



UT Health
San Antonio

STRONG STAR Fellowship Programs for Psychologists, Social Workers, and Licensed Professional Counselor Associates

ABOUT STRONG STAR

The South Texas Research Organizational Network Guiding Studies on Trauma And Resilience (STRONG STAR Consortium) is housed at UT Health San Antonio and is part of The University of Texas at San Antonio. The STRONG STAR Consortium is a state and federally funded, multi-institutional research consortium. STRONG STAR's mission is to identify the most efficacious interventions for the prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological health conditions in service members, veterans, and first responders. More information at www.strongstar.org.

At a glance:

- Established in 2008.
- Has secured more than 120 grants from federal, state, and private sources.
- Completed many of the largest randomized clinical trials for PTSD and other psychological health conditions in active duty service members to date.
- Supports over 40 ongoing research projects.
- Specializes in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), chronic pain, sleep disorders, suicide, substance use disorders, tinnitus, and other conditions.

RECRUITING PSYCHOLOGISTS, LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS, AND LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATES FOR FELLOWSHIP TRAINING

UT Health San Antonio and the STRONG STAR Consortium are recruiting highly motivated doctoral psychologists, master's level social workers, and professional counselors to complete fellowship training to support several mental health studies funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) as research therapists. STRONG STAR and UT Health San Antonio have trained more than 40 fellows since 2008, and graduates have secured research and clinical positions in academic, DoD, and VA settings.

The psychology postdoctoral fellowship year begins in Summer or Fall. Social work and professional counseling fellowships are available to start throughout the year.

Research Therapists Gain

- Gold-standard training in evidence-based therapies (PE, CPT, CBT-I, WET, CRP, ACT, and more)
- Close supervision by nationally recognized investigators and clinicians
- Interdisciplinary collaboration across psychology, social work, medicine, and neuroscience
- High-impact research experience with military and veteran populations

- Career springboard into academic, DoD, and VA roles

CURRENT STUDIES IN SAN ANTONIO AND FORT HOOD (KILLEEN, TX)

1. Combining Stellate Ganglion Block with Prolonged Exposure For PTSD: A Randomized Clinical Trial; PI: Dr. Alan Peterson, UT Health San Antonio

This is a randomized clinical trial ($N = 140$) to evaluate the efficacy of (1) a stellate ganglion block (SGB) injection combined with massed Prolonged Exposure (PE; 90-minute PE session once daily for 2 weeks) versus (2) a sham (saline) SGB injection with massed PE for the treatment of PTSD in active duty military personnel. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in San Antonio and one in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

2. Randomized Controlled Trial Of Intensive Multi-Couple Group Therapy For PTSD Versus Relationship Education In Military Couples; PI: Dr. Steffany Fredman, Penn State

This is a randomized clinical trial to compare the efficacy of (1) Abbreviated, Intensive, Multi-Couple Cognitive Behavioral Couples Therapy (AIM-CBCT) for PTSD to (2) Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) for the treatment of PTSD and the enhancement of relationship functioning in 120 military and veteran couples. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in San Antonio and one in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

3. Treatment of TBI-Related Tinnitus and Comorbid PTSD: Examination of Neurobiological Markers Related to Symptom Improvement; PI: Dr. John Moring, UT Health San Antonio

This 2-Armed Crossover RCT will examine the effects of Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD and Progressive Tinnitus Management for the treatment of comorbid TBI-related tinnitus and PTSD in 160 military service members and veterans. A sub-sample of participants undergo resting-state functional magnetic resonance imaging of the limbic, attentional, auditory, and default-mode networks associated with TBI-related tinnitus and PTSD severity at baseline, posttreatment, and 6-month follow-up. One psychology postdoctoral fellow will support the project in San Antonio.

4. Assessment and Treatment of Chronic Anger and Aggression Following Military-Related Interpersonal and Institutional Betrayal: A Pilot Investigation; PIs: Drs. Vanessa Jacoby and Alan Peterson, UT Health San Antonio

This is a pilot test of Countering Chronic Anger and Aggression Related to Trauma and Transgressions (CART), a transdiagnostic, transgression-focused intervention for military personnel who have experienced betrayals. CART directly targets reducing chronic anger/aggression and improving interpersonal relationships ($N = 40$). One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

5. Written Exposure Therapy For Suicide Prevention (WET-SP): A Randomized Clinical Trial; PI: Dr. Brian Marx, Boston University

