Using Data & Information Systems in Partnered Research

Session 3:

Revisiting Focus Groups: A Systemic Approach to Collaboration Beyond Operational Partners in Generating Evaluation Recommendations

July 18, 2023

Hosted by VIReC

Ellen A. Ahlness, PhD

Qualitative Methodologist, Seattle-Denver COIN

Sherry Ball, PhD

Investigator, VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System
Co-Director, VA Collaborative Evaluation Center

Using Data & Information Systems in
Partnered Research Cyberseminar Series

*Presentations from the field focusing on VA data use
in quality improvement and operations-research partnerships.*

Sessions cover...

- Use of VA data and information systems in QUERI Projects and Partnered Evaluation Initiatives

- Operational data resources and QI-related data

- Challenges in using and managing multiple data sources

- VA resources to support data use

- Experiences working within operations/research partnerships

Where can I download a copy of the slides?

SAMPLE EMAIL

A Practical Approach to Working with VA-Purchased Community Care Data

Thursday, October 13, 2022
2:00 PM | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada) | 1 hr

Please download today's slides
Please click here for today's live captions

Join webinar

More ways to join:

Join from the webinar link
https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?

Poll #1:

*What is your primary **role** in projects using VA data?*

- Investigator, PI, Co-I
- Statistician, methodologist, biostatistician
- Data manager, analyst, or programmer
- Project coordinator
- Other – please describe via the chat function
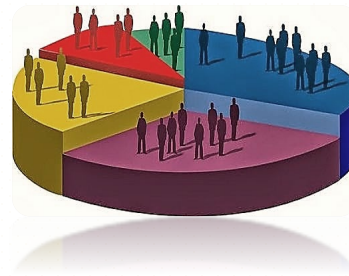
Poll #2:

How many years of experience working with VA data?

- None – I'm brand new to this!
- One year or less
- More than 1, less than 3 years
- At least 3, less than 7 years
- At least 7, less than 10 years
- 10 years or more

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Acknowledgements

- **Team Members**
  - Seppo Rinne, MD, PhD (MPI)
  - George Sayre, PsyD (MPI)
  - Brie Molloy-Paolillo, PhD
  - Christian Helfrich, PhD
  - Julian Brunner, PhD

- **Funders**
  - QUERI
  - Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA), operational partner

SCHOLAR QUERI

Session roadmap

- Setting the stage, project context

- Why focus groups?

- The integration process
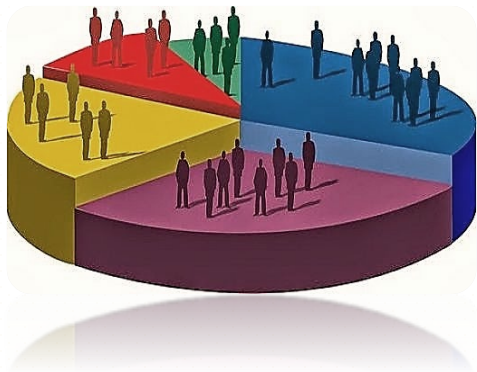
- Findings

- Lessons Learned

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Poll #3:

Was any part of your professional training spent in VA?

- Yes, internship

- Yes, residency

- Yes, fellowship

- Yes, practicum

- Yes, other

- No

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Setting the Stage

Project Context

SCHOLAR QUERI

- **VA QUERI PEC 21-280**

- "Strengthening Cerner Implementation for Health Professions Trainees to Optimize Learning and Reinforce Veteran Care"

- **Main goal:** Apply a mixed-methods approach to understand an[...] electronic health record modernization (EHRM)

- **Site focus:** Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Center (Columbus)

