

Providing Tinnitus Services via Connected Care within VA

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NCRAR
NATIONAL CENTER FOR REHABILITATIVE AUDITORY RESEARCH

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- No financial conflicts of interest
- The information presented and the opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, or the United States government



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Tara Zaugg, AuD, CCC-A

- Certified, licensed, and clinically privileged research audiologist employed at the National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR) located at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Portland Health Care System
- Co-developer of Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM), which is endorsed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office as the standard method of tinnitus management for VA hospitals
- I work to understand the perspective of clinicians and patients using PTM, and to incorporate their needs and insights into PTM as it evolves



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Tara Zaugg, AuD, CCC-A

- Research Audiologist at the NCRAR for 20 years
- Work directly with people struggling with tinnitus
 - TRT
 - Masking
 - PTM (in person, over the phone, via video conferencing)
 - Tinnitus Devices
 - Focus groups
- Train audiologists to provide care for tinnitus
- Develop materials



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What is Progressive Tinnitus Management?

- Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM) is a structured approach to providing evidence-based interdisciplinary care to improve quality of life for Veterans with tinnitus.
 - Developed to meet the needs of VA clinicians and Veterans
 - Delivered collaboratively by audiologists and behavioral health care providers
 - Tele-PTM is the connected care version of PTM
 - PTM and Tele-PTM have been endorsed by VA Central Office



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Progressive Tinnitus Management

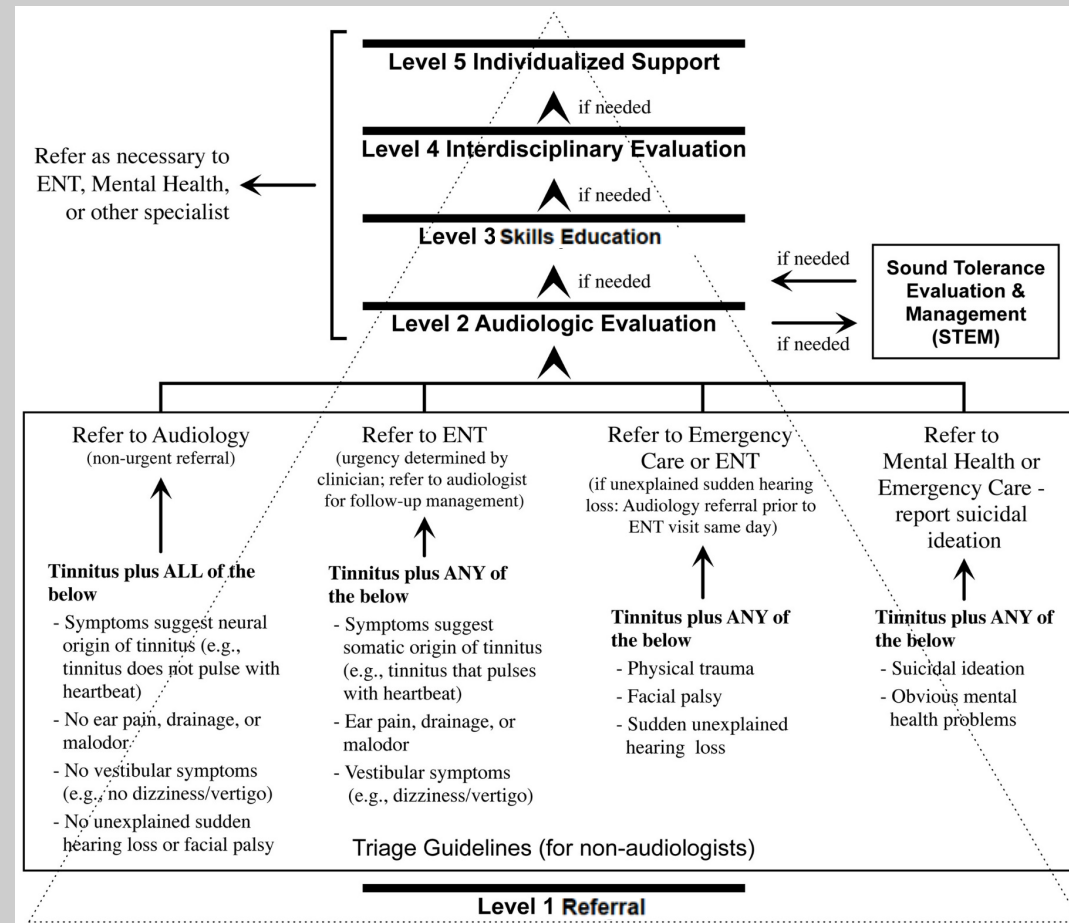
- An interdisciplinary flexible structure for providing services to people with tinnitus
- Materials developed for use by clinicians with limited experience working with patients who have tinnitus
- Modifications to PTM procedures and materials to improve usability are encouraged
- Includes Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to be provided by a behavioral health care provider
- Includes use of sound as a coping strategy, use and expectations for using sound aligned with concepts from CBT



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PTM Flowchart



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PTM Level 3 Skills Education

Audiology

- Sound Session 1
- Sound Session 2

Behavioral Health

- Pleasant Activities
- Relaxation
- Cognitive Restructuring

PTM vs Tele-PTM

- Both can be provided to groups of Veterans or one-on-one
- In-person PTM groups tend to work best with up to 8-10 Veterans at a time
- Tele-PTM groups tend to work best with up to 3 Veterans at a time
- You can use most published PTM support materials for in-person PTM programs or Tele-PTM programs
- You can use the same schedule of appointments for PTM or Tele-PTM



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Essential components of a Tele-PTM program

- Learn how to provide PTM
- Logistics
 - Training in, and access to, VVC or other modality for providing care virtually
 - Appropriate VISTA profiles for scheduling and documentation
 - Appropriate codes to capture workload
- Audiology and behavioral health providers
- Method for measuring outcomes of the care provided



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Resources for learning how to provide PTM

- NCRAR website
 - <http://www.ncrar.research.va.gov/>

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This webpage has a collection of resources that will be helpful to anyone starting a tele-PTM program.