This is a randomized clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy of Written Exposure Therapy for Suicide (WET-SP) in reducing the incidence and severity of self-injurious thoughts and behaviors in active duty military service members, veterans, and adult military beneficiaries following a psychiatric hospitalization due to suicidal ideation, suicide plans, or a suicide attempt ($N = 124$). One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

6. Accelerated Treatment for Co-occurring Insomnia, Nightmares, and PTSD; PIs: Dr. Carmen McLean, Stanford University and the National Center for PTSD at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System and Dr. Kristi Pruiksma, UT Health San Antonio

The specific aims of this project are to determine the efficacy of accelerated Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia and Nightmares integrated with Written Exposure Therapy (WET) for PTSD among military personnel for improving insomnia symptoms, nightmare symptoms, and PTSD symptoms. Recruitment will be from both Fort Hood and San Antonio. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in San Antonio and one in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

7. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia vs Brief Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia in Military Personnel with Postconcussive Symptoms following Mild TBI; PIs: Dr. Kristi Pruiksma and Dr. Vincent Mysliwiec, UT Health San Antonio

The overall objective is to determine if cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) and brief behavioral therapy for insomnia (BBT-I) can improve outcomes in service members with prolonged postconcussive symptoms following mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) and to explore the impact of insomnia treatment (CBT-I or BBT-I) on prolonged postconcussive symptoms and on blood-based brain biomarkers levels of neuronal integrity and neuronal inflammation. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

8. Implementing and Evaluating a Patient-Centered PTSD Treatment Program for Military Personnel; PIs: Dr. Alan Peterson, UT Health San Antonio, Dr. Vanessa Jacoby, UT Health San Antonio.

This study is a partially randomized preference trial to examine the relationships between patient characteristics, treatment preferences, and treatment outcomes for active duty service members engaging in a shared decision-making preintervention followed by evidence-based treatment for PTSD. The study also aims to evaluate the impact of shared decision-making on PTSD treatment completion and PTSD symptom reduction for active duty military personnel. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

9. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Integrated Vestibular Rehabilitation (ACTIVE) for mTBI: A Randomized Controlled Trial; PI: Anthony Kontos, University of Pittsburgh;

Our overarching hypothesis is that a combined, brief (< 4 weeks) intervention involving both ACT and integrated vestibular rehabilitation (ACTIVE) will reduce symptoms, impairment, and functional limitations, and accelerate return to activity among military service members and civilians following mTBI with vestibular symptoms/impairment compared to usual care vestibular rehabilitation (VESTIB CONTROL). One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

10. Augmenting Massed Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) to Prevent Suicide Risk Among Patients with PTSD; PI Dr. Craig Bryan, The Ohio State University

The primary objective of this project is to determine if suicidal behaviors can be significantly reduced when massed Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for PTSD is enhanced with Crisis Response Planning (CRP). The aims are to determine if the addition of CRP to CPT reduces suicide attempts, to identify early markers of treatment response and relapse of suicide risk, and to identify treatment content and design features that influence treatment effectiveness and acceptability. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

11. MDMA-Enhanced Massed Prolonged Exposure for PTSD in Active Duty Military Personnel; PI: Alan Peterson, PhD, UT Health San Antonio

This randomized clinical trial will compare the efficacy of 100 mg of MDMA (delivered as the active treatment) to 20 mg of MDMA (delivered as the control comparison group) when dosed in combination with Massed Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy given to both groups as the standard of care therapy for the treatment of PTSD in active duty military, guard, and reserve personnel. It will also evaluate potential improvements return to duty readiness, psychosocial functioning, intimate relationship functioning, suicidal ideation, and depression. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in San Antonio and one in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

12. Non-Trauma Intervention to Treat Posttraumatic Stress Disorder for Veterans and Service Members Suffering from a Traumatic Brain Injury; PI: Cindy McGeary, PhD (former Maj, US Air Force), UT Health San Antonio

This study will adapt Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Headache treatment to develop and test Non-Trauma Treatment for mTBI and comorbid PTSD. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

13. ASPIRED: Alleviating Suicidality by Combining Psychotherapy and Intramuscular Ketamine for Rapid Treatment in the Emergency Department: A Randomized Clinical Trial; Robert DeLorenzo, MD (COL, US Army Retired)

This randomized clinical trial will evaluate the efficacy of an intramuscular ketamine injection and Crisis Response Planning for the rapid reduction of suicidal ideation in patients treated in the emergency department at CRDAMC prior to a psychiatric hospitalization for suicide. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in San Antonio and one in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

14. A Randomized Clinical Trial Utilizing Crisis Response Planning for Suicide Prevention in Military Personnel with Traumatic Brain Injury; PI: Hannah Tyler, PhD, UT Health San Antonio