- **Site Focus:** VA Central Ohio Healthcare System (VISN 10)
  - 3rd VA EHR transition site
  - Go-live: April 30th, 2022
  - Outpatient services and same day ambulatory surgery
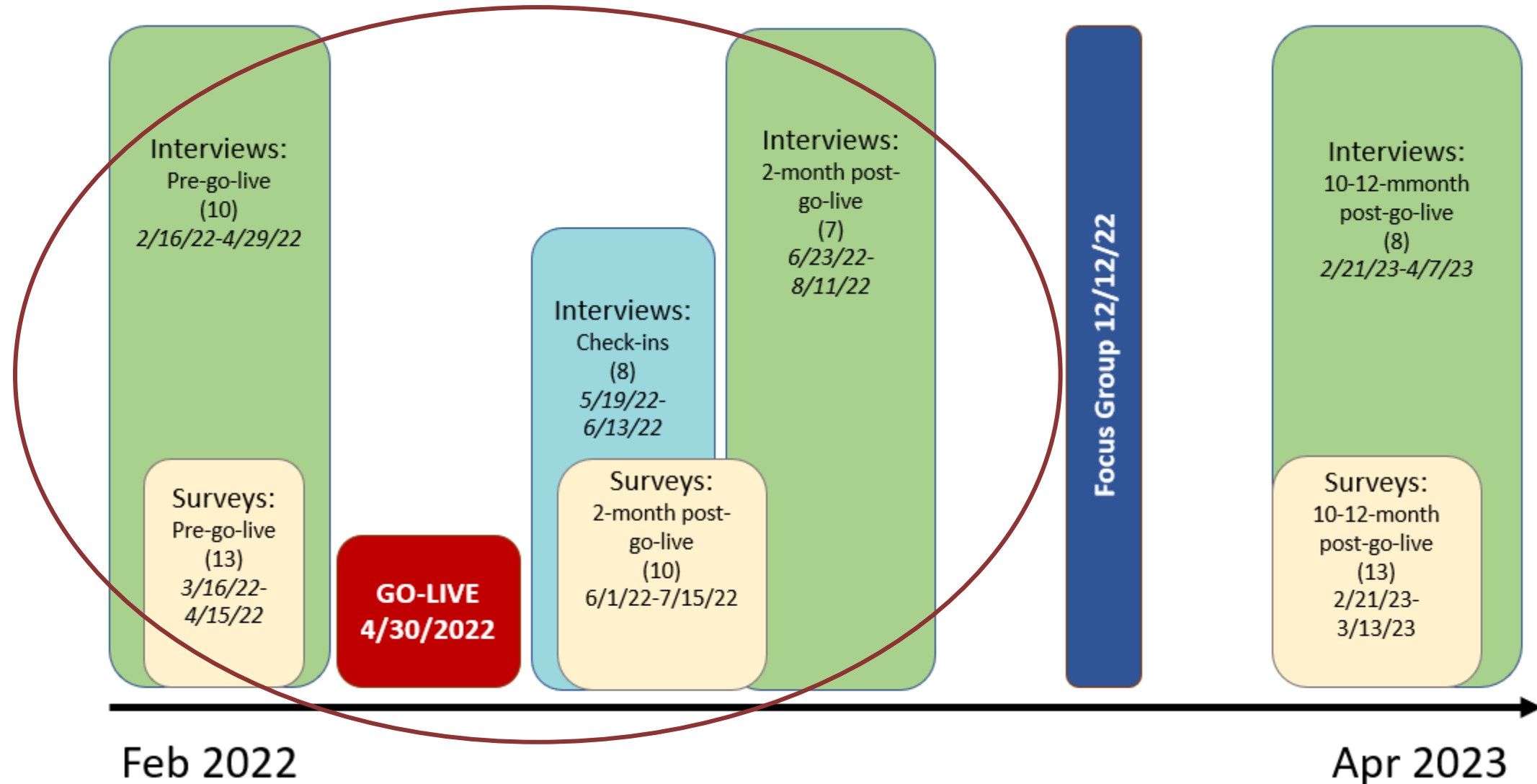
SCHOLAR Overview

- Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) play a key role in VA's care delivery

- VA educates more trainees than any other US healthcare system (~113,000/year)

