

Healing Veterans with the Art of Healing Touch

Maria Anderson, LPN; Jean Craemer, RN, MPH; Susan Holtorf, RD
VA Medical Center, Portland OR, USA



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Introduction

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the largest health care provider in the world. In 2011 VHA established the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation (OPCC-CT) with the aim of changing the philosophy and culture from a physician centered model of care to a patient centered model. In 2013 The Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center (PVAMC) participated in an OPCC-CT grant which funded partial salaries for 3 VA staff, a dietitian, recreation therapist, and RN, to coordinate Healing Touch (HT) endeavors.

- » 81 staff were trained in HT: 63 Level 1; 13 Level 2
- » Staff disciplines trained: RN's, LPN's, MD's, NA's, other
- » Technique review cards, CD's and massage tables were purchased
- » Contributions made to the development of the VA "Healing Touch Implementation Tool Kit"

Implementation

VAMC Community Living Center

The PVAMC Community Living Center (CLC) has been on a culture transformation journey over the last decade. Changing the culture from the traditional medical model to one that is person centered takes time and effort. The VA National Culture Transformation Steering Committee has provided guidance with the implementation of the following strategies:

- » Changed the name of our Nursing Skilled Care Units to Community Living Centers
- » Published the CLC Handbook that defines the cultural transformation process
- » Implemented the Holistic Approach to Transformational Change (HATCh) model which considers care practices, work practices and environment in a heart-felt analysis
- » Monitored progress quarterly for each of the VA's 132 CLC's using the Artifacts of Culture Change Tool
- » Sponsored National Culture Transformation Summits for CLC staff in 2005 and 2010
- » Annually surveyed all CLC's for culture change implementation

Implementation continued

Monthly Culture Change Committee meetings included input from interdisciplinary participants and Veterans in creating a warm, caring and home-like environment for Veterans and staff to thrive. These local efforts have been commended by the Joint Commission and the Office of Inspector General.

Enter HT, 2013! As part of the National OPCC-CT grant, funding was provided for HT training for the CLC's in the Northwest. Local Healing Touch Certified Practitioner Instructors were contracted to complete courses from June to November 2013.

CLC Facility	Number of Beds	Staff trained in Level 1 HT	Staff trained in Level 2 HT
Portland, OR	72	16	5
Roseburg, OR	42	11	-
Seattle, WA	38	9	-
American Lake, WA	67	9	-
Spokane, WA	28	4	-
Boise, ID	27	7	-

At the Portland CLC, staff are encouraged to chart their HT treatments. A chart review from October 2013 through April 2014 showed 28 Veterans received a total of 48 treatments with 100% reporting improvement in symptoms of pain, anxiety, nausea, and/or sleeplessness. All the Veterans wanted more HT available as a means to improve their comfort and quality of life.

The major barrier for staff is finding time from their regular responsibilities to do HT.

- Challenges to the implementation of HT include:
- » Finding time to provide HT sessions
 - » Staff shortages
 - » Providing a quiet space for HT
 - » Developing and maintaining skill set

From a CLC Dietitian~

Todd was admitted for supportive care during his throat cancer treatments. He was anxious, nauseated and had vomiting and dry heaves all night. He felt like he should give up and go home. When offered Healing Touch, he said "I'll try anything". Within twenty minutes he was at peace and fell asleep.

Inpatient

Trained staff have become champions in their work areas, educating Veterans and staff in the benefits of HT. They are true pioneers of culture change.

