

# iRest® Integrative Restoration, A Meditative Approach to Healing: Bringing Calm and Ease to Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence and/or Stalking

Jennifer R. Shearin, University of Missouri and Kim Anderson, PhD, MSW, LCSW – Associate Professor, University of Missouri-Columbia School of Social Work  
Terry Wilson, M.Ed., R.N., C.H.E.S – Director, Health Promotion – University of Missouri Student Health Center

## INTRODUCTION

### ABSTRACT:

This research single-subject design tested the feasibility of iRest – Integrative Restoration Yoga Nidra an evidence based form of meditation—as an intervention for trauma recovery for survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) and/or stalking. Through purposeful sampling, two participants were selected to receive the intervention for 8-meditation sessions over a 5-week period. In order to compare differences, one participant met criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and one participant did not. Findings indicated: The main category to emerge from the qualitative data analysis included the process of finding and reconnecting with one’s true self. Quantitative analysis revealed a decrease in PTSD, anxiety, stress, and depression. An increase in resiliency and mindfulness as it relates to non-reactivity to inner experience and acting with awareness. Qualitative analysis revealed a primary construct of “finding and connecting with inner self,” which included other aspects of self.

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

- Prior iRest research has addressed military trauma populations (iRest);
- No published studies of iRest research with IPV/stalking in general and as an intervention for trauma recovery in particular.
- No published studies on the impact of meditation on survivors of stalking trauma
- IPV is a significant social problem; severe physical violence 1/4 women; 16% of women have experienced stalking (NISVS).
- Short- and long-term consequences: post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and injuries, and that they were more likely to have headaches, asthma, chronic pain, irritable bowel syndrome, difficulty sleeping, reduced physical and/or mental health, and diabetes (NISVS).
- Psychological abuse by an adult intimate partner rather than more severe types of physical abuse appear to cause a higher incidence of PTSD with consequences that can include depression, hypervigilant behavior and hyperarousal (Mechanic).
- Avoidant coping is an important aspect of PTSD that survivors and helping professionals need consider when evaluating interventions, as mindfulness meditation seems to play a significant part in the reduction of avoidance (Lang).
- Increased resiliency can impact a survivor’s ability to cope and find purpose in their lives from their suffering and seems to have an effect on their recovery (Anderson).

### RESEARCH AIM:

The purpose of this research study is to examine if iRest reduces symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other stress symptoms and increases resiliency for survivors of intimate partner violence and/or stalking.

## INTERVENTION: IREST INTEGRATIVE RESTORATION

iRest – Integrative Restoration Yoga Nidra is a practice of deep relaxation and meditation that is evidence based and is shown to have positive effects on a number of biological and psychological conditions in which participants explore areas including their “Inner Resource” – place of safety and security, “Heartfelt Desire” – what they want more than anything else in life, “Intentions”, “Feelings” and “Emotions”, “Beliefs” – thoughts or beliefs that are held (www.irest.us).

Participants are guided through an 8 step-meditation protocol; developer: Richard C. Miller, Ph.D

- Week one:  
Assessment, Consent, and Orientation  
Meditation #1 Inner Resource
- Week two:  
Meditation #2 Heartfelt Desire and Intention  
Meditation #3 Body Sensing and Breath Sensing
- Week three:  
Meditation #4 Feelings and Emotions  
Meditation #5 Beliefs
- Week four:  
Meditation #6 Joy  
Meditation #7 Pure Awareness/Pure Being
- Week five:  
Meditation #8 Integration/Inner Strength  
Interview and Post Assessment

## OUTCOME MEASURES

- **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist (PCL-C)**, a self-report 17-item measure of PTSD.
- **Connor Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC)**, is a 25-item measure designed to understand resiliency related to psycho-social-spiritual aspects.
- **MQ – Mindfulness Questionnaire**, short form of Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer).
- **Depression, Anxiety, Stress (DASS) Scale**, is a 21-item measure with five severity ratings: normal, mild, moderate, severe, and extremely severe.
- **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)**, is a 5-item measure.

## METHOD

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS:

This study is currently ongoing; additional data will be collected from a 10-week format (1 x week) to compare with a 5-week protocol (2 x week):

#### Data Analysis

Data for this project includes verbatim transcripts of digitally-voice recorded interviews that are transcribed and coded, journal entries, a demographics scale, 5 – measures: PTSD Check List (PCL-C) Scale, Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS), Conner-Davidson Scale (CD-RISC), Perceived Stress Scale and (PSS), Mindfulness Questionnaire (MQ).

**Quantitative Data Analysis:** As the study is ongoing, depending upon the sample size, independent sample t-tests will be used to test for differences at pre-test regarding sample demographics. Subsequently, a paired sample t-test between groups on pre- and post-test will be conducted.

**Qualitative Data Analysis:** In most cases, the content analysis was guided by the principles of Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006), where the data was coded and analyzed. First, a review of the data was conducted to give familiarity to the structure of the group and participant interviews. Then, initial codebooks were developed to guide content analyses based on constructs drawn from the literature. Further coding followed, and additional scrutiny and re-evaluation was done of the initial codebook. Coding was first done in a broad open coding format, as the analysis progressed, more focused coding was conducted. Two coders; in addition to the researcher, took memos throughout the coding process to compare codes, and link codes to larger analysis questions.