- Residents and other health trainees have unique needs and require a focused EHR transition evaluation

- Rotations are:
  - Short
  - Episodic
  - Taking place at different stages of an EHR transition

- *We need effective recommendations to support HPTs through EHR transitions*

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SCHOLAR Data Collection

Interviews:
Pre-go-live
(10)
2/16/22-4/29/22

Surveys:
Pre-go-live
(13)
3/16/22-
4/15/22

GO-LIVE
4/30/2022

Interviews:
Check-ins
(8)
5/19/22-
6/13/22

Surveys:
2-month post-
go-live
(10)
6/1/22-7/15/22

Interviews:
2-month post-
go-live
(7)
6/23/22-
8/11/22

Focus Group 12/12/22

Interviews:
10-12-mmonth
post-go-live
(8)
2/21/23-4/7/23

Surveys:
10-12-month
post-go-live
(13)
2/21/23-
3/13/23

Feb 2022

Apr 2023

SCHOLAR Thematic Findings as Data

- Several found HPTs' EHR training to be inefficient and poorly tailored

- The EHR transition severely disrupted the process of granting EHR access to HPTs

- Delayed EHR access lessens the reliability of HPT contributions
  - EHR functionality issues result in less HPT contribution to clinical care
  - Attendings face their own learning curve
  - HPT data is harder to obtain and less reliable

- The transition to Cerner made VA less appealing to some HPTs

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Why Focus Groups?

'Reporting up'

Reporting Up

- **VHA is a learning system**
  - VA aligns research with operational priorities
  - Collaborations: ORD, HSRD, and Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA)
  - HPTs comprise a key element of this collaborative ecosystem

- **Evidence Act (2019)**
  - Decisions are based on rigorous evidence and data
  - Systematic and rigorous collection and dissemination of evidence informed by diverse viewpoints and methods

Reporting Up

GAP

- Aligning evaluation/research findings to operations – provide recommendations
- Uncertainty in translating data into practice improvements (recommendations)
- No set of standards

*Filling the gap through clinical & operational **partnerships***

Reporting Up

Team Objectives

– Test/develop a potential practice for turning value-neutral data into informed recommendations

– Produce data-driven recommendations

– Honor collaborative partner aims and expertise

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Checklist of Needs

Project Specific Needs

- Format transferrable to later project site iterations

- Capture recommendations that include contextual concerns and pragmatics to inform iterations

- Bring in operational/clinical partners

- Ensure format is not redundant with data collection processes

Program Specific Needs

- Format transferrable to other projects

- Ensure format is not redundant with data collection processes – value added

- Integrate evaluators, researchers, operations, and clinicians

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Integrating Focus Groups

Steps

- **Identify participants: diverse group of participants**
  - Include decision makers, operational partners
  - Include leadership to front line
  - Interview guide: Develop interview guide that is focus on recommendations and Idea generating

