

PTSD Treated Successfully in 10 Sessions or Less

Kaiser Permanente is one of the largest hospital systems in the US, taking care of more than 10 million patients each year.

Kaiser's peer-reviewed publication, *The Permanente Journal*, recently published practice guidelines for using Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) with patients diagnosed with PTSD (Church, Stern et al., 2017).

Many randomized controlled trials (RCT) of EFT have shown that it is extremely effective at treating PTSD in just a few treatment sessions. In one clinical trial, veterans' symptoms dropped by 64% after just 6 hourlong sessions (Church, Hawk, et al., 2013). A replication of that study found that 90% of veterans were free of clinical symptom levels after completing treatment and that they did not relapse later (Geronilla et al., 2016).

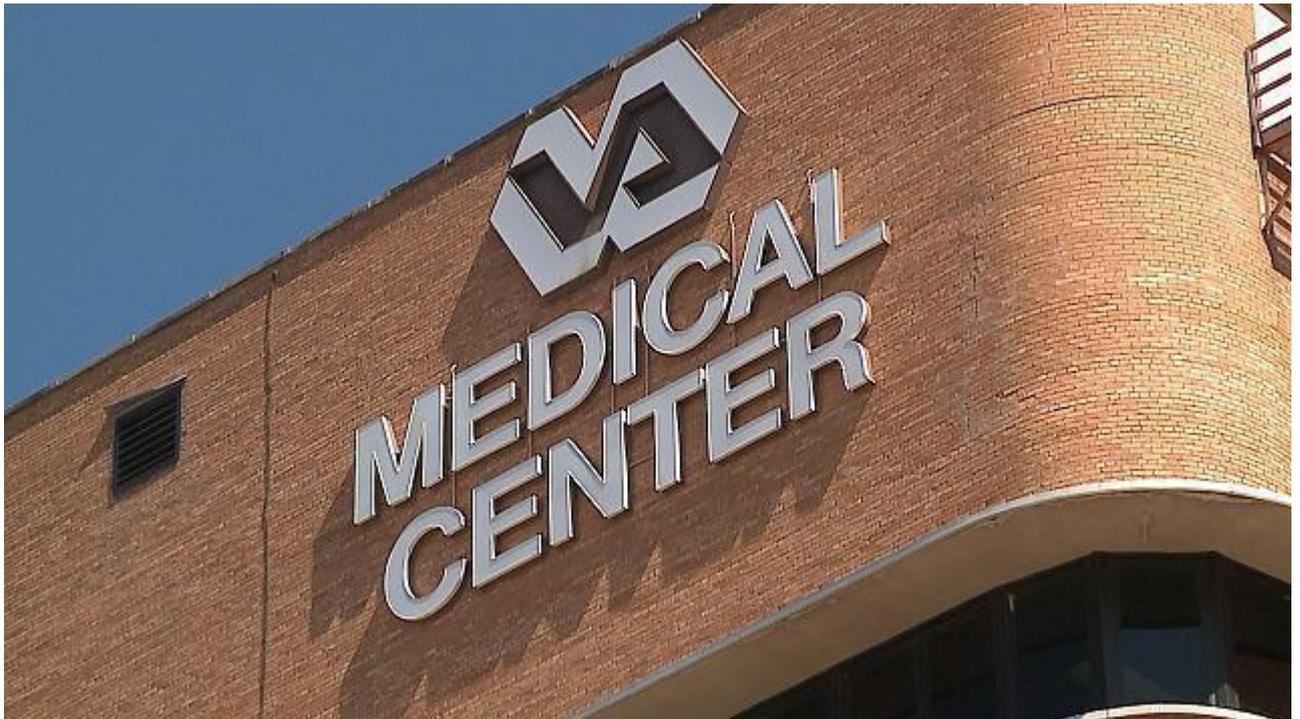
EFT combines elements drawn from cognitive and exposure therapy but also includes fingertip tapping on acupuncture points. A meta-analysis of 7 RCTs of EFT for PTSD found an extremely large effect as a result of EFT treatment (Sebastian & Nelms, 2016). It has been used in various traumatized groups including veterans, earthquake victims, and genocide survivors. Meta-analyses of EFT for anxiety and for depression, both conditions common to PTSD sufferers, also measure large treatment effects.

Practice guidelines are influential documents because medical and mental health professionals turn to them to find best practices for a specified condition such as anxiety, depression or PTSD. Practice guidelines answer questions like: How many sessions are recommended? How long should each session be? What percentage of patients get better? What further care is recommended for those who don't? What level of training is required by therapists to effectively administer the treatment?

The guidelines published in *The Permanente Journal* surveyed 448 EFT practitioners, and combined their insights with the statistics from clinical

trials of EFT. They recommend 5 hourlong EFT sessions for those at risk for PTSD, and 10 sessions for those with full-blown symptoms.

For the past decade, the nonprofit Veterans Stress Project has been providing free EFT sessions to veterans. Some VA centers offer EFT and it was pioneered in a large-scale project at Fort Hood, the largest military base in the US, where veterans receive group therapy.



A sergeant who served as a US Army Medic in Desert Storm says, “After EFT I feel released from an emotional prison. My severe hyper-vigilance has been dissolved. I now frequently experience joy and happiness. Mental blocks to creativity and prosperity have been removed.”

Captain George Peters had this to say after completing the Stress Project program: “For 35 years I was hard to get along with. Divorced, fired, and feared by my children because I over-reacted to any provocation. Six hours of therapy gave me the tools to change.”

The publication of the practice guidelines by *The Permanente Journal* is likely to accelerate EFTs acceptance as an approved therapy throughout the VA. With many veterans and their families seeking drug-free treatments without side effects, access to EFT has become a priority for advocacy organizations such as the Veterans Stress Project.

References

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