

Project Welcome Home Troops

VETERANS AND TRAUMA

The National Institutes of Health estimate that, of the approximately 2 million veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, up to 20% suffer from post-traumatic stress or PTS. Veterans of previous wars may also continue to experience symptoms of PTS. PTS is an anxiety disorder that develops as a result of exposure to a traumatic event and is characterized by:

- *Recurring intrusive thoughts related to the trauma (e.g., flashbacks, dreams)*
- *Avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, emotional numbness, and social withdrawal*
- *Symptoms of physiological arousal such as hyper-vigilance, exaggerated startle response, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, irritability, and hyper-reactivity.*

As veteran post-traumatic stress (PTS) and suicide are on the rise, there is an urgent need to address combat stress. The Power Breath workshop allows veterans to regain a sense of self-mastery and control because they can self-administer the techniques. Research shows that these programs are effective, safe, prevention-based and free of known side effects. They can be scaled up to serve large numbers of veterans at a lower cost than many traditional interventions.



POWER BREATH WORKSHOP

The Power Breath Workshop is a mind-body resilience-building program for returning veterans. It offers practical breath-based tools that decrease the stress, anxiety and sleep problems that many returning veterans experience. A cornerstone of the Power Breath Workshop is the SKY (Sudarshan Kriya Yoga) Practice, a set of empirically validated breathing techniques. Through rhythmic breathing patterns, the SKY Practice brings deep mental and physical relaxation which research suggests can reduce symptoms of anxiety, anger, insomnia and depression. Through interactive discussions, the Power Breath workshop also teaches resilience and empowerment strategies, and develops self-awareness, connectedness and community.

Our trainers are experienced facilitators who draw upon veterans' existing strengths and wisdom to support them in returning to their natural, healthy state. Knowledgeable about military culture with extensive experience in breathing and mind-body techniques, our trainers guide the workshop with the attitude of mutual learning and respect. The program is interactive and facilitated in an open and supportive environment where veterans can share their life experiences if they wish and think about how their values shape their life.

"There is an alternative to medications and sleepless nights for those that serve our country." – Ohio Congressman Ryan

Ohio Congressman Ryan was introduced to Project Welcome Home Troops while researching the benefits of mindfulness. He was heartened to see such positive results for our troops from a simple practice, and is choosing to support Project Welcome Home Troops because he wants to see the program expanded to Ohio.