This randomized clinical trial will test Crisis Response Planning as a secondary suicide prevention intervention in service members who are at elevated suicide risk due to their history of concussion or mild TBI. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will support the project in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

15. A Randomized Clinical Trial Using Noninvasive Brain Stimulation Combined with Written Exposure Therapy for PTSD in Military Personnel with Mild TBI; PI: Casey L. Straud, PsyD, University of Texas at San Antonio

This randomized clinical trial will test the synergistic effects of combining transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) with written exposure therapy for the treatment of PTSD in military service members and veterans ($N = 150$) with mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI). Secondary objectives will evaluate improvements in persistent postconcussive symptoms (PCS) secondary to mTBI, examine tDCS effects on physiological mechanisms of extinction learning, and to explore the dynamic timing of PTSD and PCS improvements to better understand the relationship between these comorbid conditions. Two psychology postdoctoral fellows, licensed professional counselor fellows, or social work fellows will support the project in San Antonio, Texas.

CLINICAL PROGRAM AT KILLEEN

1. Strong Families Support and Prevention Program; Project Directors: Dr. Vanessa Jacoby, UT Health San Antonio

The Strong Families Support and Prevention Program is funded by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Division of Prevention and Intervention to provide prevention services and evidence-based PTSD treatment to military service members, veterans, and their families. One psychology postdoctoral fellow, licensed professional counselor fellow, or social work fellow will be available in Killeen, Texas, at Fort Hood.

CLINICAL PROGRAM AT SAN ANTONIO

1. Clinical Health Psychology Fellowship; Project Director: Dr. Donald McGeary, UT Health San Antonio

This clinical fellowship will offer applied training in Clinical Health Psychology overseen by supervisors with board certification in Clinical Health Psychology through the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). Fellows will receive training in established treatments for Clinical Health Psychology concerns including Chronic Pain, Insomnia, Weight Management and Biofeedback (using Nexus-10 hardware). Clinical training will be supplemented by applied clinical research training with funds available for the fellow to generate their own pilot research.

PSYCHOLOGY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

- APA Accredited Doctoral Program
- APA Accredited Internship
- Postdoctoral fellowships are sometimes available to students from other disciplines
- Unrestricted ability to work in the US

SOCIAL WORK FELLOWSHIP APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

- Social work applicants should have completed a master's in social work (MSW) from a Council on Social Work Education accredited program
- Current LMSW licensure (or eligibility for LMSW licensure)
- Unrestricted ability to work in the US

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING FELLOWSHIP APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

- Professional counseling applicants should have a completed a master's degree in counseling or a related field that is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
- Unrestricted ability to work in the US

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are accepted throughout the year until the positions are filled. Applicants are asked to send (1) their CV, (2) three Letters of Recommendation, and (3) a Statement of Interest to the following:

For STRONG STAR study positions:

Dr. Alan Peterson: PetersonA3@uthscsa.edu

For Strong Families Support and Prevention Program:

Dr. Vanessa Jacoby: jacobyv@uthscsa.edu

BENEFITS

- Competitive salary at the established NIH fellowship and internship stipend levels
- Health and dental insurance
- Generous paid time off policy
- Support for scientific meeting attendance

For More Information, Please Contact Us**Alan Peterson, PhD, APBB**

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WEBSITE: www.strongstar.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Psychology postdoctoral fellows and social work/professional counseling interns will work for the **Division of Behavioral Medicine within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at The University of Texas at San Antonio and for the STRONG STAR Consortium**. Our postdoctoral fellows have published articles in high-quality, peer-reviewed journals, co-authored book chapters, and presented research at national conferences. Other achievements by STRONG STAR fellows include being awarded student loan repayment through the NIH and being hired on as faculty of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences following their postdoctoral fellowships. Fellows will receive expert training and on-going weekly supervision in gold-standard assessments and evidence-based treatments for posttraumatic stress disorder, suicide, and relationship enhancements. Fellows will receive weekly clinical supervision to meet the psychology licensure requirements for the State of Texas and most other states.



UT Health San Antonio (left photo). The Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences and the STRONG STAR Consortium offices in San Antonio are located in the Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (right photo).



The STRONG STAR offices at Fort Hood are located in the Shoemaker Center (top photo) and the Intrepid Spirit Center (bottom photo).

The University of Texas at San Antonio is an Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer including protected veterans and persons with disabilities. All postdoctoral appointments are designated as security sensitive positions. UT San Antonio is committed to excellence through diversity.