



As TRE Providers, we see powerful results on a regular basis, but nothing speaks louder than hard data. We recently conducted a 10-week program for 74 clinical and administrative staff at a community mental health organization. Due to the demanding nature and context of this work, staff often experience high rates of psychological stress, burnout, and secondary trauma. So we decided to measure just how staff was doing on these variables before and after the TRE program using two widely used and well-validated research instruments (the Perceived Stress Scale 10 and Professional Quality of Life 5). We added compassion satisfaction to the assessment, because it is widely known to mitigate some of the costs of caregiving. And we also conducted a content analysis of the qualitative program evaluation.

The participants received theoretical and experiential TRE instruction in group settings at weekly intervals over a 10-week period, for a total of 7 contact hours. We provided education on the biopsychosocial effects of the stress-trauma continuum at the first session. Each session involved demonstration and practice of the TRE movement sequence and participants were encouraged to independently practice TRE at home.

All along the program facilitators heard good reports from participants, so we were expecting some excellent results by the program's end. But when the statistician, John Hughes PhD, ran the numbers, the outcomes exceeded everyone's expectations. There was a statistically significant increase in compassion satisfaction, and decreases in perceived stress, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. For those who like the numbers, the p values were all less than .009 (see Table 1). Qualitative data showed participants experienced relaxation, greater equanimity, less pain, and more capacity (see Table 2 for participants' quotes). A mixed-method program evaluation demonstrated high satisfaction rates, with participants stating that the program skills and information were useful for their personal and work lives. 22% requested longer weekly sessions and/or a longer program entirely. As one participant requested, "Make it a longer process. I enjoyed it too much."

Overall the program was so successful, that the organization has hired us to run another 10-week program, and is sending 6 staff members to be certified. Hard data does indeed speak volumes!

Contrast of Pre and Post for Perceived Stress, Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Traumatic Stress								
Variable	Pre		Post		t	p	95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
PS	18.63	5.49	13.67	5.28	-7.29	<.001	-7.39	-4.2
CS	41.18	5.64	41.91	5.25	2.74	.009	0.42	2.75
BO	21.87	5.64	19.88	5.14	-3.81	<.001	-3.71	-1.13
STS	23.68	6.74	20.69	5.4	-4.65	<.001	-5.37	-2.11

Table 1 – Contrast of Pre and Post for Perceived Stress (PS), Compassion Satisfaction (CS), Burnout (BO), and Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Qualitative Themes		
Theme	# of references	Example quotes
Tension-relaxation continuum	25	C106: "I am more relaxed (in my body)."
		C227: "The tremors were very relaxing."
		C218: "Less tense"
Equanimity	19	C219: "I appreciate feeling more calm and at peace. It's a great way to start work week."
		C223: "Learning how to let go of things, situations I can't control. Staying more positive."
		T110: "Anxiety has decreased significantly and I am not startled right away."
		T106: "When I do face times of stress TRE has helped me reach calm, relaxed state of mind faster than in my past."
Health and pain relief	13	C106: "When I feel like I can't sleep I use TRE."
		T110: "Back problems have decreased."
		C110, C114: "Less headaches."
		C213: "I am able to ease physical pain through tremoring."
		T116: "When I started I was experiencing pain on my wrist, halfway through program when I starting laying with my hands faced up the pain began to decrease and then dissapeared."
Self-care	9	C106: "This helping me get tthrough some personal issues I am dealing with at home."
		C219: "Taking the time during work to dedicate to my well being."
Capacity	5	C105: "Able to handle things (situations) I can't control."
		T112: "I noticed that as I do TRE more I don't feel tired physically. I have more energy everytime and don't feel overwhelm."

Table 2 – Qualitative Themes

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