



Reiki for Trauma

By Sandi Anderson RM CHTr

Jack, retired plumber and father of four, served in the navy with the Sea Bees during the 1950's and was in Korea during the war. Jack came home with physical scars as well as invisible scars. His hyper-vigilance and re-occurring bad memories made it hard to connect with loved ones.

After his years of service, Jack built his own business as a plumber. He was up early, out late, and working multiple jobs a long way from home, which meant driving when tired. The years of long days, short nights, poor diet, and lots of coffee took a toll on his mental and physical health and personal life: diabetes, weight gain, irritability, heart attack and several divorces.

While driving home after a very long day and week, Jack fell asleep at the wheel and rolled his truck. He was hospitalized with multiple injuries, and surgery was needed for his wrist and hand. The accident triggered his hyper-vigilance, war memories, depression, high blood pressure, and insomnia.

One of his adult daughters, a Reiki Master, suggested that Reiki could help him. A Japanese healing technique, Reiki uses the laying of hands on or just above the body to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and promote healing on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels. The practice has been used to help individuals who survived trauma.

During his first session with a certified Reiki practitioner, Jack lay comfortably on a massage table while the practitioner gently placed their hands on or above different areas of his body, with intentions of releasing blocked energy and promoting balance and harmony. Jack was surprised. He felt a growing sense of calm and relaxation as the Reiki energy moved through his body. His worried thoughts and feeling slowed down, and he felt peaceful. As his session continued, Jack noted his pain level improved as well.

Jack thanked his daughter for her persistent encouragement to try something new. After one Reiki session, the biggest improvement Jack noticed was that he slept better and through the night. He continued to receive regular Reiki sessions, along with PT for his hand and wrist. Over time, his hyper-vigilance and stress levels decreased, improving his sense of well-being and peace, and he recovered from surgery faster than expected. He developed greater appreciation of life.

Reiki promotes healing from the outside in and reminds the body how to feel calm again. During a flight, fight, or freeze response, emotions that assist a person through a traumatic experience are often buried. Reiki gently helps to release those trapped emotions and free people from their trauma.

Reiki is a complementary therapy and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical or psychiatric care. Those interested in adding Reiki to their wellness plan should consult a qualified Reiki practitioner and work together with their health care team.

Additional Resources:

- * Reiki for Mental Health: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9326483/>
- * Reiki and Post - Traumatic Stress Disorder: <https://www.reiki.org/articles-and-post-traumatic-stress-disorder>
- * University of Minnesota: takingcharge.csh.umn.edu

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