

GRM



**GLOBAL
RESPONSE
MEDICINE**

SPRING 2025

BRIDGING BORDERS OF CARE

Treating the Invisible Wounds of War
2-Week Immersion at Home Base



SUMMARY

In 2024, the government of Ukraine requested support from Global Response Medicine (GRM) and partners, including Home Base (HB), to enhance the country's capacity to address invisible wounds. This effort facilitated an exchange for six Ukrainian clinicians, national leaders in mental health care and policy for service members, veterans, prisoners of war (POWs), and first responders. Despite expertise in psychology, psychiatry, and traumatic brain injury (TBI), these professionals face significant gaps between demand and existing infrastructure. The initiative was modeled after GRM's 2023–2024 polytrauma and burn care exchange, developed in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), the EU Foreign Policy Initiative, and leading U.S. hospitals.



In December 2024, GRM staff visited the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) Kyiv Mental Health Center and the Main MIA Hospital, both in Kyiv, followed by a visit from HB experts in March 2025. This progression culminated in a two-week observership at HB in Boston during April and May 2025. Supported by GRM coordinators and interpreters, participants trained with a multidisciplinary team of psychiatrists, neurologists, clinical psychologists, and rehabilitation specialists. Their curriculum included intensive outpatient models, trauma-focused therapies, and integrated approaches to recovery and reintegration.

The program aims to collaborate with Ukraine's mental health leaders by providing essential tools, strategies, and partnerships to address the psychological needs of veterans and service members. It is expected to inform care across the MIA system and support recovery efforts for over 1.2 million veterans and 5–6 million active-duty personnel. The Ukrainian government has also expressed interest in expanding clinical research through this initiative, aiming to strengthen evidence-based mental health care nationwide.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Ukraine's urgent need is to return service members to duty while managing ongoing physical and psychological injuries and preparing for the anticipated influx of veterans reintegrating into civilian life after the war ends. To support this critical need, the program was structured in three phases to ensure continuity from preparation to implementation.

Phase 1: Pre-departure (Kyiv, Ukraine)

GRM and HB leadership conducted a one-week site visit to the MIA Kyiv Mental Health Center and the Main MIA Hospital. These meetings aligned program goals, introduced core clinical concepts, and prepared fellows for the U.S.-based training.

Phase 2: Observership (Boston, USA)

In April–May 2025, six fellows participated in a two-week observership at HB, studying its intensive outpatient model. This model compresses a full year of trauma-focused therapy, physical wellness, and peer support into an intensive two-week program. Fellows also collaborated with multidisciplinary teams across the Mass General Brigham (MGB) system, including MGB Psychiatry, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and the Benson Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine.

Phase 3: Implementation (Ukraine)

Following the U.S. rotation, GRM and HB continue providing remote support as fellows adapt protocols, pilot interdisciplinary models, and expand research capacity to facilitate sustainable mental health system reforms in Ukraine.



Across the two-week observership, fellows engaged with best practices in three core domains of invisible wounds care:

Psychological Support:

Fellows observed structured treatment models such as the Intensive Clinical Program (ICP) and ComBHAT, which emphasized efficient patient management, defined selection protocols, and a balance between group and individual therapy. They also explored complementary techniques such as battle acupuncture (*shown in the middle photo*) and art therapy, both low-resource, high-impact interventions well-suited to the Ukrainian context.

Diagnostics and Treatment Innovation:

Participants studied advanced clinical interventions, including Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT), and ketamine-assisted psychotherapy. They also explored emerging tools such as portable MRIs and neuromodulation devices such as TAC-STIM, ShiftWave (*shown in the bottom photo*), and ALPHA-STIM, evaluating their potential as scalable, field-adaptable solutions.

Rehabilitation and Recovery:

At Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, fellows observed interdisciplinary approaches to functional recovery, including occupational therapy, prosthetics care, and the integration of physical and psychological rehabilitation. These models offered insight into holistic recovery pathways for veterans transitioning from acute care to long-term reintegration.



HEALING THROUGH CONNECTION

Beyond the clinical observership, fellows engaged in cultural experiences that reflected the program's themes of healing, resilience, and solidarity. At Fenway Park, they attended a Red Sox game and met pitcher Liam Hendriks, a vocal supporter of Ukraine, sharing a moment of unity in one of Boston's most iconic sports venues.

GRM and HB co-hosted a benefit concert featuring acclaimed pianist Vadim Neselovskyi, joined by the Sheffield Chamber Players. The event raised over \$25,000 for mental health efforts in Ukraine and highlighted music's role in trauma recovery.

In a virtual gathering, the fellows met world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who reflected on the power of art in times of crisis and closed with a cello performance dedicated to the group. These experiences added emotional depth and reaffirmed the program's mission: healing through shared human connection.



“
All people who actually care about veterans and active duty and care for their welfare and wellbeing during the war and after the war, are united under the same goal.
Dr. Taras Kushnir
”



Thank you for the wonderful opportunity to learn about the best mental health practices for the veteran and active-duty community in the U.S. and to see firsthand how rehabilitation and recovery processes are taking place. We had the opportunity to meet leaders in the field of psychiatry and psychology and to share our experience gained in this war to find new methods of diagnosis and treatment for the military.

Ihor
Head of Psychological Rehabilitation
National Guard of Ukraine



CONCLUSION

The observership at HB equipped Ukrainian mental health specialists from the MIA with targeted clinical skills, trauma-focused therapies, and integrative rehabilitation strategies to address the invisible wounds of war. The program reinforced sustainable care delivery, expanded clinical research capacity, and deepened multidisciplinary collaboration. Most importantly, it marked the beginning of a long-term exchange grounded in solidarity that will continue to strengthen Ukraine's mental health system during the war and beyond.

“
Wars don't end
with the last shot;
the fight then
moves to the mind
and heart for
years to come.
Ukrainian veteran
”



KEY OUTCOMES

Burnout prevention training

Comprehensive patient triage

Enhanced research capacity

Fitness and nutrition integration

Multidisciplinary
collaboration

Neuromodulation techniques

Trauma-focused therapies



The rotation to the United States as part of the 'Invisible Wounds of Ukraine' program was an extremely valuable professional experience for me. I was particularly impressed by the modern approaches to working with service members suffering from traumatic brain injuries and the emphasis on family support. We are already planning to implement the acquired knowledge and resources within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine system.



Viktoriiia
Clinical Psychologist
Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine