have been instrumental in meeting the unique needs of the military community and advocating for this kind of service model to be a standard level of care.

In the following report, we are excited to share some of the progress we have made since our founding in 2016 and recent highlights of our work as we strive to provide the highest quality care to our Veteran and Service Member communities.

Thank you for being a champion of our work as we serve those who so selflessly serve us all.

Private Support by the Numbers *Since 2016*

We rely on philanthropic support to carry the mission, vision, and daily work of our military-focused mental and behavioral health programs forward. Our donors have made a significant, collective impact at DU through endowments, estate planning, and current use gifts.



~300 Donors have made a gift in support of the Military Psychology specialty and/or the Sturm Center

~\$3,000,000 Dollars have been raised



Exciting News

Sturm Center part of award-winning VA learning collaborative focused on Veteran suicide prevention

The University of Denver's Sturm Center was selected to be a member of a pilot VA/community suicide prevention learning collaborative in the Denver and Colorado Springs areas. Other members of the collaborative were representatives of university medical and psychiatric programs, VA resource and healthcare centers, and mental health advocates from across the country. Together, this learning collaborative worked with 13 community organizations in the pilot program area who had both direct and indirect relationships with Veterans and Service Members.

Due to the diversity of participating organizations, the impact of the learning collaborative was widely felt. Over 25,000 community members and over 5,000 Veterans were impacted by the services and supports introduced by the collaborative over a 16-month period. Activities included training experiences in military/Veteran cultural competency, universal suicide prevention, and mental health.

Overall, nearly 85% of participating organizations reported the experience a success. One organization lead stated, "Some of these new innovations with [training] will be really helpful for new peer support members and staff. I view these as long-term wins and resources for us. They are invaluable. They give people new perspectives, tools, and hope. Hope is key. You never know what is going to save a life or a relationship, to it's always important to keep adding to our reservoir."

The pilot program won a national VA award for most outstanding project in VA suicide prevention and has now received additional funding for several more years. The University of Denver team has now been asked to be part of the third collaborative cohort.

Thank you for believing in our faculty, staff, and students who work tirelessly to solidify our place as a global leader in mental and behavioral health education, research, and service. Your support gives us the confidence to pursue opportunities that have a local, regional, and global impact.



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This is a big win, not only for the University of Denver, but for all the current and future Veterans and Service Members lives that have and will be changed through this work. The success of this pilot program is just the beginning—I am proud to represent an institution that is committed to the long-term wellbeing of our military families.

Dr. Torrey Wilson
Dean, Graduate School of Professional Psychology

Sturm Center Results

Our mission of being a private University dedicated to the public good is realized through the Sturm Center and our Strengthening Bridges program (a collaboration between the Sturm Center, the Caring for You and Baby (CUB) Clinic and the Caring for Denver Foundation). In addition to being a Yellow Ribbon awarding graduate school—closing the tuition gap for eligible Veteran students—our internal and external efforts reflect our commitment to creating a comprehensive system of training and care and reducing stigma surrounding mental health. **Your gifts support these efforts.**



1,020
Veterans, Service Members or their family members completed inquiries for services




9,400
therapy or assessment sessions were conducted




10,300
hours of direct clinical services have been provided



115
full-battery psychological assessments were completed



\$4,500,000
worth of benefits were allocated to Veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense through our collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Veterans Advocacy Project



85+
GSPP students have provided clinical services at the Sturm Center



200+
graduate students have attended a course within the Military Psychology specialty program



40%
of students involved with the Sturm Center Military Psychology specialty are Veterans or Service Members



1,264
community members (educators, medical professionals, social workers, military service members, attorneys, and more) participated in Strengthening Bridges outreach and training activities over the last two years



Supported by a grant from the Caring for Denver Foundation, the **Strengthening Bridges Project** coordinates the services of two clinics – the Sturm Center, a behavioral health center for Veterans, Service Members, and their families, and the CUB Clinic, serving families with infants and young children – to integrate services, training, and outreach to meet the specific needs of Military and Veteran family members. Our programs aim to offer high-quality, evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and confidential behavioral health services to Military and Veteran families in Denver.

