

# May

## PRA eNews

### Sarah Desmarais, PhD, Joins Policy Research



Policy Research welcomes Senior Vice President Sarah Desmarais, PhD. Dr. Desmarais is responsible for developing and providing oversight on research projects, as well as administrative and management duties in support of a variety of other projects. She received her Master's and PhD in Forensic Psychology and Law from Simon Fraser University in 2005 and 2008, respectively. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. Prior to joining PRA, Dr. Desmarais was a tenured Professor of Psychology and University Faculty Scholar at North Carolina State University. There she held leadership positions including serving as Director of the Center for Family and Community Engagement and Coordinator of the Applied Social and Community Psychology Graduate Program. She also was a member of the NC State University Research Leadership Academy and Academy of Outstanding Faculty Engaged in Extension.

Dr. Desmarais works on issues at the intersection of public health, community safety, and social justice. Her current research is focused on evidence-based practices for reducing detention rates, especially among people with behavioral health needs. She provides technical assistance and consultation to behavioral health, criminal justice, and intelligence agencies throughout the United States and abroad on problems and solutions for implementation, policy, and practice. Dr. Desmarais has authored more than 120 peer-reviewed publications in journals including the American Journal of Public Health, Criminal Justice and Behavior, and Law and Human Behavior. She has served as principal investigator and co-investigator on more than \$9 million in grants and contracts from foundations and government agencies including the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute of Justice, and the National Science Foundation. Her work has been featured in national media outlets such as the Washington Post and HBO's Last Week Tonight with John Oliver.

### Memorial Day: Honoring Heroes, and Preventing Suicide



At the end of this month, communities will join together as trumpeting parades and quiet observances honor the memories of U.S. men and women who died while in military service. Alongside these hallmarks of Memorial Day, there is a grief that has too often remained unspoken and unrecognized: that experienced by those left behind when a servicewoman or serviceman dies of suicide. While we celebrate and commemorate those brave lives lost in physical battles, the numerous lives lost to the raging battles of the mind are no less fallen and deserving of honor. These are the battles that continue to be fought long after the physical war is over. The issue of death by suicide among these heroes transcends all race, age, and socioeconomic factors, and the painful ripple effects of the loss carry far beyond any one family.

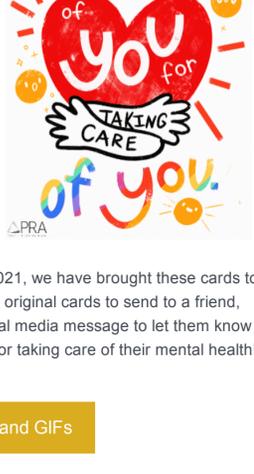
Now more than ever, surviving service members, Veterans, and their families (SMVF) are raising their voices to spread awareness and rally support for interventions, and their neighbors and leaders are answering the call. Prevention of death by suicide among service members and Veterans is a public health crisis that demands widespread attention and intervention, grounded in an understanding of the nature of the issues involved.

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### Celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and each year Policy Research celebrates this opportunity to raise consciousness around the importance of mental health care and to encourage people to seek help when they need it.

Last year, we created a suite of three images celebrating mental health care—all available for free, public use—to encourage community conversations about the importance of taking care of your mental health. The images were inspired by the global "Rainbow Hunt" movement, which seeks to inspire hope and positivity during the COVID-19 pandemic. A year later, it is as important as ever to take care of your mental health and to encourage others to do the same.



In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month 2021, we have brought these cards to life as animated GIFs. Download the GIF files or the original cards to send to a friend, colleague, or loved one in an email, a text, or a social media message to let them know that you're thinking of them and are proud of them for taking care of their mental health!

[Download the Images and GIFs](#)

### Do You Really Know Resilience? New Research: How Organizations Should Be Preventing Burnout



*By Jenny Green, Vice President of Business Development, WELCOA*

Why is wellness important to your company or business? Why invest in the wellness of your people? While your answer as an organization is going to be as unique as the personal goals we have for our wellness as individuals, one thing is for certain. The pandemic upset the work/life balance of people around the world. We're experiencing burnout on a scale of which most organizations have never seen. Leaders are beginning to rally around resilience and look for ways to build their workplaces, cultures, and resource base to help employees adapt effectively to life events.

