

The MIND BODY Connector

FALL 2013, Vol. 3, No. 2

Director's welcome

The BHI marked an important milestone on June 17th: the launch of our leadership council, a dynamic group of individuals who have made the BHI a focus of their volunteerism and philanthropy. We are fortunate to have their talent and expertise in the BHI family, as we look to a bright future together.

At the launch meeting, I outlined four BHI priorities: building programs for caregivers and military veterans, promoting childhood health, and expanding genomics research. We also plan to expand our presence online, to foster these priorities as well as our clinical and educational missions.

There is increasing recognition that a preventive mind body medicine approach is essential to improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of health care. This is where the BHI excels. The contribution we can make to public health inspires and drives our work every day. We are grateful that you share this vision.

Gregory L. Fricchione, MD

Director, Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine
Associate Chief of the
Department of Psychiatry
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Resilient Warrior:

LEARNING TO BE HOME AGAIN

THE NUMBERS ARE STAGGERING. Nearly 3 million men and women have served at least one tour of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan during the past decade of war. One-third of these veterans come home with some form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, or substance abuse problem after having been fired on, encountered an improvised explosive device, or weathered other horrific events. Suicide rates among Army and Marine personnel are double the national average. Sleep disturbances, uncontrollable anger, hypervigilance, and chronic physical and mental health disorders known to be tied to stress are seen more frequently in returning soldiers.



Recognizing that conventional treatments for stress-related disorders are not always effective or readily available, the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine (BHI) partnered with the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program to design an approach to help soldiers and their families.

Aggie Casey, RN, is the BHI's lead clinician for "Resilient Warrior," launching in October 2013 at Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Mass. The program was piloted at the US Army Medical Research Center at Fort Bliss, Tex., and at the San Diego Naval Base. At Hanscom, groups of 20 repatriating soldiers will receive six weeks of training in mind body skills including relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, and

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THE HEALING COAT

IN THE 1990S, Cynthia Thomas and her husband had moved to Boston, and she had a successful career in journalism. But in 1999, life took an unexpected turn when she found herself undergoing surgery for brain cancer.

The post-surgery seizures, chemotherapy and loss of cognitive function were draining and stressful for Cynthia. To help with the healing process, Cynthia joined the BHI's Mind Body Program for Cancer. Throughout the 10-week program, participants learn scientifically-validated stress-reduction and resiliency techniques such as breathing exercises, movement, nutrition, and other methods that help shift thoughts and behaviors. Teachings acknowledge the particular challenges that cancer patients face.

"Patients going through cancer treatment have a lot of common threads," says program lead Ann Webster, PhD. "They face common fears, as well as emotional and physical experiences."


Cynthia explains, "I was skeptical at first, but this helped me to cope with cancer at every stage of the experience. I – and I think it's safe to say, all of us in our group – have benefited a great deal. Some rediscovered a sense of confidence; others have found significantly improved sleep. We are all, in general, happier people than we were when we started the program."

While all groups learn a full repertoire of approaches, Cynthia's group was unusual in that it found its own unique tool. They call it "the healing coat."

Cynthia and another participant purchased the coat on a whim one day while shopping at a local Goodwill store. The coat is plaid, unattractively big and saggy, with a black velvet collar, three buttons and two huge pockets. But "there was just something about it," says Cynthia.

The two shared the coat with others in their BHI group, to serve as a symbolic source of inspiration and support, "for anyone who was having a procedure, or anyone who just needed a little extra care," says Cynthia.

Some wore it to their appointments to feel ready for whatever news might await them. Others used it as a reminder to better care for themselves, practice confidence or to play more.

The group still meets informally, and the "healing coat" is still making its rounds. Cynthia says, "At some point the coat may stop working its magic for all of us. But it will always remind us to live every moment of life to its fullest and be grateful for how good our life is now. The program reminds us to ask: Who says how long you should live? The real question is: How well will you live it?" 



Cynthia Thomas
and the healing coat

— RESILIENT WARRIOR

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effective communication tools to deal with emotions that may be raw or unexpressed. To enhance the program's relevance and impact, topics are presented using language and scenarios that are familiar to military personnel. "This approach does a lot to downregulate and change the challenging dialogue, and helps soldiers to have a better re-entry into civilian life," Ms. Casey says.

Clinicians who work with soldiers can enroll in a two- to three-day intensive skills program based on the BHI's time-tested "train the trainer" model, so that they can offer the Resilient Warrior program regularly on their bases or in neighboring communities. A comprehensive program manual provides a valuable, ongoing resource.

Brigadier General (ret) Jack Hammond, executive director of the Home Base Program, is enthusiastic about the benefits of the Resilient Warrior program for soldiers and their families. "We have a very large number of people who have been affected, including family members who experience stress while their loved one is away. April 15 of this year [the date of the Boston Marathon bombings] created a great deal of anxiety and helplessness. That's called 'Monday' for a military family waiting for information about a father, wife, or child. Imagine having to sustain that for a year or more. The cumulative effects of that stress are significant. And they continue after the soldier comes home, if the family member becomes a long-term caregiver. In our case, mind body medicine is an appropriate and cost-effective level of therapy," Hammond said.

The BHI and Home Base are seeking funds to expand the program to additional military bases and throughout New England and Southwest Florida. 

June 17th marked the inaugural meeting of the Benson-Henry Institute Leadership Council.



