

**“The impact of this tiny study was larger than that of some randomized controlled trials. The study was groundbreaking because it showed that military patients and providers were open to this type of treatment and it led to the inclusion of Yoga Nidra into the pool of treatment options for post-traumatic stress.”**

*Joan Walter, JD, PA  
Chief Operating Officer  
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### **A CRITICAL NEED**

Between 28 and 49 percent of soldiers and members of the National Guard returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from post-traumatic stress or other difficulties such as drug and alcohol abuse, depression, anxiety, insomnia, suicide and additional violence against self and others.

*Department of Defense Task Force  
on Mental Health Report (2007)*

## **Yoga Nidra Studied for its Effectiveness in Reducing Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms**

Due to the impact of more than a decade of war on our service members, mind-body treatments have been added to complement traditional treatments for post-traumatic stress. A groundbreaking Samueli Institute pilot study in 2006 at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. on Yoga Nidra helped with this shift towards a more integrative approach.

Yoga Nidra is a self-care practice that focuses on reducing physical, emotional and mental tension. The technique promotes deep relaxation through body scanning and deep breathing. Because Yoga Nidra is practiced while lying on the back, no yoga poses are required, making it well-suited for soldiers with multi-trauma including combat-related post-traumatic stress symptoms and physical injury.



### **FEASIBLE, EFFECTIVE AND WELL-RECEIVED**

Samueli Institute’s goal was to determine whether Yoga Nidra could be explored as a treatment for post-traumatic stress symptoms in military personnel. The small pilot study found that service members and providers were open to this type of treatment and that it could successfully be included into the range of offerings.

In the tested cohort, a decrease in post-traumatic stress symptoms from the baseline measurement throughout the study to the end-point assessment was observed. Anecdotal comments by study participants indicated acceptance and practice of the techniques to relieve anxiety and other post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Comments from participants included:

- “It is easier to get to sleep...and I sleep longer.”
- “I feel more accepting of situations in my life that I cannot control.”
- “The classes are calming and I always have a really good day after the sessions.”

The research team concluded that Yoga Nidra is feasible and may be beneficial to soldiers with significant symptoms of post-traumatic stress. **Samueli Institute’s pilot study lead to the inclusion of Yoga Nidra into the treatment options for the rehabilitation of warfighters post deployment.**

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