



### McCracken Legacy Recipient: Helen Viola Gough

#### 2009 Summary of Research

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provides services to over 100,000 senior veterans. Many suffer from age related conditions or cope with the psychological long-term impact of military service (GAC, 2006; Canada, 2008). To aid them VAC contracts hundreds of private occupational therapists from across Canada. VAC and OTs are committed to providing rehabilitation around a client-centred care philosophy. Little is known about the work provided by occupational therapists, the occupational impact of late-life posttraumatic stress-like symptoms, or the institutional process organizing care to older adult veterans and their spouses. During the last year and half, my research has attempted to organize the diverse literature, construct occupational specific concepts, and develop a detailed proposal to care for our Canadian older adult veteran.

Examples:

[1] \*Gough, H.V. & Hollis, V. (2010). Veterans' perceptions of healthcare supports: A systematic review and meta-synthesis. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 77 (on-line supplement). doi: 10.2182/cjot.10.001. Available at: <http://www.caot.ca/default.asp?pageid=2396>.

The recipient planned, collected, synthesized and analyzed data for this paper. Findings will be presented by the applicant at the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapist May 2010 Halifax Conference and a post presentation was presented on a similar topic at the 19th World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Paris, France (abstract appearing in the *Journal of Nutrition, Health and Aging*, 13(4), 2009.)

[2] \* Gough, H.V., Hollis, V., & Daum, C. (2010). Senior Veteran Mental Health Post War: An Occupational Perspective. 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Montreal, Nov 2010.

The recipient planned, collected, and analyzed data for this paper. The abstract for this paper was submitted for the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Annual Meeting poster presentation.

[3] \*Gough, H.V., O'Brian, B., & Hollis, V. (2010). Text-Mediated Relations: An Institutional Ethnographers account of their Occupational Therapy Practice with Disabled Veterans in the Community. Institutional Ethnography Division of the Society of the Study of Social Problems. Atlanta, GA., Aug., 13-15.

The recipient planned the study and will assist with analysis. Abstract accepted to present findings as a paper presentation at the Society of the Study of Social Problems Annual Conference, Aug 2010. Potential peer-reviewed publications to be written once study is complete in April 2010.

**2009 Summary of Clinical Work**

I continue to actively work in rural Alberta with veterans struggling with mental health issues due to military service. The following highlights two areas I am currently working within which influences my academic research with veterans:

[1] Mental Health Clinical Care Manager (Mar 2009-present, full time)

The recipient conducts client assessments, engages with veteran struggling with Operational Stress Injuries (disorders caused/exacerbated by military service) and confer with health care providers to develop action plans with interventions to assist in community reintegration towards vocational retraining.

[2] Veterans Affairs Canada Occupational Therapist (Mar 2007-present, contract part-time)

Edmonton, Alberta & British Columbia; Community Occupational Therapist, conduct client assessments in the community and long term care settings, provide appropriate occupational therapy treatment, plan, provide, coordinate, and follow up on treatment and interventions.

I kindly thank all those who are involved in the McCracken Legacy award for their generous support.

Sincerely,

Helen Viola Gough