Key Program Differentiators

- The Sturm Center is the only Veteran/military specific clinic in the Denver Metro area that accepts clients from all categories, thus helping to fill the gaps in services these populations often face. The Center is also able to provide therapy services on a weekly basis for an unlimited number of sessions, which is unique across Veteran/military clinics in Denver and the surrounding areas.
- As one of the only low-cost sites in the state that completes objective medical evidence assessments for the Veteran/military population, clients travel from throughout Colorado and across state lines to obtain these services.
- Governmental agencies, Veterans Service Officers, Veterans Service Organizations, the Veterans Advocacy Project and many other agencies refer clients to the Sturm Center to complete necessary, specific and nuanced evaluations.
- The Sturm Center is open to DU student Veterans and Service Members, as well as their families, for care. We actively partner with the University's Office of Veteran Affairs to promote awareness of this resource and reduce stigma surrounding care.
- The University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology works in close partnership with the University Office of Veteran Affairs on community programming, wrap-around services, and efforts to provide welcoming and culturally sensitive engagement with our Veteran and Service Member community.
- We champion events connected to the memory and celebration of all major Veteran-related holidays, as well as consult on university-wide messaging related to military current events.

Awards and Accolades

The **Governor's Challenge** is a national initiative through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) to develop suicide prevention programs for the military community. Colorado was one of the first few states selected for the program in 2019 and the Sturm Center was one of the initial clinics to participate.

DU Staff met with leaders of major organizations who serve veteran and military populations in order to work towards the zero-suicide mission. Our teams attend periodic local and national policy development sessions with approximately 30 other experts from Colorado and nationally who specialize in suicide prevention, military culture, legislation, policy and/or behavioral health related issues. Collaborative organization partners included the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center, Cohen Veterans Network, Colorado National Guard, Buckley Air Force Base, Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado and the Family Care Center.

This Governor's and Mayor's challenges are now nationwide programs, and we continue to participate alongside 54 other teams across the United States to enhance and align local and state-wide suicide prevention efforts.



2018

The Sturm Center received official commendations by the State of Colorado House of Representatives in May 2018 for their innovative work.

Events Made Possible by You



WeServe, WePlay

The Children's Museum of Denver, Strengthening Bridges, and the Perinatal through Five (P-5) mental health specialty at GSPP have partnered to develop and implement WeServe, WePlay, a community-engaged, culturally sensitive, and evidence informed facilitated play, support, and psychoeducation for military families, Service Members, Veterans and their children.

Curricula emphasizes the value of play and responsive interactions in early childhood, while offering parents support, resources, and a network of peers and professionals to rely on and learn with. This program not only offers families vital resources, but will help our care teams refine our approaches to working with the military family population. WeServe, WePlay begins this Winter at the Children's Museum of Denver.

"At the end [of programming], I felt more grounded in my body, my values and my sense of purpose and meaning." - Music Wellness and Vicarious Trauma Event Participant



FamFair 2023

FamFair 2023: It Takes a Village was a wonderful success! Hosted in partnership with the GSPP's Baby S.T.E.P.S. Lab (Supporting Teachers, Educators, Parents, and Service Providers), University Libraries, and Strengthening Bridges, we had more than 300 registrations, including expectant and current caregivers, children, and community professionals that serve children and families participate in an immersive child development play and learning community event. The fair focused on child social-emotional and cognitive development, interactive play-based learning sessions, music therapy, dance therapy, and networking.



Where War Ends

In collaboration with GSPP's Colorado Opiate Use Disorder/ Substance Use Disorder Training Program and Military Psychology specialty, Caring for Denver Foundation, and Division 19, GSPP proudly hosted Army Veteran, author, speaker, and meditation teacher, Mr. Tom Voss. Mr. Voss debuted his documentary, *Almost Sunrise*, which follows him and fellow Veteran Anthony Anderson on a 2,700-mile walking journey across the country reflecting on their experiences of war and saving themselves from the edge of suicide. A meditation session followed the program.

Music Therapy

Virtual music therapy is an ongoing, rolling admission program for military Service Members, Veterans, and their family members. Music therapy helps to enhance self-expression, cultivate creativity, and help build community. Topics for classes include music and mindfulness, song sharing/discussion, lyric analysis, songwriting, composition, and production.



Looking Ahead

While you may be familiar with the recognition we've received, we want to emphasize that you, our donors, have played a key role in our success as a department and as one of the largest and most comprehensive military psychology and Veteran clinics in the U.S.


With your help, we are taking a multifaceted approach to mental and behavioral health care to ensure that Veterans, Service Members, and their families have access to the appropriate care they deserve. Our goals are not confined to Colorado, or even the tri-state area in which our direct-service clients come from. As our peers and our patients look to us as a knowledge center, our goal is to expand our reach through training, research, and workforce development to develop a national and global network of advocates who are ready to care for the specialized needs of our military communities.

Follow our progress and stay up-to-date on department and programmatic news by subscribing to our newsletters. Email Ramona.Bishop@du.edu to sign up and please indicate if you would like to receive our military-specific newsletter.

Thank you for making a difference for DU.

For more information on how to support GSPP's military and veteran work, please contact Ashley Haliko, Executive Director of Development at Ashley.Haliko@du.edu.



 For more, follow us on Instagram @du_gspp