- **Focus group**
  - Task-oriented - recommendations – share via email
  - Foster exchange: Real time triangulation and corroboration of ideas
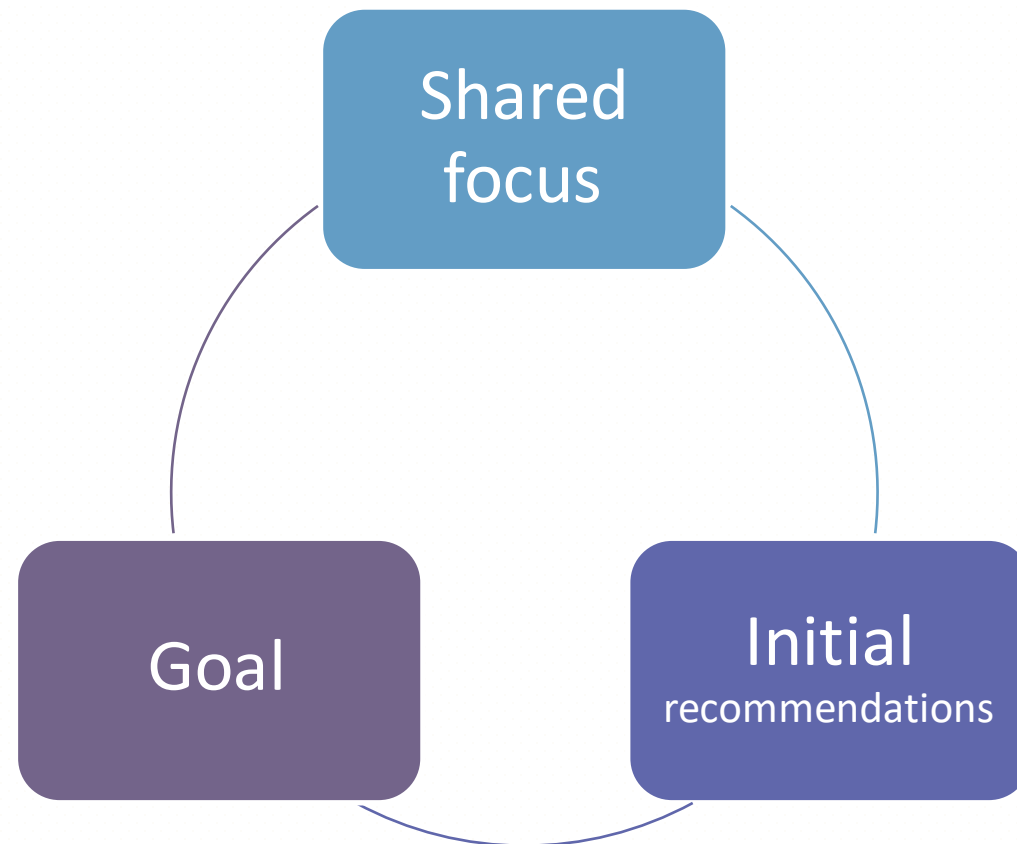
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Sampling Participants

Local
Director

Trainee
Liaison

Operational
Partner

Operational
Partner

Operational
Partner

Sampling: Email invitation to focus on

Interview Guide

0. Tell us about your role in the VA.

Previously Established goal

1. Related to the Cerner transition, **what are the largest barriers to achieving this goal?**
2. Related to the Cerner transition, **what has been helpful towards achieving this goal?**

Previously Compiled Recommendations

1. Are there any **barriers to these recommendations** that haven't been mentioned?
2. Are there any **additional recommendations** you would make?

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Fostering discussion During the Focus Groups

