

Benefits of Massed Prolonged Exposure Therapy

There is universal agreement that effective and efficient treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for Service members is needed. One common barrier to the implementation of effective treatments for PTSD within the military is treatment length (8-15 weeks), which may interfere with military duties and readiness. As such, a shorter course of therapy, referred to as massed therapy, could accelerate improvement of PTSD symptoms for some Service members, while also supporting military readiness.

Facilitates Military Readiness

Massed PE therapy is delivered in a compressed format, providing 60-minute daily sessions for 10 weekdays over the course of 2 weeks versus the typical treatment length of 8-15 weeks. Massed PE allows providers to give effective care to services members for PTSD while helping to promote mission readiness more rapidly.

Rapid Symptom Improvement

Mental health providers seek to deliver effective and efficient care. A great benefit of massed PE delivery is that it may help patients achieve rapid symptom improvement. Treatments that help to provide rapid improvement for patients could also help providers with caseload management.

Lower Dropout Rates

An ongoing issue for clinics and providers treating PTSD within military MTFs is dropout rates. From a practical standpoint, the longer treatment lasts, the greater the likelihood that service members may run into competing demands or lose interest.

Deciding between Standard PE Therapy vs Massed PE

It is important to consider an individual's personal and military unit circumstances when making treatment decisions. Standard scheduling will be preferable in most cases and will allow ample time for between-session practice and homework. However, in cases where a Service member needs treatment but does not have the time to complete month course of treatment (e.g., upcoming deployment, training scheduled, impending PCS, unit cannot release member for standard length of treatment) that takes 2-3 months, massed PE should be considered.

References

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