From an Inpatient RN~

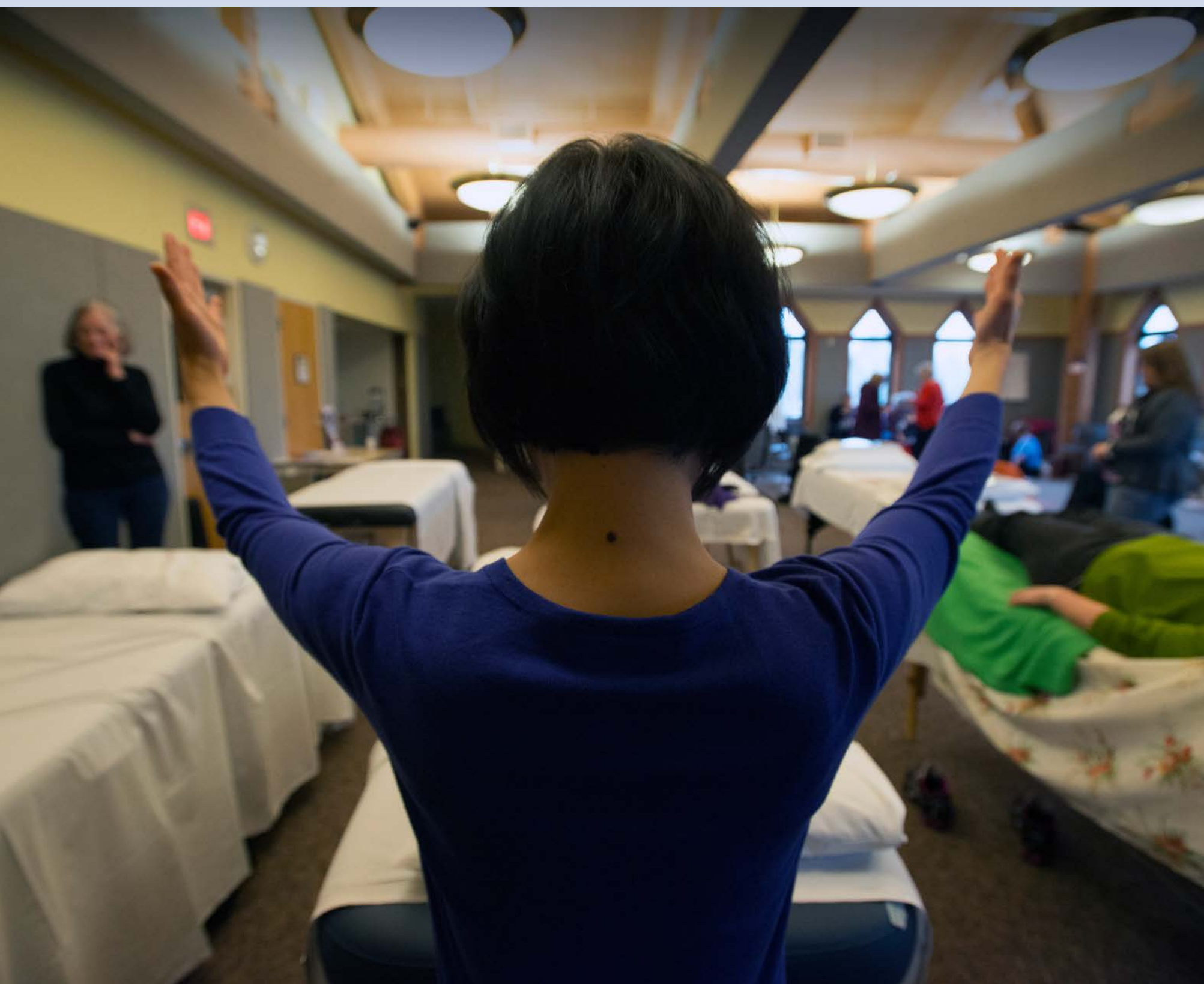
I have been caring for a patient for the last 3 nights who has dementia and delirium. He has been very confused, restless, combative, agitated and sleeping poorly. After being restless for 5 hours he began to repeatedly yell and moan at the top of his lungs. I decided to do HT. He stopped yelling after a few minutes. I continued for another 5-10 minutes, and he fell asleep.

Outpatient

Weekly HT clinic was piloted at PVAMC Primary Care. One hour HT was provided to Veterans. Primary care physicians provided referrals for HT.

From an Outpatient LPN ~

60 year old female with chronic pain, limited range of motion in shoulder and back, and poor sleep quality. Pain score 8. Goal verbalized she would like to get her pain level down to 6. After one HT session she hopped off the table and was ecstatic "Look I can move my arm and I can touch my toes!" Her pain score was 0 after her first session, and she remained at 0 for 3 days. She reported the only reason the pain returned was because "I felt normal again and I started moving furniture around." She also reported that after her first HT session she went home and slept a full 8 hours in her own bed - and that she had been unable to do that for many years.