Known specialties

Decision Makers

Cross-referencing

Dynamic

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Findings
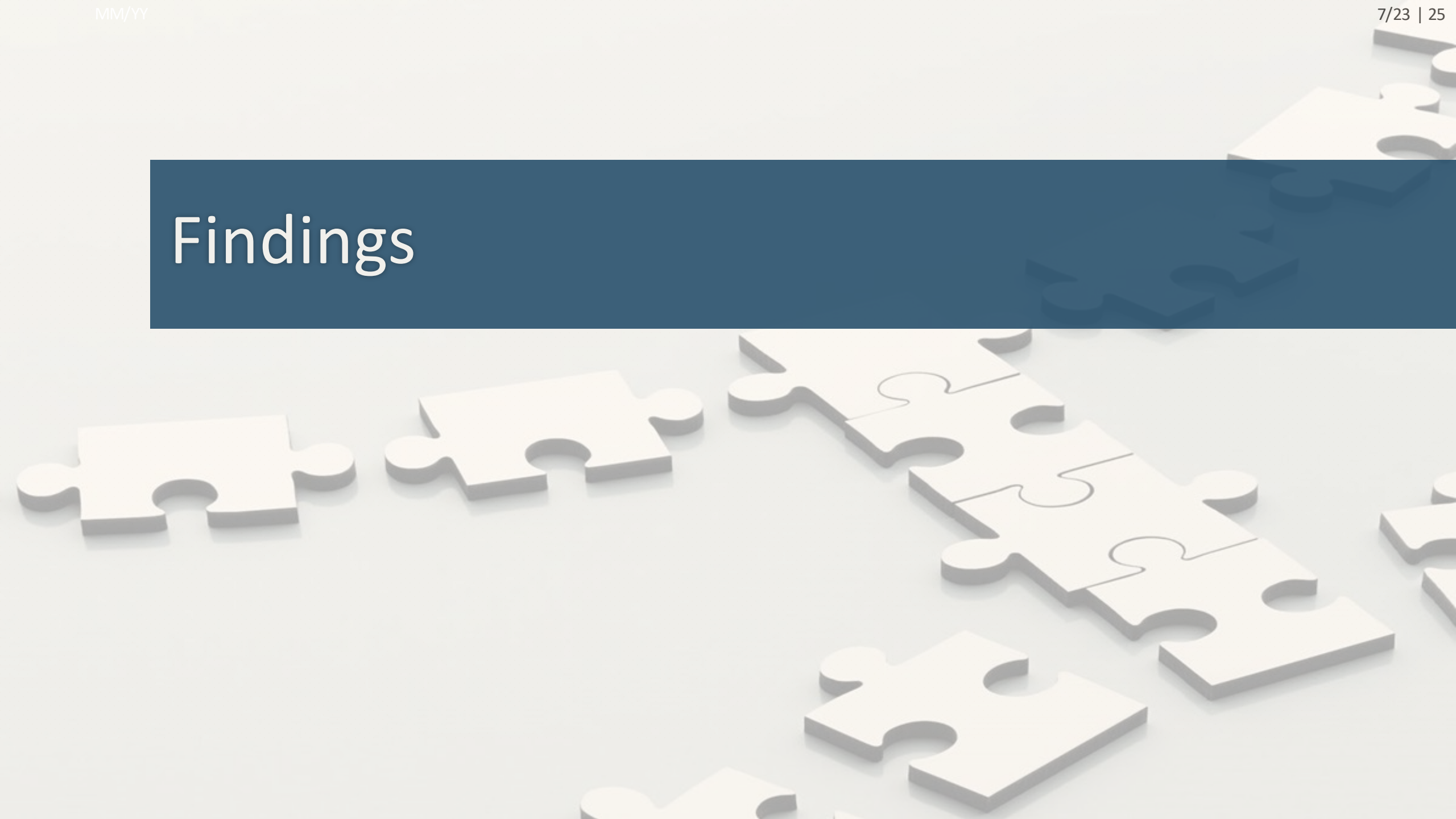
Themes

Work Done
- Community of sharing
- Disseminating best practices

Needs
- Resources on supervising HPTs in Cerner don't exist
- Facilitating *Day 1 Access*
- Self-assigned TMS trainings

Persisting Issues
- *Many*
- Provisioning process obscure
- Excessive training
- Contacting/ assigning trainees

Concerns
- Finding data for issues under discussion

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Thematic Recommendations

- Facilitating Day 1 Access:
  - Onboarding: shaped by sites
  - Establishing Facility Trainee Onboarding Coordinator

- Best practices sharing:
  - Centralize artifacts, actively promote solutions across sites

- Need for higher-level body to address issues:
  - Establishment of HPT Education Council

- Persisting issues:
  - HPT credit
  - Documenting preceptor workload
  - Running reports for Congress on HPT workload

