

INVITATION TO VETERANS

Helping Veterans and Their Families Thrive

An Innovative Approach to Reduce Stress and Enrich Family Well-Being



In Canada, data¹ indicates that 30% of military personnel involved in combat operations risk suffering from Operational Stress Injury or major depression during their lifetime; others may experience at least some associated symptoms. This impacts the whole family and, over time, can erode family life, if not addressed.

Through funding from VAC's *Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund*, men and women veterans and their families now have the opportunity to take the **stress-reducing Transcendental Meditation® (TM®) program**, offered through the *Canadian Women's Wellness Initiative [CWWI]*. This innovative training alleviates veteran stress and also allows the whole family to participate, creating a more resilient, healthy, harmonious, and supportive family environment.

Since 2010, in the USA, *TM for Veterans/David Lynch Foundation* has partnered with leading veteran service organizations, Army and Marine bases, and VA medical centres and are advisors for this initiative. In the US, more than 1,500 US veterans and active-duty personnel with PTS and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) have learned Transcendental Meditation, with excellent results.

The US Department of Defense has funded \$2.4 million for studies involving Transcendental Meditation and veteran wellness. Since 2019, **Veterans Affairs Canada provided the Canadian Women's Wellness Initiative with \$166,815**, through the *Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund*, to bring the TM program to Canadian veterans and their families.



As a veteran, I was looking for that missing piece of my recovery from injuries. TM is what I needed. The TM teachers took great care of me and my family. We now practise as a family and the benefits for all of us are incredible. We are more focused and calmer and look forward to our meditation sessions. If you are looking for the next piece in your recovery, or just getting to the next level, then TM is for you.

—Bruno Guevremont, Veteran, Invictus Games Ambassador

What is Transcendental Meditation (TM®)?



TM is an easy-to-learn technique that relieves the symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, and PTSD; it develops greater resilience, ultimately improving well-being. TM is not a religion and requires no lifestyle changes. The results from TM can be experienced right from the beginning of the practice. TM differs from mindfulness in that it utilizes the natural tendency of the mind to effortlessly experience quieter states of thought and gain deep relaxation.

TM is practised for 15-20 minutes twice a day by adults (less time for children), sitting comfortably in a chair, with the eyes closed. During TM, the body gains a profound state of rest and relaxation; the mind is deeply settled, yet wide awake, and the brain functions with increased coherence. The deep rest gained during TM restores balance and strengthens the brain circuitry associated with happiness and well-being.

Evidence-Based Relief for Veterans

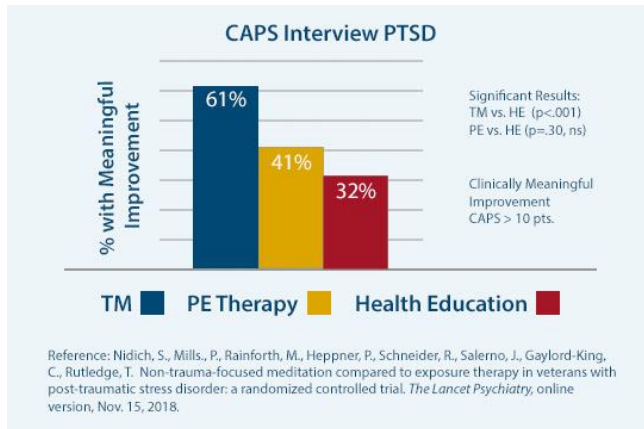
More than 400 peer-reviewed studies verify the benefits of the Transcendental Meditation technique, including:

Reductions in: Post-Traumatic Stress • Anxiety • High Blood Pressure • Depression • Insomnia • Pain • Alcohol and Drug Misuse • Emotional Numbness

Improvements in: Satisfaction with life • Resilience/Peak Performance • Energy • Focus • Creativity

Studies have indicated that TM is safe and effective in resolving Post-Traumatic Stress and concomitant symptoms, such as poor sleep and anger. TM is not trauma focused and acts through the promotion of post-traumatic growth. Further, veterans find the practice enjoyable and acceptable. —Brian Rees, MD, Colonel (ret)

