

Veterans and Mindfulness: The Impact of a Peer-Led Community-Based Initiative

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Veterans that are reintegrating to civilian life and potentially transitioning from clinical services for mental health are in a critical phase that can be further complicated with a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis. Recent paradigm shifts in therapy have suggested that mindfulness-based interventions can have a positive impact on both PTSD symptoms and stress levels, making this type of approach advantageous to the veteran population. Additionally, this approach is also thought to be impactful for emergency medical service providers due to both chronic stress and potential daily exposure to traumatic events. This study utilizes a phenomenological approach to understand both veterans' reintegration experience and impact of a community-based mindfulness intervention for veterans and EMS providers in the community. Results have indicated that the intervention which is led by trained veteran facilitators can help participants both reintegrate into their communities and lead to a reduction with both stress and PTSD symptoms.