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Lessons Learned
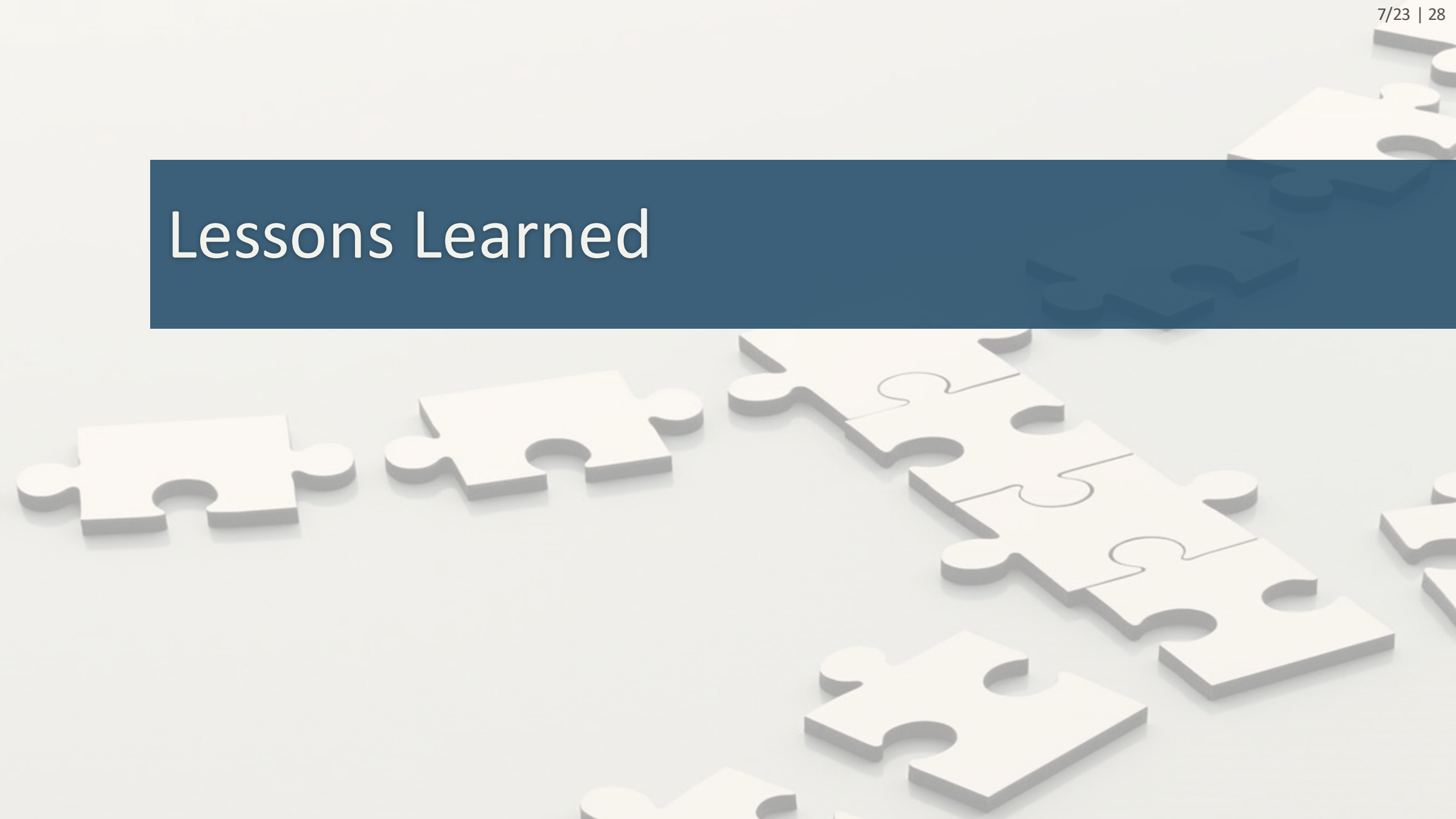
What Went Well

- Participants:
  - referred to other participants to comment more
  - clarified points being made by others
  - reflected on others input
  - improved credibility of the data

- Platform for participants to have their **voices heard**

- **Participants thanked us for the "therapy session"**
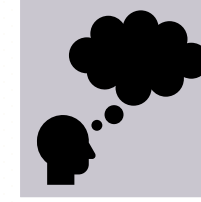
Recommendations
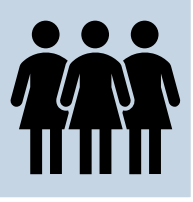
Center Group Dynamics

- Relationships matter!
- Keep groups small
- Leverage existing member familiarity

Hand Over the Reigns

- Take a step back
- Listen first, guide second
- Anticipate member expertise

Keeping in Mind...

