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### PTSD expert speaks at St. Joseph's

By CHRIS KNIGHT, Enterprise Senior Staff Writer

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SARANAC LAKE - An expert in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder talked with a group of counselors and staff from St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment and Recovery Centers on Tuesday.

Dr. Edward Tick, a clinical psychotherapist, is the director of Sanctuary: A Center for Mentoring the Soul, an Albany-based nonprofit program designed to help returning veterans. He is also the author of "War and the Soul," a book that focuses on healing the nation's veterans from PTSD.

Tick has been working closely with St. Joseph's officials on their plan to develop a \$3.5 million community residence for combat veterans suffering from both substance abuse and PTSD. The project is one of several veterans-related initiatives that would be part of Patriot Hills at Saranac Lake, a proposed retreat and reintegration facility for veterans, active military personnel and their families that would be housed in a new hotel and conference center in the village.

St. Joseph's CEO Bob Ross said Tuesday's meeting was the first of many training sessions with Tick that his staff will participate in as the veterans program is being developed.

"In preparation and in advance of that opening, we wanted to begin the process of informing and teaching," he said.

The session was also opened up to members of the healing community in the Saranac Lake area and those involved in the Patriot Hills project. Ross said the goal was to get out Tick's message of hope.

"Yes, PTSD is a serious problem, but it's not just a mental issue; it's a spiritual issue and a community issue," Ross said. "There are pieces that the community can provide even if they aren't professional healers. Spiritual renewal is being connected to family and community, not just medically assisted."

Tick said the need for PTSD facilities like the one St. Joseph's is planning, as well as the Patriot Hills project, is "enormous."

"We have millions and millions of veterans all across the country suffering from all kinds of war wounds, not just post-traumatic stress disorder," he said. "We have people with massive psychological, physical and spiritual wounds who are still largely hidden from the public. There are too many wounded for all of the professionals to possibly take care of. We pretend that the military government can do it themselves, but they can't."

Tick said the public has an obligation, not just to thank veterans but to "listen to their stories, cry with them at night, help their families when the troops are overseas, babysit, send care packages and start pen-pal relationships with troops in the field."

Living in Albany, Tick said he's been a frequent visitor to the Adirondacks and thinks Saranac Lake is ready to take on the challenge of doing more to support veterans.

"This is one of a rare number of communities where a large number of caring and creative individuals got together, talked to each other about the problem and have shown a willingness to do something about it," Tick said. "There are a number of organizations coming out already saying that they want to be part of this healing consortium. All of these are unique conditions that give me great hope and optimism that we can create a model healing community here."

Ross said St. Joseph's is working to develop the curriculum for its veterans program. Design plans for the 25-bed facility on the campus of St. Joseph's are also being finalized, with plans for a groundbreaking in 2011.

"Both of those are making progress, slower than we ideally wanted, but still moving forward," he said.

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#### Article Photos












Dr. Edward Tick, an expert in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, speaks to a group of counselors and staff from St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment and Recovery Centers in Saranac Lake on Tuesday. (Enterprise photo — Chris Knight)

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