

1st Infantry Division hosts panel about wellness studies

FORT RILEY, Kan. - The 1st Infantry Division hosted a panel this morning in regards to Victory Wellness programs and its effectiveness.

The panel was held to explain the effectiveness of the Victory Wellness program. During the event Soldiers were encouraged to discuss their experience with Operation Victory Wellness. Soldiers also discussed alternative ways to assess mental health.

Dr. Amy Adler, the senior scientist at the Center for Military Psychiatry and Neuroscience at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, opened the panel with a series of studies that show direct links between victory wellness programs, and a series of variables, ranging from leadership communication to trust in the units.

“There is a direct correlation between unit readiness and wellness of the unit's soldiers,” said Adler when she was explaining how readiness can be effected by wellness. Adler would further explain several tactics that could be used to promote unit readiness and wellness simultaneously.

“Out of 9,000 surveys that were taken, approximately 7,000 of them responded” mentioned Adler when she was going through how she came across her findings. “People want to be heard more than anything else.”

Doctor of Psychology Craig Bryan, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral health at Ohio State University, followed Adler for the second half of the discussion. Bryan discussed his findings that show links between suicidality in the military. These links range between lack of unit cohesion to knowledge of suicide prevention.

“We need to begin moving from passive approaches to suicide prevention such as screenings said Bryan, “we need to begin taking more active approaches like active listening or

helping change the circumstances”. Bryan would follow up with five different tactics he has found effective to lower both suicide and suicidal idealization.

Bryan also discussed his mental health studies as well as common misinterpretations and theories about mental health. Bryan elaborated by showing the stigma that mental health is a primary factor in suicide idealizations and how people need to change their perception in order to find new ways to counter suicide idealization.

“Over 50% of suicide decedants deny suicide idealization or do not mention suicidal thoughts”, added Bryan. “75% of people that exhibit suicidal behavior only idealize suicide that same day.”

Bryan concluded the portion by reminding the audience that he is still actively studying suicide prevention and mental health. He ended with stating that active approaches to suicide prevention are more effective than passive approaches.

The panel concluded with an open floor for the audience to ask questions about any of the topics discussed or expound on a certain section of the discussions.