Practice Groups

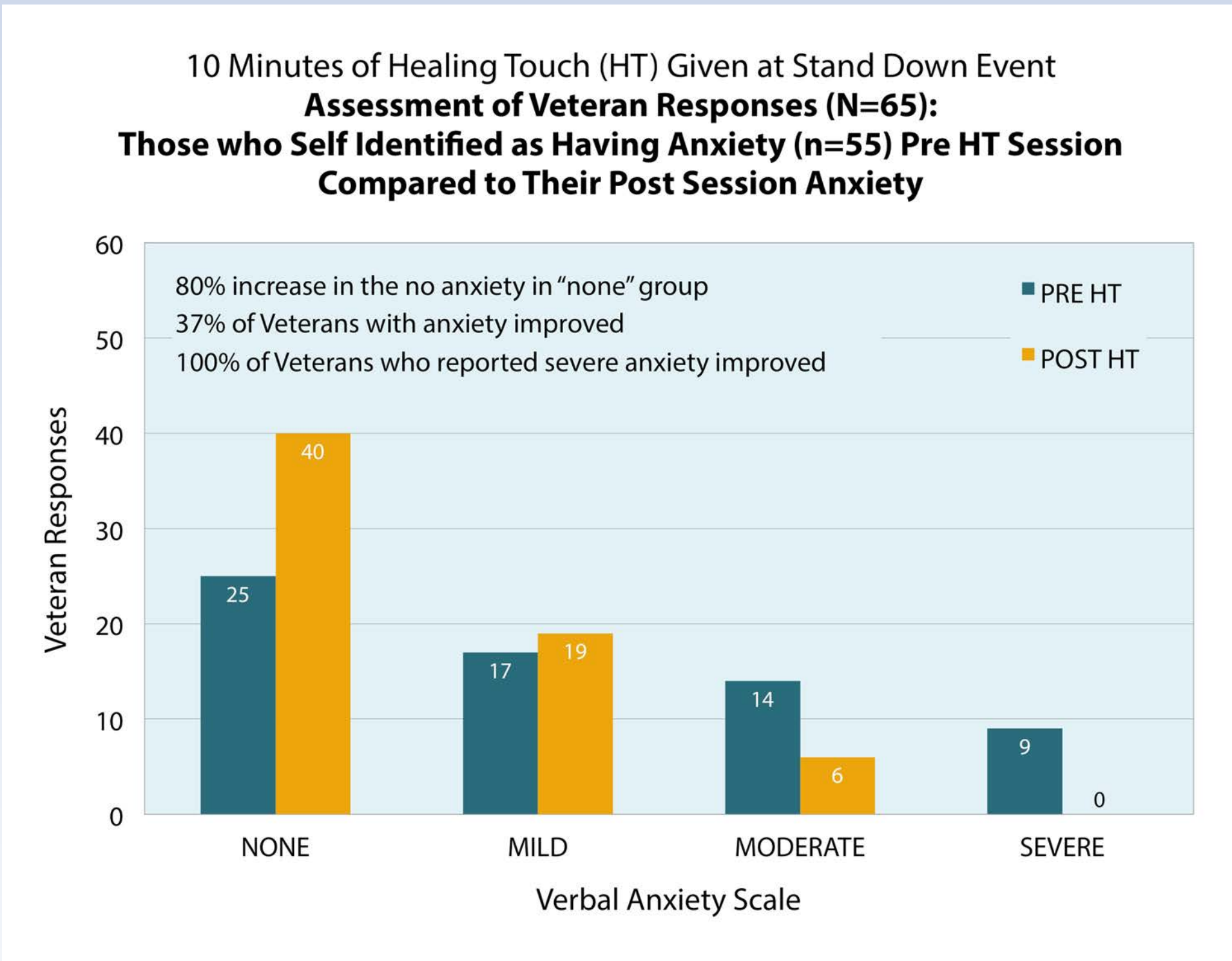
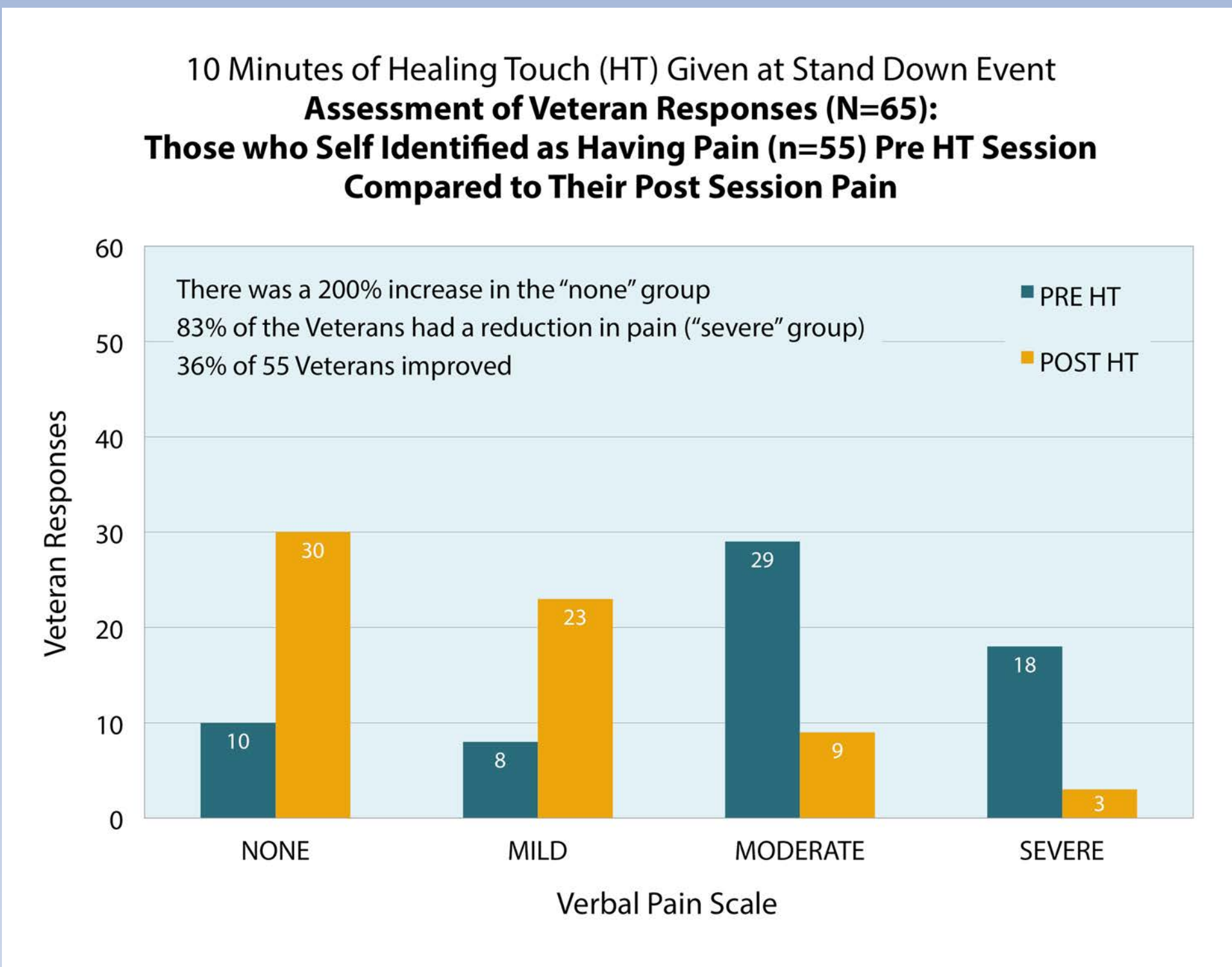
Two monthly HT practice groups were formed to:

- » Strengthen staff skills
- » Update staff on current HT news
- » Problem solve barriers to implementation

Volunteering

HT trained staff have volunteered at local Stand Down events. These community outreach events are designed to provide services to homeless Veterans. These include food, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to other community agencies who serve the homeless.

During these events Veterans were offered 10 minutes of HT. Participating Veteran's pain and anxiety were assessed pre and post treatment. Although this is not the most therapeutic environment to provide HT the preliminary results suggest a therapeutic effect.



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Contact Information

Maria Anderson, Maria.Anderson3@va.gov

Jean Craemer, MJean.Craemer@va.gov

Susan Holtorf, Susan.Holtorf@va.gov