

Treatment of Combat Trauma in Veterans Using EFT

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Abstract

With a large number of US military service personnel coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and co-morbid psychological conditions, a need exists to find protocols and treatments that are effective in brief treatment timeframes. In this study, a sample of 11 veterans and family members were assessed for PTSD and other conditions. Evaluations were made using the SA-45 (Symptom Assessment 45) and the PCL-M (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist - Military) using a time-series, within-subjects, repeated measures design. A baseline measurement was obtained thirty days prior to treatment, and immediately before treatment. Subjects were then treated with a brief and novel exposure therapy, EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques), for five days. Statistically significant improvements in the SA-45 and PCL-M scores were found at posttest. These gains were maintained at both the 30- and 90-day follow-ups on the general symptom index, positive symptom total and the anxiety, somatization, phobic anxiety, and interpersonal sensitivity subscales of the SA-45, and on PTSD. The remaining SA-45 scales improved posttest but were not consistently maintained at the 30- and 90-day follow-ups. One-year follow-up data was obtained for 7 of the participants and the same improvements were observed. In summary, after EFT treatment, the group no longer scored positive for PTSD, the severity and breadth of their psychological distress decreased significantly, and most of their gains held over time. This suggests that EFT can be an effective post-deployment intervention.