Multi-site Dissemination of a Spiritually-based Mantram Repetition Program for Veterans

Jill E. Bormann, PhD, RN, FAAN\textsuperscript{1,2,3} \quad Taylor Andrews, BA\textsuperscript{2}
Melissa M. Buttner, PhD\textsuperscript{1,2} \quad Marjorie Ferguson, FNP-BC\textsuperscript{2,4}
Kimberly R. Weingart, PhD\textsuperscript{2} \quad Niloo Afari, PhD\textsuperscript{1,2,5}

\textsuperscript{1} VA Center of Excellence for Stress & Mental Health
\textsuperscript{2} VA San Diego Healthcare System
\textsuperscript{3} Hahn School of Nursing and Health Sciences, University of San Diego
\textsuperscript{4} VA Santa Barbara Outpatient Community Clinic
\textsuperscript{5} University of California San Diego
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Objectives

1. Describe components of Mantram Repetition Program (MRP) for symptom management in Veterans.

2. Summarize outcomes of psychological distress in Veterans who completed the MRP at multiple sites.

3. Describe two types of MRP facilitator training with advantages and disadvantages of each.
Mantram Repetition Program?

• Complementary, non-trauma-focused *skills*
• Training attention on a *spiritually-based word*
• 3 portable, mind-body practices
• Used intermittently during the day or night

1. Mantram Repetition
2. Slowing Down
3. One-Pointed Attention

Why mantra, not mantra?

Reflects work of Eknath Easwaran, spiritual teacher of the Eight Point Program

www.easwaran.org

Blue Mountain Center of Meditation in Tomales, CA

Not a “sitting mantra meditation”
Not same as Transcendental Meditation (TM)
Why mantram, not mantra?

Sanskrit root word

Mantra: manas = mind trai = to cross
Mantram: “to cross over the mind”

5. Compose a mantra and repeat it. Or use this one: “My head will not explode.”

Not even a good affirmation!
12 Mantras to Lift You Right Up

Let go of what you cannot control

Always choose joy

Forget what’s gone, appreciate what remains, and look forward to what’s coming next

Wag more, bark less

Comfort is the enemy of achievement

Don’t believe everything you think

Be a warrior, not a worrier

I’m too busy working on my own grass to notice if yours is greener

It’s just a bad day, not a bad life

When nothing goes right... go left

When you feel like quitting, think about why you started
A mantra is NOT a:

1. Slogan
2. Motto
3. Affirmation
4. Created self-talk
5. Song or poem
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mantram (pronunciation)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Om Mani Padme Hum (Ohm Mah-nee Pahd-may Hume)</td>
<td>An invocation to the jewel (Self), in the lotus of the heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namo Butsaya (Nah-mo Boot-sie-yah)</td>
<td>I bow to the Buddha</td>
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<tr>
<td>My God and my All</td>
<td>St. Francis of Assisi’s mantram</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maranatha (Mar-ah-nah-tha)</td>
<td>Lord of the Heart (Aramaic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrie Eleison (Kir-eay Ee-lay-ee-sone)</td>
<td>Lord have mercy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus, Jesus or Lord Jesus Christ</td>
<td>Son of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with you</td>
<td>Catholic Rosary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om Prema</td>
<td>A call for universal love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rama</td>
<td>Eternal Joy within (Gandhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So Hum</td>
<td>I am that Self within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om Shanti</td>
<td>In invocation to eternal peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shalom</td>
<td>Peace, wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheheena</td>
<td>Feminine aspect of God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mantram Curriculum

1 - What is a mantram?
2 - How to choose and use a mantram
   Tracking mantram practice
3 - Mantram repetition and the stress response
4 - Slowing down
5 - One-pointed attention
6 - Making healthy choices
7 - Making mantram a part of your life
8 - Putting it all together
Video

Veteran describing mantram repetition use.
## VA Facilitators & Training

### Apprenticeship

1. Clinicians took course from expert facilitator to learn & practice.

2. Co-facilitated with expert facilitator until comfortable on his/her own.

3. At least one but maybe more courses.

### 2-Day Intensive

1. Clinicians attended 2-day face-to-face training.

2. One-month prior they received materials to choose & use mantram.

3. Day 1: Each of 8 classes taught/demonstrated.

4. Day 2: Attendees taught portions of each of 8 classes.
VA Facilitators & Training

Know and practice program skills
Prefer mental health clinical experience

Apprenticeship (n=4)
San Diego

2-Day Intensive (n=7)
- Las Vegas
- Long Beach
- Loma Linda
- Los Angeles
- San Diego
- Santa Barbara
VA Facilitators & Training

Interested in bringing program to their sites
Received local approval from their supervisors

Apprenticeship (n=4)
- 2 Social Workers
- 1 Registered Nurse
- 1 Nurse Practitioner

2-Day Intensive (n=7)
- 6 Social Workers
- 1 Nurse Practitioner
VA Patients \((N=273)\)

Self-selected, treatment-seeking patients
Self-reported pre/post questionnaires

- Apprenticeship \((n=4)\)
  - VA patients \((n=173)\)

- 2-Day Intensive \((n=7)\)
  - VA patients \((n=100)\)
Age, Gender & Ethnicity

Mean Age = 57 (SD=11.46)
Range: 22-88 years
Males - 87%
Females - 13%
Sample Characteristics

- Ever Deployed: 69%
- Medical DX: 58%
- Psychiatric DX: 56%
Measures

- Brief Symptom Inventory-18 (BSI-18)
  Derogatis, 2001

- FACIT*sp-12: Spiritual Wellbeing Scale
  Peterman et al. 2002

- Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) – Brown & Ryan, 2003

*Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy
Mean Scores* by Facilitator Group

higher scores = greater amount of variable

Significant improvements over time in all outcomes \((p < .001)\)

No differences on outcomes between facilitator training
Conclusion

- Successful dissemination
- Effective in a real-world setting
- Positive outcomes
- Potential bias - not clinical trial
- No differences due to type of facilitator training
Thank you!

jill.bormann@va.gov
www.jillbormann.com