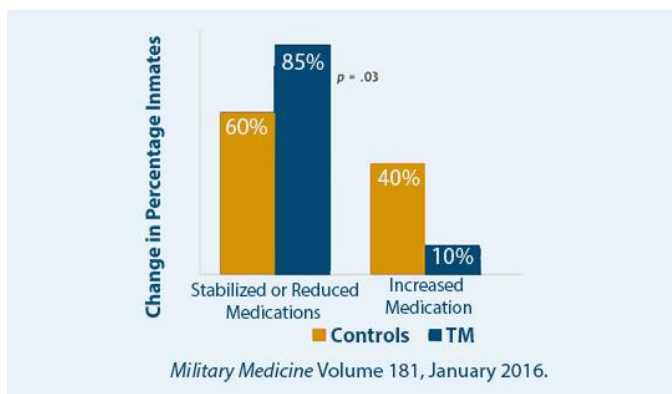
Research compares TM to gold-standard trauma-based therapy for PTS



Non-trauma-focused meditation versus exposure therapy in veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder: a randomised controlled trial. *Lancet Psychiatry*, November 15, 2018.

This study, funded by the US Department of Defence, compared the non-trauma-focused practice of Transcendental Meditation with Prolonged Exposure Therapy, which some veterans find

uncomfortable. This sample included 203 veterans with a current diagnosis of PTS. The results indicate that TM is at least as effective as Prolonged Exposure Therapy.



Impact of Transcendental Meditation on Psychotropic Medication Use Among Active-Duty Military Service Members with Anxiety and PTSD. *Military Medicine* 2016 Jan; 181(1): 56-63.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether the regular practice of Transcendental Meditation decreased the need for psychotropic medications required for anxiety and Post-Traumatic

Stress (PTS) management and increased psychological well-being. The sample included 74 military service members with documented PTS or anxiety disorder.

At 1 month, 83.7% of the TM group stabilized, decreased, or ceased medications, while only 59.4% of controls stabilized, decreased, or ceased medications.

Here's What Veterans and Family Members are Saying

I was interested in TM, but I was skeptical at the same time. Having that inner peace after meditation really emboldened me to deal with things that I'd been just kind of stuffing away. To be able to have relief from agitation, have relief from anger, frustration, sleeplessness, alcoholism, drug addiction—that's huge. —Sgt. James Thrasher

This practice has been immensely helpful to the way my husband and I communicate. Often times, we used strong words and loud voices to get our points across. Since starting TM, we have been able to really come together and increase our communication in a softer, supportive and loving manner even if it might be a negative subject. —Wife of Army Veteran

TM is most assuredly NOT a religion; rather it is a technique for taking you down mentally to ground zero, clearing your mind of stress and frustration as you find peace within yourself and equanimity of spirit. —Lt-General Clarence E. McKnight, Jr.

The experience and opportunity of training and consistently meditating has been life-changing. Our household is calmer, quieter, happier, and we will always be grateful for the scholarship we were given to learn TM, which has become one of the best treatments we have ever found for PTS.—Veteran

Confidential • Accessible • Lifelong Tool • No Concentration • Easy to Learn

- TM is confidential, easy to learn, and simple to practise in the comfort of the family home;
- There is no stigma, as the practice is private and inconspicuous;
- TM is portable; it can be practised anywhere at any time, with no need to leave the community;
- The training doesn't involve controlling the mind or concentration, which can be difficult for those suffering from flashbacks or intrusive thoughts;
- Family members can be involved in the training, so the whole family can heal;
- TM is taught by compassionate certified teachers with decades of teaching experience and some additional training for clients with PTS/Occupational Stress Injuries;
- Once learned, TM is a lifelong self-help tool for veterans and their families, with a lifetime of support for a sustained impact;
- TM is an adjunct modality to support existing services and traditional medical protocols.

How to Participate

The Canadian Women's Wellness Initiative will offer this training to veterans and their family members in five cities across Canada (see below) until June, 2023. The TM technique will be taught in a course where participants attend 12 or more meetings over a period of 6 months, with the following course structure:

- An information session introducing the program (1.5 hours);
- Instruction over 4 consecutive days (each session 1.5 hours);
- A follow-up meeting for 1.5 hours 10 days after completion of the 4-day instruction;
- One meeting per month (or a few more, depending on individual need) to ensure successful practice and outcomes (for 6 months).

Veterans interested in participating in this project, or anyone wishing more information, can email or call the appropriate contact in their city:

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Reference

1. *Current Issues in Mental Health in Canada: Mental Health in the Canadian Forces and Among Veterans:* Jean-Rodrigue Paré, Legal and Social Affairs Division; Melissa Radford, Economics, Resources and International Affairs Division 2013-10-01.



CANADIAN WOMEN'S WELLNESS INITIATIVE
Improving the Health and Well-Being of Canadians