

Serving those who have served...

Complementary
and alternative
programs help
returning veterans
find balance, well-
being and peace of
mind...

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER & SUICIDE IN RETURNING VETERANS

THE PROBLEM

20% of the 2 million young veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its consequences which often involve anxiety, depression, substance abuse, rage, divorce, loneliness, homelessness, and suicide. The suicide rate among veterans aged 18 to 29 years has increased by 26% from 2005 to 2007. Current statistics suggest that there are 8 veteran suicides a day...

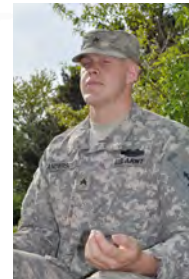
Medication and therapy are the main treatments for PTSD but many veterans dislike the side-effects of medication and they feel disempowered by their dependence on drugs or psychiatrists.

Complementary and alternative treatments are gentle, cost-effective, prevention-based, free of side-effects, and empowering: veterans regain a sense of self-mastery and control because they self-administer the techniques.

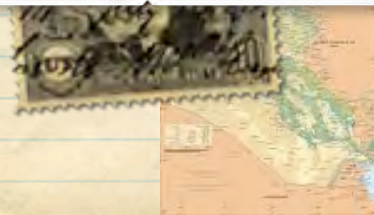
Returning from war is half the battle...the invisible wounds of war can remain and often lead to PTSD and suicide...

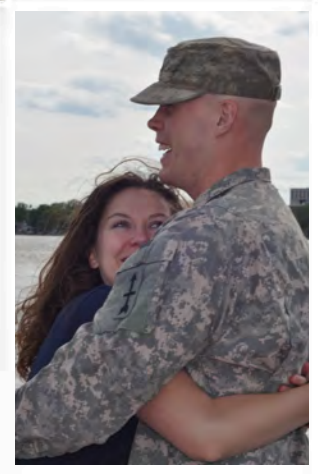


Complementary and alternative programs can help veterans deal with the trauma more effectively and, more importantly, reclaim their life...



They were well trained
for combat
but not for trauma...





Reconnecting with loved ones after years in combat and high levels of trauma and anxiety can be challenging but possible!

HOW WE AIM TO HELP

Research pioneered by our laboratory suggests that complementary and alternative treatments based on breathing and meditation can help reduce anxiety and depression and increase well-being, optimism, and focus. However, little if any research has been conducted with returning veterans. We plan to perform cutting-edge research (including psychophysiological and brain-imaging assessments) to understand which programs work best for people with different psychological profiles.

The result of our research will provide ground-breaking information that could benefit thousands of returning veterans nation-wide...

WHAT THE VETERANS ARE SAYING....

Over the last year, we have successfully conducted pilot breathing-based programs as a free service to local veterans. To address the high levels of anxiety and sleeplessness, we selected a breathing-based program. Breathing-based practices aim at rapidly reducing anxiety and arousal by bringing the body to a physiologically relaxed state. Several studies have demonstrated that breathing practices have immediate and positive effects on well-being as well as well as indices of stress such as blood pressure, heart rate, and cortisol, the “stress hormone.”

The veterans who have benefited from the programs have thanked us and shared that they are sleeping better, coping with anger and anxiety in a more healthy way, and feel happier.

Our research will include psychophysiological and brain-imaging methods to answer 2 important therapeutic questions:

- 1) Which complementary and alternative programs are most useful (e.g. breathing v.s. meditation)
- 2) Which programs work better for different people?



There are many women among today's returning veterans. Jennifer Kannel, 29, spent a year in Iraq with the Wisconsin Army National Guard and participated in our pilot program this fall. She says that our programs have changed her life for the better...