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Wave Academy Makes Strides in Curbing Post-Traumatic Stress in Military Veterans
New Johns Hopkins University-Validated Research Reveals the Measurable Impact of
Aquatic Bodywork Therapy as a Promising Intervention

San Diego Nonprofit Focuses on Stemming the PTS and Suicide Epidemic Among Returning Service Personnel of the Iraq and Afghanistan War Era; Calls for Access to Therapy Pools to Increase Capacity

San Diego, CA (November 6, 2014) – Today, Wave Academy, an innovative San Diego-based nonprofit that provides Aquatic Bodywork Therapy (ABT) – a specialized warm water therapy – to veterans diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) and their caregivers, released new data on the measurable impact of ABT in reducing the crippling symptoms of PTS. Research conducted in conjunction with the Center for Research and Reform in Education Institute (CRRE) at Johns Hopkins University - *U.S. News & World Report's* #1 ranked graduate school of education - analyzed data on 15 U.S. military veterans undergoing an eight-week ABT treatment protocol and found that subjects experienced a more than 28% decrease in PTS symptoms. This data shows great promise for the therapy and its potential to heal the thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans diagnosed with PTS every month and reverse the alarming statistic that 22 veterans commit suicide every day in the U.S.

Conducted by licensed therapists in 96-degree water, ABT couples warmth, buoyancy and fluid movements with water-borne massage to help clients heal from physical, mental, emotional and other traumas and medical conditions. Wave Academy's treatment stretches, expands and supports the spine and body while promoting a sense of peace and relaxation so complete that the recipient tends to "surrender" and release tensions that enable the body and mind to move beyond the limitations that gravity of fear would otherwise impose. This is designed to lead to the reduction in PTS symptoms such as sleep disruption, anxiety and depression.

"Post-Traumatic Stress among military personnel has reached epidemic proportions and families of loved ones exhibiting symptoms of violence, isolation and depression are desperately seeking methods to keep them all safe," said Dave Towe, Wave Academy Executive Director. "By providing Aquatic Bodywork Therapy in San Diego, home to one of the largest military populations in the country, we are actively healing families, saving lives from suicide and creating hope in the lives of men and women who honorably gave their lives in service to our country."

Last year, Wave Academy partnered with Johns Hopkins University CRRE to evaluate its program to explore how it could measurably reduce the debilitating symptoms affecting clinically diagnosed veterans with PTS. The evaluation documented the symptomatic progression of 15 Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Iraq war veterans who were clinically diagnosed with PTS. The protocol involved one one-hour ABT session per week over eight weeks, as well as detailed intake sessions and exit interviews. Several assessment tools were used to monitor PTS symptoms including the PCL-M (PTSD Checklist-Military), which is based on diagnostic criteria as described in the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition). These assessments gauged clients' symptoms during the protocol and were administered at four points – pre-therapy and at weeks 2/4/8.

Preliminary results indicate that warm water therapy may be linked to better sleep, pain reduction and lower levels of anxiety. After four weeks, reductions in PTS symptoms start to appear on two of the industry assessments.

- The PTSD Checklist-Military (PCL-M) scores showed a **28% median reduction in symptoms over the protocol.**

- The Profile of Mood States (POMS) scores showed a **38% median reduction in symptoms over the protocol.**
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Wave Academy personnel, under the guidance of Monica Traystman Ph.D., Wave Academy Research Program Advisor, undertook the research, including data collection. Researchers at the Johns Hopkins University, School of Education, Center for Research and Reform in Education analyzed the data.

“There is little empirical evidence on Aquatic Bodywork Therapy to quantifiably demonstrate the healing powers of this Complementary Alternative Medicine modality,” said Traystman. “These preliminary results are significant in demonstrating the ability of warm water therapy to serve as a powerful intervention in the treatment of PTS. We hope that this data will be received as a valuable contribution to the field of knowledge about holistic medicine and help spur increased support for ABT as a viable non-drug treatment.”

Clients have offered moving accounts of their improving physical, mental and emotional health after undergoing Aquatic Bodywork Therapy with Wave Academy:

“Before the therapy sessions, I couldn’t get control of the way I was thinking and was filled with thoughts of suicide, depression, stress, anger, fear, resentment and guilt,” said James Moreno, Marine Corps veteran. “Wave Academy has been the most beneficial for my recovery. I am extremely happy to be where I’m at now and to even say that I am happy.”

“I returned from combat 10 years ago and had PTSD and thought this is just the way I am now – angry, mad aggressive,” said Amanda Smith, Army veteran. “After the first treatment session, I asked – is this what it’s like to feel relaxed? I hadn’t felt that way in years and years.”

Today, millions of Americans are beginning to explore Complementary Alternative Medicine in the treatment of physical and mental illnesses and injuries and the demand for Wave Academy’s services is growing exponentially. In 2014, Wave is projected to deliver upwards of 300% more therapy sessions than in 2013.

“Imagine helping to move troubled clients from depression, sleeplessness, panic attacks and suicidal ideation to better sleep, less pain and a more positive life outlook,” added Towe. “We have the power to realize this potential, but we need access to commercial therapy pools in San Diego County to expand our capacity to serve those who simply cannot afford to wait. Please join Wave Academy in helping to diffuse the ‘war at home’ that many service men and women face when returning from deployment and help us build stronger families and communities.”

To learn more about the Wave Academy, visit www.waveacademy.org and “like” us on our [Facebook fan page](#).

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*****Interview opportunities are available with Wave Academy personnel and military veterans diagnosed with PTS and receiving Aquatic Bodywork Therapy.**

Additional statistics:

- Today, one in four veterans is diagnosed with PTS.
- Of the more than 2.6 million service men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, 20-35 percent have come home with PTS.
- When untreated, PTS can lead to alcohol and drug abuse, heart attacks, depression, dementia and suicide -- evidenced by the fact that 22 veterans commit suicide every day in the U.S.

- Veteran suicide rates in California are three times higher than among civilians.