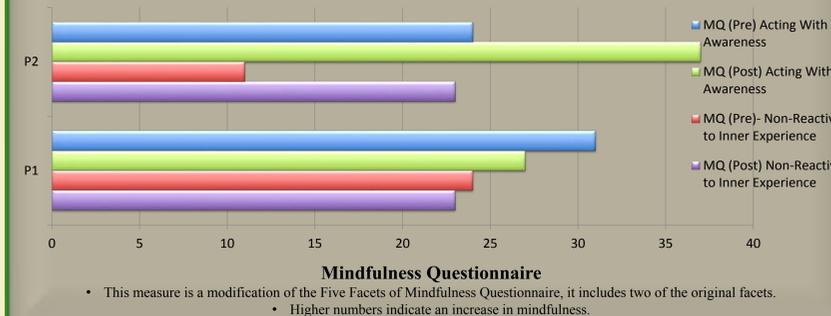
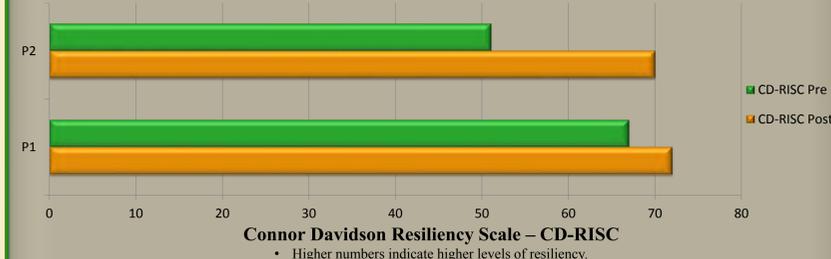
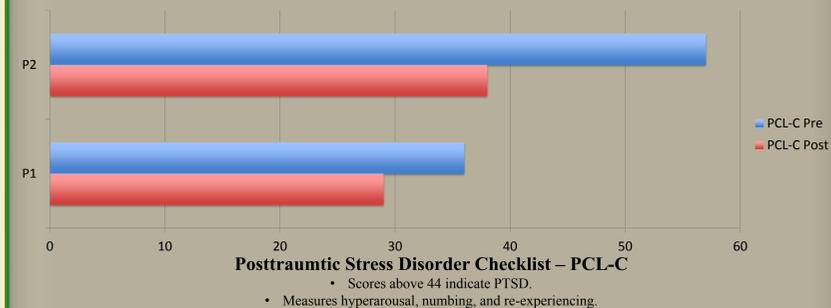
## FINDINGS

The preliminary findings of the single-subject design study **show a reduction in PTSD symptoms and an increase in resiliency.** For the participant that met criteria for PTSD, there was a greater increase in resiliency and a **clinically significant reduction in PTSD symptomology.**

## QUANTITATIVE

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION:

- Participant one (**P1**) did not meet criteria for PTSD.
- Participant two (**P2**) did meet criteria for PTSD.



## QUALITATIVE DATA

The core category to emerge from the data, was the construct: “Finding and connecting to one’s inner self” that was important to their recovery. Other aspects of self that emerged:

- Pride
- Patience
- Self-Efficacy
- Self-Realization
- Self-Awareness
- Coping
- Calm
- Self-Reliance
- Connectedness



### PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

#### Finding and Connecting with Inner Self

*“I feel like **my brain is more connected to my heart now**, cause they used to think on different levels, different paths, and now **they are connected because they are helping one another out**, cause my feelings and emotion are inside my heart. [they] help my thoughts and then my thoughts help analyze my feelings, so they’re just a cycle helping each other and I like that, I like that I can help my heart not hurt by mind, ... I’m really glad that I have that and that I found that.” ~ P1*

*“...just knowing that there is a place...something within you that its still not touched and will never be touched and the whole idea that you are perfect, so **you don’t have to live with this violence you don’t have to live with this trauma**, you can get past this... don’t think that you’ve lost like its there with you...” ~ P2*

## CONCLUSIONS

- iRest proves to be beneficial for those who have or have not met criteria for PTSD. Through this study, however, we have found that individuals that are living with PTSD symptoms, such as nightmares and anxiety, experience a reduction of symptoms in general; however, those who meet criteria for PTSD have a clinically significant reduction in PTSD symptomology such as difficulty sleeping, anxiety, depression, and anger.
- Participants, regardless of criteria met for PTSD, mention a sense of loss due to their traumatic experience and that through iRest they reconnected with the inner self they thought no longer existed.
- It is through this reconnection with self that survivors were able to increase their resiliency, coping, self-efficacy, awareness, self-reliance, sense of calm, patience, and connect to family and peer relationships through pride and the ability to help with the knowledge they have gained [teaching others through the iRest skills they have learned].

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- McNair Scholars Program – University of Missouri - Columbia

## REFERENCES

References are available, please see researcher for handout.