Employee Use and Perceived Benefit of a CAM Wellness Clinic at a Major Military Hospital: Evaluation of a Pilot Program

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Purpose

Describe the design, rationale, use, and perceived impact of the Restore & Renew® Wellness Clinic.

• Theoretical principles on which the R&RWC model is based and their relevance to symptoms of secondary traumatic stress.

• Clinic features and therapeutic interventions including modalities offered, staffing, and logistics.

• Methods and results of the program evaluation, recommendations for further action and research related to CAM and workplace wellness.


Background - Secondary Traumatic Stress

The war’s long duration, and the emotional impact and increased workload associated with treating critically wounded young Service members, can:

- magnify stress,
- erode sleep, and
- may impact staff health and performance.

This quote might fit better toward the end -- the slide is about secondary trauma and stressful military hospitals. We haven't yet told them about the clinic, so the quote doesn't make sense yet. Move it to later? I think the set-up about healthcare environmental stressors and military hospitals is important.

jliechty, 4/24/2011
A New Model Of Workplace Stress Reduction Was Needed

- Wellness care, supportive, not stigmatizing
- Hospital-based, on-site, walk-in, free, open to all employees
- Multiple modalities, team approach
- Healing environment
- Based on principles of Chinese medicine
- Theoretically grounded in research on autonomic nervous system regulation and traumatic stress.

• We influence and are influenced by the quality and quantity of *qi* that surrounds us

• *Qi* moves in a dynamic and fluid interplay of opposites. *Yin* is quiet, contemplative and internal; *Yang* is active, assertive and external.

• Our bodies, minds and spirits are an integrated whole, linked by the movement of *qi* and this dynamic interplay of *Yin* and *Yang*.

Our Vision: Spread Coherent Heart Qi

Coherent, balanced and harmonious heart qi influences cognition, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

A coherent cardiac rhythm has a “ripple effect” that can influence others nearby – it may support the creation of a calmer workplace and more heart-felt compassion.

Team Approach to Healing Environment

Creating an optimal healing environment starts with our staff:

- Orientation and continuing education in common clinical frameworks
- Meditation before each clinic
- Regular debriefings
- Encouragement of self-care and self-regulation.

Restore & Renew® Wellness Clinic
A Peaceful Environment

The creation of a calm, quiet, healing environment was established by:

• keeping lights and voices low,
• playing relaxing music, and
• having clinicians focus on being mindfully present and in a loving and caring internal state.

Participants were invited to choose a preferred modality and get settled on a treatment table or acupuncture chair.

Gentle eye contact was made to communicate the intention of caring, non-judgment, and presence.
Inviting A “Felt Sense” of Somatic Mindfulness

Participants were given time to:

- Orient to physical surroundings
- Bring awareness to the support the table or chair represented
- Experience a grounded, somatically mindful state before we began.

Maintaining A Witness State

Participants were encouraged to maintain this mindful embodied state by continuing to be present to their experience while they experienced acupuncture or bodywork.
Do you have a word for how you feel differently now?

Take a moment to go back to the place called ‘peaceful’, ‘calm’, ‘smooth’, ‘quiet’, or ‘relaxed’.

Notice everything there is to notice about this place.

We want you to be able to find your way back to this place, and know you have arrived.

You can practice coming back to this place often and especially as you fall off to sleep at night.
Bringing Balance to Yin and Yang

The R&RWC provided opportunities to:

• Nourish innate *yin* energy in participants

• Experience its deeply restorative effect during sessions; and

• Access this state later, anchored in embodied memory.

Restore & Renew® Wellness Clinic
Together these points are believed to help bring balance to the ANS, improve sleep, ease tension and pain, increase energy and enhance focus. Ear acupuncture is used globally to improve health and wellness.

Did you want to put in a bar over the eyes to protect identity?

jliechty, 4/25/2011
Clinical Acupressure

The Seva Stress Release is a Clinical Acupressure protocol designed to:

- ease stress,
- support well-being,
- settle anxiety, and
- calm body, mind and spirit.

Zero Balancing®

ZB supports alignment of the body's structure with attention to energy flow in muscle, fascia and bone. ZB:

- Relieves stress,
- Supports internal order and clarity,
- Addresses chronic pain conditions, and
- Helps maintain emotional well being.

Program Evaluation Questions

- Will military caregivers participate in an onsite CAM wellness clinic?
- What benefits will participants perceive the wellness clinic offers?
- What life changes will participants attribute to their participation?
- Is there a “ripple effect” from participants’ greater coherence to relationships at home or at work?

Methods

Sample:
- Inclusion criteria: hospital employees or volunteers
- 1,346 participants signed consent forms
- 2,756 surveys collected from 1,010 of the participants
- 80% Clinical Personnel

Setting:
- Major military medical center (*capacity = 1,000 beds*)
- Once weekly clinic 8 am-2 pm for 12 months

Interventions: (Participants selected one or more modalities)
- 58% received Ear Acupuncture
- 60% received Therapeutic Bodywork – SEVA Acupressure or Zero Balancing®

Measures

Anonymous 1-page exit survey

- **Perceived benefits, first visit**: relaxation, energy, mental clarity, stress, pain
- **Perceived benefits, subsequent visits**: sleep, mood, compassion for self, compassion for others, pleasure, ease in relationships, awareness of need for self care
- **Write-in comments on behavior changes**

**Most important features enabling participation**

- No cost
- Hours
- Location
- Anonymity
- Supervisor encouragement

**Write-in suggestions to improve clinic**

**Opportunity to write comments on mural**

Findings

Agreed/strongly agreed with short-term benefits:

- 98% - more relaxed
- 94% - less stress
- 84% - more energy
- 79% - less pain
- 96% - my mind at ease

97% would recommend to coworker

Participants who *Strongly* agreed with the following benefits, at 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 12+ visits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>2\textsuperscript{nd} Visit</th>
<th>12\textsuperscript{th} Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More compassion for patients</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved sleep</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease in relations with coworkers</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure in personal relationships</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved mood</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased awareness of need for self-care</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, reported compassion for patients rose with each visit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12+</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is this a “ripple effect” of coherent heart qi in the system?

547 write-in health habit changes were reported.

Categories included:

• Improved diet and nutrition
• Increased exercise
• Increased stress-reduction practices
• Improved cognition and mood
• Decreased use of addictive substances
• Improved sleep

Limitations

- Surveys were anonymous to maximize participation; no individual longitudinal data on changes was collected.
- No standardized measures of stress symptoms were used.
- No comparison group or randomization.
- Findings are descriptive - no causal inferences can be made at this time.

Summary of Findings

• **RRWC**, a hospital-based wellness clinic based on principles of Chinese medicine, was feasible, well-utilized and perceived by most participants to have positive health benefits related to stress reduction at work, improved mood and sleep, and lifestyle.

• Repeated visits appear to have cumulative benefits.

• Participants report that increased clinic visits led to greater compassion for patients, and more ease with co-workers and others.
These should correspond somewhat to our program evaluation questions we posed earlier

jliechty, 4/25/2011
Bringing Peace to War

Our experience is particularly relevant as our nation explores approaches to mitigate the impact of nine years of war and secondary traumatic stress on health care employees caring for wounded veterans.

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