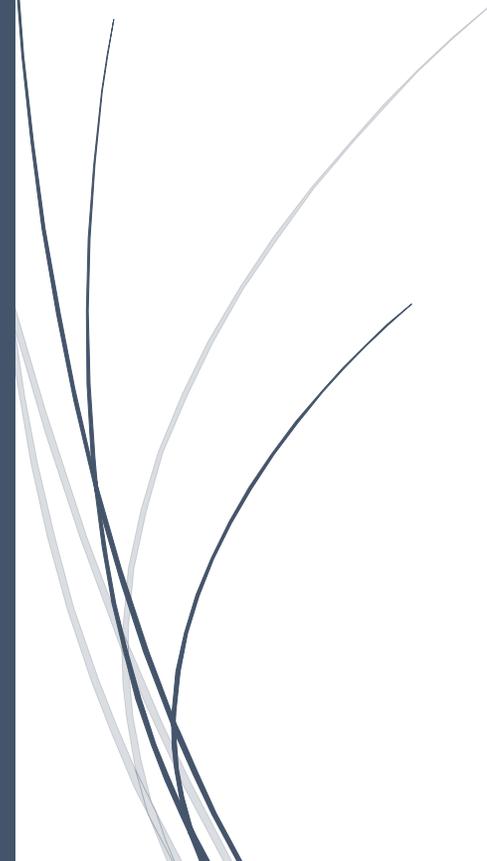


A blue arrow-shaped graphic pointing to the right, containing the text "2021 Guide".

2021 Guide

Treatment of PTSD

3 things that have finally been
acknowledged to help PTSD.

A series of thin, curved lines in shades of blue and grey, originating from the bottom left and extending upwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Dr. Heather Walden, Licensed Acupuncturist
Physician

ADVANCED WELLNESS SOLUTIONS

Welcome. I'm Dr. Heather Walden. I was nationally certified in 2000 in Chinese Herbology and Acupuncture. I have treated a wide range of disorders using acupuncture and herbal therapies, including chronic pain and PTSD. I am passionate about restoring health and wellbeing to veterans and their families.

PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) can occur after a traumatic (extremely stressful) event. It is common to suffer stress after surviving traumatic events such as combat, being assaulted or even being in a car accident. However, if your stressful reactions do not subside over time or are impacting how you live your life, you may have PTSD.

Experiencing trauma doesn't mean you'll develop PTSD. While about 8% of the general population will experience PTSD, the incidence for veterans is much higher. A public health study of PTSD in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans showed 15.7% of OEF/OIF deployed Veterans screened positive for PTSD compared to 10.9% of non-deployed Veterans.ⁱ It is estimated that 30% of Vietnam Veterans have had PTSD in their lifetime.ⁱⁱ

There are four main types of PTSD symptoms:ⁱⁱⁱ

- intrusive memories
- avoidance
- negative changes in thinking and mood
- changes in physical and emotional reactions.

Behavioral symptoms of PTSD include agitation, irritability, hostility, hypervigilance, self-destructive behavior, or social isolation. The psychological symptoms of PTSD include flashback, fear, severe anxiety, or mistrust.

PTSD also causes negative mood changes such as a loss of interest or pleasure in activities, guilt, or loneliness. Sleep disturbances including insomnia or nightmares are also common in people suffering from PTSD.

There are three things that have finally been acknowledged to help PTSD.

- Acupuncture
- Transcendental Meditation
- hands in the soil

Acupuncture helps to unwind the body's energy systems that have been wound so tight. This winding can happen quickly or over time.

The area of the brain that controls the fight or flight response is the amygdala which triggers the hypothalamus to release stress hormones. There is a lot of current research to show that acupuncture gets this little bugger to relax. It is part of our primitive limbic system in the brain. I also think that when the atlas/axis is chronically misaligned that this area gets a lopsided pressure adding to the stress response.

Transcendental Meditation also has lots of research regarding PTSD and many vets have successfully recovered using this technique. I spent two years (2016-2018) working at the Maharishi (think Beatles) University in Iowa not only meditating 2 times a day but frequently going on extended meditation retreats. My daughter went to the high school where they also practiced basic yoga and meditation 2x daily.

Hands in the soil serves not only to ground the veterans by tending and growing things it gives them another avenue of service. So, often there is a lot of guilt and shame regarding their actions during war time. Agrability^{iv} is a movement that helps disabled vets be productive in Agriculture. My first degree was in AG from Penn State, so it is like my first love.

When the amygdala is stressed, pain levels go up and are easily exacerbated causing uncontrollable reactions that seem instantaneous. This results in a guilt/shame cycle where many vets use alcohol and other substances to push those emotions down. Relationships suffer and the veteran gets isolated. The incidence of suicide seems astronomical, from 6,399 in 2017 to 6,435 in 2018. That's close to 20 a day.

I know I've said a lot about guilt and shame here, but these emotions are very damaging to the psyche. When combined with fear it traps veterans into a vicious cycle where they are also confronted by painful physical wounds as well.

The bottom line for helping those with PTSD is calming the Amygdala.

There are also nutrient deficiencies that show up in a hair analysis indicative of an overactive metabolism that will keep a person in a heightened state of awareness. For instance, calcium deficiency can indicate an overactive adrenal gland. When this happens sometimes a person keeps creating situations where the fight or flight reactions seem warranted i.e. always being late.

If suspect you or a loved one are suffering from PTSD, please call to schedule an appointment with me.

Early treatment can help prevent PTSD symptoms from getting worse.

Call (772) 403-7640 to schedule your appointment.

I hope this helps!

Dr. Heather

ⁱ <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/epidemiology/studies/new-generation/ptsd.asp>

ⁱⁱ https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_veterans.asp

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967>

^{iv} <http://www.agrability.org/>