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Joint Federal Research Funding for Military Personnel and Veterans

Project Report Summary Template

Funding Opportunity
Review of Novel, Emerging and Alternative Mental Health Interventions for Women Veterans
Brief Overview
This project conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of novel, emerging, and alternative interventions for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and related mental health conditions among women Veterans. The review assessed existing evidence, examined outcomes using a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) lens, and identified priorities for future research and clinical practice
What is this Research About? PTSD is a significant mental health concern among women Veterans, yet relatively little research has focused on whether newer or alternative interventions are effective for this population. This project aimed to identify and evaluate emerging PTSD treatments, assess their effectiveness using sex- and gender-informed analyses where available, and determine gaps in the evidence base to support future care and research.
What did the Research Do? Researchers completed a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials and observational studies evaluating novel and emerging PTSD interventions for women Veterans. The project included: • Comprehensive literature searches and study screening. • Data extraction and risk-of-bias assessments. • Quality-of-evidence evaluation using the GRADE framework. • Evidence synthesis focused on PTSD and related mental health outcomes. The final review included 7 randomized controlled trials and 5 observational studies. Findings were presented at the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum 2025, accepted for presentation at the Department of Family and Community Medicine Conference at the University of Toronto, and submitted for publication in the journal Women's Health Issues.
What did the Research Find? The review found a growing but still limited evidence base for novel and emerging PTSD interventions for women Veterans. Key findings included: • Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories demonstrated moderate-certainty evidence for reducing PTSD symptom severity beyond clinically meaningful thresholds.

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- Holographic Reprocessing demonstrated moderate-certainty evidence for meaningful improvements in PTSD symptoms, depression, and anxiety.
- Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR) produced outcomes comparable to present-centered supportive psychotherapy for PTSD and depression.
- Trauma Center Trauma-Sensitive Yoga showed low-certainty evidence suggesting benefits comparable to Cognitive Processing Therapy.
- Delivery of Self Training and Education for Stressful Situations (DESTRESS) demonstrated potential improvements in self-reported PTSD symptoms.
- Evidence for several other interventions, including Accelerated Resolution Therapy, Cervical Sympathetic Block, Capnometry-Guided Respiratory Intervention, pharmacological treatments, and trauma-informed aquatic therapy, remained uncertain because of very low certainty evidence.

The review also found that few studies reported outcomes separately by sex or gender, limiting the ability to determine intervention effectiveness specifically for women Veterans.

What does this Research Mean?

The findings suggest that several novel interventions show promise for treating PTSD among women Veterans, particularly Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories and Holographic Reprocessing. However, the overall evidence base remains limited and additional high-quality studies are required. The review highlights the importance of:

- Conducting larger and more rigorous clinical studies.
- Comparing emerging interventions directly with established PTSD treatments.
- Incorporating longer-term follow-up and standardized outcome measures.
- Routinely reporting sex- and gender-disaggregated outcomes.
- Using intersectional and GBA Plus-informed research designs to better understand which interventions work best for different groups of women Veterans.

These findings can help guide future mental health research, program development, and clinical care for women Veterans experiencing PTSD and related mental health conditions.

Sources

Final Report-RF-0034 Novel emerging and alternative mental health interventions for women veterans. Final Report submitted April 30, 2026, under the Joint Federal Research Funding Program for Military Personnel and Veterans. [Final Repo...n veterans | PDF]

Knowledge Mobilization Outputs

- Findings presented at the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum 2025.
- Poster accepted at the Department of Family and Community Medicine Conference at the University of Toronto.
- Manuscript submitted to Women's Health Issues and under peer review.

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