

Impact of Complementary Therapy on PTSD Symptoms

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Question

- ❑ In patients with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, how does complementary therapy, compared to no complementary therapy, influence patient reports of PTSD symptoms?



<https://chealth.canoe.com/channel/natural-and-complementary-therapy>

Background

- ❑ PTSD is “the complex somatic, cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects of psychological trauma” (Sareen, 2020).
- ❑ Common symptoms for PTSD include: intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and flashbacks of past traumatic events, avoidance of reminders of trauma, hypervigilance, and sleep disturbance (Sareen, 2020).
- ❑ Complementary therapy is the use of Western/pharmacologic medicine in addition to non-mainstream healthcare practices.
- ❑ Examples of complementary therapy include the use of natural products, mind practices such as meditation, body practices such as pilates, and additional therapies such as group therapies.

Study	Description	Results
Influence of Adjuvant Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) on Symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Veterans - Results from a Randomized Control Study, 2018.	Level II Randomized Control Study (RCT) examined the effects of MBCT on diagnostic PTSD symptoms as well as depression, anxiety, and stress. The study focused the therapy effects on Iran military veterans after eight weekly sessions (Jasbi et al., 2018).	Amongst middle aged military vets with PTSD and treated with a standard SSRI, adjuvant MBCT improved symptoms of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and stress, compared to a control condition” (Jasbi et al., 2018, p. 440).
Impact of Prolonged Exposure Therapy on Social Support and PTSD Symptoms, 2020.	Level II Randomized Control Study (RCT) explored the “impact of exposure therapy on perceived social support, as well as the time ordering of social support and PTSD symptom improvement during treatment” (Bourassa et al., 2020, p. 411), utilizing prolonged exposure (PE) through images and virtual reality (VR).	The results from this study presented a positive correlation between PE therapy and social support, a direct correlation between social support and reduction in PTSD symptoms, as well as a decrease in PTSD symptoms overall (Bourassa et al., 2020)
The Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with Respect to Psychological Symptoms and Recovering Autobiographical Memory in Patients Suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, 2015	Level II Randomized Control Study (RCT) that measured the impact of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions on PTSD symptoms such as avoidance, intrusion and hyperarousal (Akbarian et al., 2015).	The study found that, in ten weeks, CBT significantly reduced PTSD symptoms such as avoidance, intrusion and hyperarousal, and improved adult memory.
Effects of Therapeutic Horseback Riding on Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Military Veterans, 2018	Level II Randomized Control Study (RCT) that tested the efficacy of a six-week Therapeutic Horseback Riding (THR) program on improving PTSD symptoms and coping (Johnson et al., 2018).	The results of the study revealed that the implementation of THR lowered PTSD symptoms. At week three, the study found a decrease in symptoms, and by week six another drop in reported symptoms.

Conclusion

- ❑ Implementing complementary therapy in addition to pharmacologic treatment will assist in reducing reported symptoms of PTSD.
- ❑ Additional research is necessary to explore more expansive populations and other forms of complementary therapies such as recreational, art, massage, yoga and music therapy.

Application

- ❑ Nurses and physicians can utilize these findings to encourage and provide resources for patients diagnosed with PTSD to include complementary therapies in their treatment regimen.
- ❑ Therapies suggested can be catered towards each person in order to individualize and optimize care.
- ❑ Options of complementary therapy nurses can suggest include: mindfulness, horseback riding, cognitive, prolonged exposure, yoga, art, music, massage and recreational therapy.



<http://usmfreepress.org/2019/07/15/5-oils-to-put-in-your-diffuser-to-promote-relaxation/>