Progressive Tinnitus Management

Progressive Tinnitus Management, or PTM, is a stepped-care program that involves coordinated care between Audiology and Behavioral Health. Tele-PTM is the connected-care (telehealth) version of PTM.

Clinician Resources

- **VA Clinicians**, [click here to join the PTM Team](#) on the VA's Microsoft Teams platform
- **Starting a PTM or Tele-PTM program?** Please [contact us](#) for support if needed.
- [Online PTM Training](#)
- [PTM PowerPoint Presentations for Clinicians \(for use with Patients\)](#)
- [Tinnitus Questionnaires, Surveys and Interviews](#)
- **References**
 - [PTM: Clinical Handbook for Audiologists](#)
 - [VA Clinical Practice Recommendations for Tinnitus](#) 
 - [Publications relevant to PTM](#)

Materials for your Patients

- [Tinnitus brochure](#) 
- [Patient workbook](#) 
- [Links to patient PTM videos](#)
- [Sound tolerance handout](#) 



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<https://www.ncrar.research.va.gov/ClinicianResources/IndexPTM.asp>

Four online training modules on the [VA Talent Management System \(TMS\)](#):

- **Module 1: Overview of Tinnitus and its Management** (TMS #37062) is appropriate for all health care providers who are interested in learning more about tinnitus and what can be done about it.
- **Module 2: Tinnitus Assessment and Basic Care** (TMS #39741) describes the basic steps that audiologists take to provide tinnitus care, which is Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM) Level 2. This module may be of interest to other health care providers who wish to know what is done by audiologists.
- **Module 3: Clinical Intervention for Tinnitus** (TMS #39742) describes PTM Level 3 Skills Education that is provided for patients needing care beyond PTM Level 2. Level 3 is conducted by both audiologists and behavioral health providers. This module may be of interest to other health care providers who wish to learn about Level 3 Skills Education.
- **Module 4: Virtual Practicum for Tinnitus Management** (TMS # 39743) contains a series of videos depicting a patient going through the five stepped-care levels of PTM. The clinical services are provided primarily by an audiologist and a psychologist. This entertaining module may be of interest to other health care providers who wish to know how PTM services are provided through all of its five levels.



This series of courses is also available for non-VA employees on Employee Education System VHA TRAIN. [Click here to register.](#)



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<https://www.ncrar.research.va.gov/ClinicianResources/PTMClinicianTraining.asp>

One method for learning more about PTM is to download the PTM workbook and watch these videos while playing the role of the patient. Complete all activities in the video using the workbook as a resource.

workbook

videos






Tinnitus Resources

Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)

The method of **Progressive Tinnitus Management** (PTM) was developed by NCRAR researchers over 10 years ago. It is a stepped-care method of tinnitus management, meaning that people with tinnitus receive the level of services that are required by the severity of their condition. Please click on the below links for access to PTM materials.

- Educational video about tinnitus "Ringing in the Ears: What Can I do About It?"
- Tinnitus Questions and Answers (brochure) 
- How to Manage Your Tinnitus: A Step-by-Step Workbook 
- **Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM) Videos**
 - [Session 1 with Audiologist: Using Sound Part 1](#)
 - [Session 2 with Psychologist: Stress and Distraction](#)
 - [Session 3 with Audiologist: Using Sound Part 2](#)
 - [Session 4 with Psychologist: Changing Thoughts Part 1](#)
 - [Session 5 with Psychologist: Changing Thoughts Part 2](#)

Additional information:

- **Hearing and Hearing Loss...** because those with tinnitus also often have hearing loss.
 - [How does the Brain Help Us Hear? \(brochure\)](#)  (Gallun/Saunders)
 - [Hearing Conservation \(brochure\)](#)  (Dann/Saunders)
 - [Tips for Improving your Listening Experience \(brochure\)](#)  (Lewis/Saunders)
 - [Hearing Aids: The Basics \(brochure\)](#)  (O'Connell Bennett/Saunders)
- **Sound tolerance...** because some people who have tinnitus also have trouble tolerating sound.
 - [Sound tolerance information](#) 
- **Patient voices...** you may be interested in hearing how tinnitus affects others. Click here to go to our [Patient Voices page: Real patients with real stories to share.](#)



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<https://www.ncrar.research.va.gov/Tinnitus/TinnitusPatientResources.asp>

Logistics

Forthcoming TMS learning module entitled *Progressive Tinnitus Management via Connected Care (Tele-PTM) Into Patients' Homes: Setting up a Program*

- Training in, and access to, VVC or other modality for providing care virtually
 - Check with your local facility telehealth coordinator
- Appropriate VISTA profiles for scheduling and documentation, as well as appropriate CPT codes to capture workload
 - <https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/rehab/asps/ASPS%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>



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Measuring Outcomes

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Tinnitus Questionnaires and Surveys

- Various Tinnitus Questionnaires and Surveys are available at the NCRAR website:
 - <https://www.ncrar.research.va.gov/ClinicianResources/TinnitusQuestionnaires.asp>
- NCRAR seminar on collecting and interpreting outcomes of clinical care for tinnitus:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YZOizA5Zt4&list=PLYxJG75sdf1TB9XjWXShzuODpw9ZZ-AfU>



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Modifications

- Whole Health
- Using sound to escape tinnitus versus bringing sound into your life that you want
- Communication Strategies



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