But organizational resilience has become synonymous with stress management. While our ability to endure is crucial, it's only part of the solution. Building resilience is not about helping people absorb the punches better. It is about solving their problems with compassion. This is not about fixing employees. It is about giving them the proper tools and resources—helping them build skills that actually improve their lives.

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### Upcoming Events

#### **SOAR and Equity Webinar—Improving Equity and Inclusion in SOAR Programs**

May 25, 2021, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET  
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

In this webinar, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center will address barriers to equity in SOAR implementation and present strategies to overcome them. It will include a panel discussion with a diverse group of SOAR providers who are working on creating equitable and more culturally relevant SOAR programs in their communities.

#### **Fostering Trauma-Informed Approaches in Your Courtroom: Resources for Judges, Court Staff, and Providers**

May 26, 2021, 2:30-4:00 p.m. ET  
SAMHSA's GAINS Center

Trauma-informed courts acknowledge the prevalence of trauma among people involved in the criminal legal system as well as the risk for vicarious trauma among professionals working in these settings. This webinar will cover key concepts on the importance of adopting a trauma-informed approach in drug treatment courts and provide practical information on how to implement trauma-informed practices.

#### **Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) in Drug Courts Virtual Learning Community (Part 2): Overcoming Barriers to Social Integration for MAT Participants**

May 27, 2021, 2:00-4:00 p.m. ET  
SAMHSA's GAINS Center

Personal recovery is promoted when individuals receiving MAT have safe, stable, and drug-free housing; employment; and access to social support systems. This webinar will document barriers to such social integration for persons on MAT and will outline strategies for overcoming these social barriers. The webinar will take place from 2:00-3:00 p.m.; those joining the discussion group will remain in the same virtual event space when the format transitions at 3:00 p.m.

#### **The Future of Teleservices in Drug Courts (Part 1): Where Are We Now? Recent Developments and Emerging Opportunities**

June 16, 2021, 1:00-3:00 p.m. ET  
SAMHSA's GAINS Center

The first installment in this three-part Virtual Learning Community presents a retrospective view of the transition to teleservices from the perspective of treatment court practitioners, a review of the mounting evidence-base for teleservices in treatment court settings, commentary on the potential for enhancing best practice standards through the use of teleservices, and results of a nationwide survey of treatment courts regarding practice modifications, implementation barriers, effective innovations, and intent to continue use of teleservices. The webinar will take place from 1:00-2:15 p.m.; those joining the discussion group will remain in the same virtual event space when the format transitions at 2:15 p.m.

#### **Early Diversion Virtual Learning Community (Part 4): Developing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships with Law Enforcement That Survive Changing Times**

June 17, 2021, 2:00-4:00 p.m. ET  
SAMHSA's GAINS Center

Access to treatment services, staffing, and service models have been altered due to the pandemic and recent reframing of law enforcement and behavioral health partnerships. In this webinar, presenters will describe how community partnerships with law enforcement, such as Crisis Intervention Team programs, have adapted to address the needs of individuals in crisis or in contact with law enforcement. The webinar will take place from 2:00-3:00 p.m.; those joining the discussion group will remain in the same virtual event space when the format transitions at 3:00 p.m.

#### **Mental Health Training for Juvenile Justice Train-the-Trainer**

June-July 2021  
National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice

Developed for juvenile detention, and corrections professionals, this virtual training provides critical information and practical strategies for interacting with youth who are experiencing mental health, substance use, and traumatic stress conditions. It provides research-based instruction that increases juvenile justice practitioner knowledge and develops and enhances instruction to support effective and safe interactions with youth.

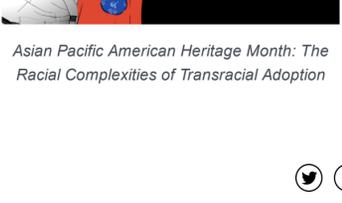
### Recent Stories From the PRA Blog



*PRA Hobbies: What have you been working on? Part 2*



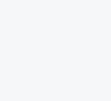
*Recognizing Asian/Pacific American Heritage and History beyond the Month of May*



*Asian Pacific American Heritage Month: The Racial Complexities of Transracial Adoption*



*Writing for Wellness: Just Me and My Running Shoes*



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