

TRAUMA CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Improving Access at UW Medicine

THE TRAUMA RECOVERY INNOVATION PROGRAM at UW Medicine conducts groundbreaking research to improve care for people who experience traumatic events, such as sexual assault, natural disasters and combat exposure. Such events can lead to substance abuse, clinical depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, commonly known as PTSD. Left untreated, these conditions can last a lifetime, placing a heavy burden on families, communities and the economy. An estimated \$3 billion per year is lost in worker productivity in the U.S. due to PTSD alone.

The key to improving trauma care is to increase access to interventions that work. With the **Trauma Recovery Innovation Program** at UW Medicine, we take existing interventions for mental health and adapt them to address the unique challenges faced by trauma victims. We also train current and future trauma researchers and clinicians, so that people suffering from trauma can get the best help available — today and for generations to come. We invite you to join us in this important work.

Accelerating Change

By adapting existing methods, the Trauma Recovery Innovation Program can provide earlier intervention, can provide more accessible interventions, and can more precisely target treatments to reduce the severity and chronic nature of trauma symptoms. We are seeking funding for all the projects listed below.

Identifying those at risk. No one knows for sure why some people who experience traumatic events develop PTSD, while others don't. By adapting a short computer test that was originally designed to predict suicide risk, we hope to better understand the risk factors associated with developing PTSD, so that we can quickly deliver treatment to those most in need.

Reaching rural patients. The standard psychosocial treatments for PTSD take between nine and 15 one-hour sessions. This time commitment is unrealistic for many people in rural or underserved areas who have to travel for miles to see a counselor. We want to adapt a phone-based intervention, one proven to reduce alcohol consumption, to use as a shorter, more convenient treatment in addressing early recovery following trauma exposure.

Helping students cope. Many college students who have been sexually assaulted cope with the trauma by drinking heavily. This has both short- and long-term consequences for the trauma victim, including increasing problems with alcohol and worsening of PTSD symptoms. By adapting a promising web-based intervention to a mobile app, we can help more college students cope with sexual assault sooner.

Accelerating the healing process. Avoidance behavior — trying not to think about the trauma and suppressing feelings about it — inhibits healing from PTSD. We want to encourage people to use coping strategies that are likely to prevent the development of PTSD and other trauma-related reactions. One possible way of accomplishing this is with personalized text messages. We plan to test how effective these text messages are at accelerating the healing process.

Training the Next Generation

Ensuring that researchers and clinicians have the skills to address trauma-related health issues is critical to our mission. Many providers cannot afford to attend trainings and complete the necessary clinical follow-up needed to master the skills for caring for trauma patients. This is especially true for providers who work in rural areas or with underserved populations.

Additionally, we aim to support researchers who are developing brief, portable and adaptable treatments for trauma patients. An investment in **scholarships** for devoted clinicians and **fellowships** for early-career scientists will allow us to train the next generation of trauma-care experts.

Recruiting and Retaining Superb Leaders

Endowed faculty positions are vital to UW Medicine. The resources and prestige they confer help us recruit and retain superb faculty members who lead important programs and initiatives — and they provide a permanent and reliable source of support. We seek to establish one endowed professorship to help lead the Trauma Recovery Innovation Program.

Opportunities to Invest

Although projects like those listed in this proposal are immensely valuable to our work, they can be difficult to fund — or to fund quickly. For instance, grants from federal grants tend to support well-established projects, rather than experimental projects or those that test feasibility, and the funding process is slow. Private philanthropy allows us to test new ideas more quickly and with more flexibility—and it also allows us to fund needs such as fellowships and scholarships.

With your support, we can move projects and programs forward at an accelerated pace to ensure more people have access to high-quality trauma care. Below are a few ways you can invest in our program.

Identify those at risk. Investment will help us develop a short, computer-based test to identify those at risk for PTSD.	\$100,000
Reach rural patients. Gifts will help us gather initial feasibility data to develop this phone-based intervention.	\$100,000
Help students to cope. Funding will help us gather initial feasibility data and program this app aimed at helping college students cope with sexual assault and alcohol abuse.	\$50,000
Accelerate recovery. Gifts will help us test our existing prototype and conduct initial feasibility testing around improving trauma recovery with the use of brief text messages. This data will then support a larger grant application.	\$50,000– \$150,000
Fellowships for investigators. Investment will provide fellowships for early-career scientists and researchers who want to specialize in PTSD.	\$50,000
Scholarships for providers. Investment will help us train community providers in the latest and most effective ways to help those affected by trauma.	\$25,000
Endowed professorship. Gifts will support a substantial portion of the program leader’s annual salary.	\$500,000

Join Us

To support the Trauma Recovery Innovation Program or learn more about preventing and treating trauma, please contact Cassidy Gammill, assistant director for philanthropy, at 206.221.0635 or cgammill@uw.edu. Thank you for your interest in our work.