



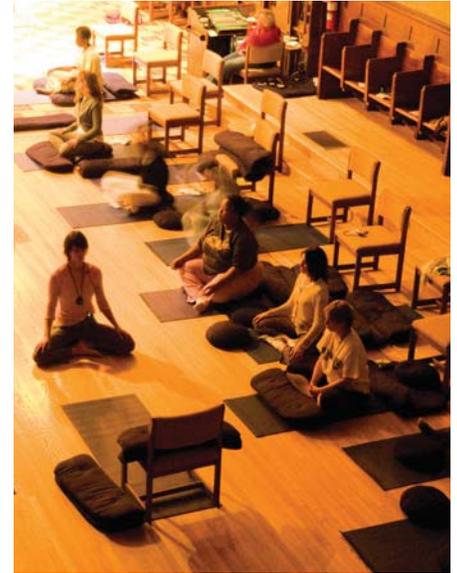
Garrison Institute Initiative on Transforming Trauma

How Pervasive Is Trauma, and How Is It Treated?

Trauma is a far-reaching, growing, global epidemic. From the 26 million displaced persons worldwide, to the estimated 7.7 million U.S. veterans and civilians with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to the 5.3 million reported cases (32 million estimated total) of U.S. domestic violence annually – 50% of whom are children – trauma directly affects large segments of the population.

In the past 20 years it has been widely recognized that trauma is not only psychological but also physiological. Even in cases where there has been no overt bodily injury, trauma disrupts healthy neurological functioning and causes a profound mind-body rupture. This is one reason why cognitive and psychological approaches such as “talk therapy” by themselves are often inadequate: they don’t address trauma’s neurological and physiological bases.

The larger field of trauma treatment spans a wide range of supports, responses and formal interventions. In particular, a growing body of work by researchers and clinicians suggest that contemplative methods, such as meditation or yoga, when integrated into state-of-the-art trauma care, show promise and merit a place in the repertoire of trauma treatment. Contemplative-based self-care for trauma workers may be particularly important for secondary or vicarious trauma (VT), since it can be used to mitigate VT before it becomes a serious problem or even avert it altogether.



Domestic violence shelter staff program at the Garrison Institute. Photo by Mary Ann Glass.

Mission

Within the Garrison Institute’s mission of applying contemplative approaches to complex social and environmental issues, its Initiative on Transforming Trauma (ITT) works to advance the field of contemplative-based trauma care. ITT aims to increase visibility of new contemplative-based clinical and self-care interventions, highlighting scientific research that can validate such approaches. ITT programs develop and test specific contemplative methodologies for various trauma care settings.

Strategy

ITT’s strategy for pursuing this mission is twofold. It fosters the development of the emerging field of contemplative-based trauma care by identifying, networking and convening thought leaders including researchers, clinical practitioners, contemplative experts, policymakers and funders. It also develops and pilots innovative, contemplative-based trainings for trauma workers. Pilot projects are chosen for potential replication on a wider scale.

Initiative on Transforming Trauma Activities

Research – ITT conducts research in the emerging field of contemplative-based trauma care, such as its ongoing mapping study, which documents the current state of the field, analyzing which practices are being used with which populations, with what success. The study is led by clinical trauma specialist Deborah Rozelle, Psy.D. and University of Michigan researcher Anthony King, Ph.D., and also draws on the work of UCLA psychiatrist Daniel Siegel, VT specialist Laurie Pearlman, Ph.D. and guidelines used by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS).

Networking and Convening – ITT convenes interdisciplinary meetings of experts in trauma research, trauma treatment and contemplative practice traditions. Participants present their work, engage in dialogue and explore ways of promoting effective use of contemplative practices in trauma research and clinical practice. The ITT steering committee also brings together leading trauma and contemplative scholars, researchers and clinicians.

The Wellness Project – Developed by the Garrison Institute specifically for workers and managers in domestic violence shelters and other settings, Wellness Project trainings use meditation, restorative yoga and complementary methodologies to alleviate vicarious trauma (VT), reduce burn-out, strengthen resilience and support caregivers to be more effective in their work with clients.

Education and Advocacy – ITT works to educate care providers and policymakers about the pervasiveness of vicarious trauma and what can be done about it. It hosts special retreats for executive-level agency leaders, government officials and funders to educate them about VT in the workplace and build support for caregiver interventions like the Wellness project. ITT also offers onsite one-day programs called “Wellness Days” for social services agencies. They use psychoeducation and experiential training techniques to inform staff about VT and how contemplative-based interventions can help.

Priority Issues

ITT’s work aims to transform the field of trauma care, and ultimately help rethink and alleviate the epidemic of trauma which is a deep part of contemporary society. Specifically, ITT’s current activities have direct application many trauma fields, including:

- **Research** – ITT conducts its own research and convenes interdisciplinary gatherings of leading experts on trauma.
- **Family violence** – Wellness trainings and other ITT programs are resources for domestic violence shelters, child welfare agencies and other family service providers.
- **Youth-at-risk** – Together with the Garrison Institute’s Initiative on Contemplation and Education, ITT offers education and training resources for students and staff at special education schools and other settings working with child trauma.
- **Humanitarian aid** – ITT is pursuing new programs to develop and test contemplative-based methodologies for alleviating VT among humanitarian relief workers.
- **PTSD** – ITT can provide resources for veterans’ hospitals and other settings where post-traumatic stress disorder is treated.
- **Policy and administration** – ITT offers trainings and resources to administrators and government officials tasked with managing delivery of trauma services.

For detailed and updated information on the Transforming Trauma Initiative, visit www.garrisoninstitute.org or contact ITT Program Assistant Terri Pahucki, 845.424.4800 x 105 terri@garrisoninstitute.org