- *Do* step in if fixations develop

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Next Steps...

Less time on introductions

More time on:
- Barriers/facilitators to identified recommendations
-Ongoing issues

Design initial stages with attention to incorporating data from groups into reports

THANK YOU!
Questions?

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Ellen Ahlness, PhD

Qualitative Methodologist, Seattle-Denver COIN

Ellen.A.AhlnessAbdulmuminov@va.gov

Sherry Ball, PhD

Investigator, VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System
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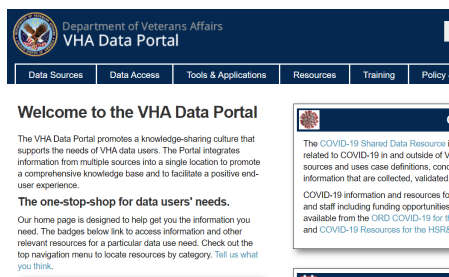
Sherry.Ball@va.gov

Partnered Research
BONUS SLIDES

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Resources for *VA Data Users*

Select image to visit page
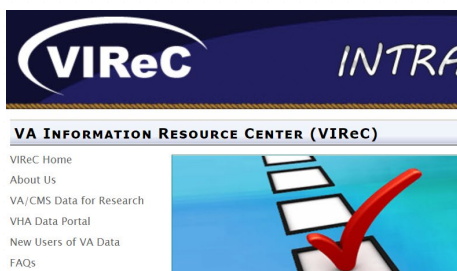
VA Information Resource Center (VIReC) (VA Intranet)
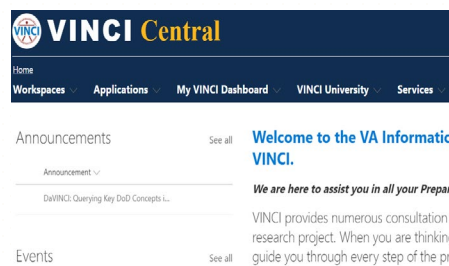

VHA Data Portal (VA Intranet)
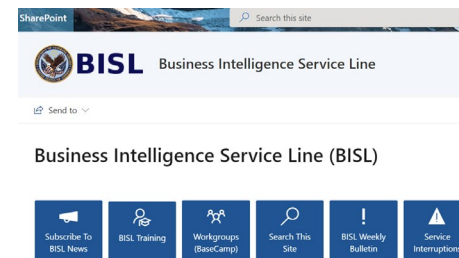

VIReC Cyberseminars
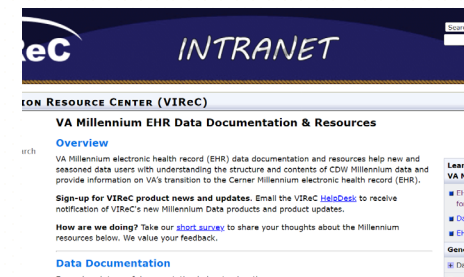
VA Millennium EHR Data Documentation (VA Intranet)

Quick Guide: Resources for Using VA Data (VA Intranet)

VA Informatics and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI) (VA Intranet)

BISL/CDW (VA Intranet)

Health Economics Resource Center (HERC) (VA Intranet)

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HSRData Listserv

o Community knowledge sharing

o ~1,400 VA data users

o Researchers, operations, data stewards, managers

o Subscribe by visiting
vaww.virec.research.va.gov/Support/HSRData-L.htm (VA Intranet)

VIReC HelpDesk

o Individualized support

o Request Form:
varedcap.rcp.vaec.va.gov/redcap/surveys/?s=KXMEN77LXK (VA Intranet)

Questions about using VA Data?