The Reverend Dr. Barbara H. Nielsen, Brigadier General (Ret.) Jack Hammond, Executive Director, Boston Red Sox & MGH Home Base Program, Ms. Kelly Brooks, Herbert Benson, MD, director emeritus, BHI, John W. Henry, Pam Jackson, Arthur C. Anton Jr., Allison L. Taff, and Gregory L. Fricchione, MD, director, BHI

TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

FROM SEPT. 17 TO 20 the Benson-Henry Institute hosted a conference on *The New Science of Resiliency and its Clinical Applications*. Nearly 350 physicians, nurses, psychologists, and other health professionals from across the United States and countries including Japan, Korea, Australia, Brazil and Ireland converged on Harvard Medical School, to learn from BHI clinicians and featured faculty. Speakers and participants discussed the latest brain mapping and genetics studies in mind body medicine, and how best to translate these findings into clinical practice as the healthcare system evolves.



The next BHI conference on *The Science of Resiliency* is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 16 to 19, 2014, in Boston. For information, contact Jill Buchanan at 617-643-6043 or jbuchanan4@partners.org.

Above: Herbert Benson, MD, director emeritus of the Benson-Henry Institute; David Brown, PsyD, chief, Behavioral Health, Pacific Regional Medical Command; Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, professor emeritus, University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Photo credit: Pam Jackson, BHI Leadership Council

KUDOS!

Darshan Mehta, MD, MPH, medical director, was elected to be the President of the Charles River District of the Massachusetts Medical Society for the 2013 – 2015 term.

The May 2013 issue of *American Heart Journal* featured an article, "Benefits and costs of intensive lifestyle modification programs for symptomatic coronary disease in Medicare beneficiaries" evaluating the **BHI Cardiac Wellness program** and another cardiac wellness program. The BHI program was superior in measures of cost savings and longer intervals to rehospitalization.

BHI and its collaborators were coauthors of an article titled "Relaxation Response Induces Temporal Transcriptome Changes in Energy Metabolism, Insulin Secretion and Inflammatory Pathways" in the May 2013 issue of the peer-reviewed online journal *PLOS One*. This groundbreaking study showed for the first time that elicitation of the Relaxation Response turns off genes that are involved with inflammation, while genes that control more productive energy metabolism are turned on.

COMING UP!

Public Programs – all programs meet weekly.

Relaxation Response Resiliency Program (3RP) begins in Boston on Nov. 19, 5 to 7 pm; and on Jan. 9, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. It begins at MGH West in Waltham on Oct. 23, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. This eight-week program is designed to reduce stress and build resiliency through proven mind-body principles and interventions. Contact Sue Clough at 617-643-6054 or sclough@partners.org.

Cardiac Wellness – Basic and "graduate" programs are offered on an ongoing basis several times per week at MGH West in Waltham. This program's nationally-recognized curriculum is specifically designed for patients with hypertension, diabetes, arrhythmias or heart disease. Contact Lauren Lortie at 781-487-6112 or lelortie@partners.org.

Mind Body Program for Women begins in Boston on Oct. 21, 5 to 7 pm. This eight-week program, created especially for women, teaches a variety of mind-body skills and interventions to decrease medical symptoms and build resilience. Contact Sue Clough at 617-643-6054 or sclough@partners.org.

Mind Body Program for Cancer begins in Boston on Oct. 28, 2 to 4 pm. This 10-week program is designed to supplement the medical treatment of cancer patients by giving them tools to cope with the stress of their illness, make informed choices about treatment and maintain hope. Contact Ann Webster, PhD, at 617-643-6038 or awebster3@partners.org.

These medical programs are covered by most health insurers in whole or in part. Most programs also include individual pre-, interim, and post-program visits. New programs are added often. For updated program listings, visit www.massgeneral.org/bhi/services/programs.asp.
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COMING UP!

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Specialty Programs

Extra Edge: A Program for Teens –

One-session program in Concord, Mass.
on Nov. 2, 10:30 am to noon; and on
Nov. 6, 4 to 5:30 pm. Two-session
program in Boston on Oct. 22 and
Oct. 29, 4 to 6 pm. Teens will learn
research-validated stress management
techniques to maximize their learning
potential and personal resiliency, and
reduce test-taking anxiety. Contact
Marilyn Wilcher at 617-643-6035 or
mwilcher@partners.org or

Rana Chudnofsky at 617-643-6068
or rchudnofsky@partners.org.

Gentle Yoga begins at MGH West in

Waltham on Nov. 20, noon to 1 pm.
This eight-week program emphasizes
stretching, deep breathing, and other
techniques to relax the body and quiet
the mind. Classes are appropriate for
beginners and advanced practitioners.
Drop-in opportunities available. Contact
Lauren Lortie at 781-487-6112 or
lelortie@partners.org.

Continuing Medical Education Programs for Professionals

**Changing Lifestyle with Mind Body
Medicine: How to Build Resiliency in
Patients** will be offered on Dec. 6 at
Massachusetts General Hospital's
Simches Research Building, Boston.
Contact Jill Buchanan at 617-643-6043
or jbuchanan4@partners.org.

The Benson-Henry Institute and
the MGH Psychiatry Academy have
partnered to create an online course,
*Stress and Resiliency: The Fundamentals
of Mind Body Medicine*. For more

information and to register, visit
www.mghcme.org/bhi.

BHI also offers customized one-
or two-day workshops to prepare
clinicians to integrate mind body
interventions into their practice.
Trainings this fall will include: resiliency/
weight loss, chronic pain, women's
health, cancer and life-threatening
illnesses, teen health, and successful
aging. For more information contact
Marilyn Wilcher at 617-643-6035 or
mwilcher@partners.org.

Peg Baim, MS, NP, will teach a
three-credit course, *Principles of
Mind Body Spirit Nursing*. This course
is offered through a joint project
between BHI and MGH's Institute
for Health Professions. It is open
to nurses and other healthcare
providers, and can be taken alone
or as part of a nine- or 15-credit
series leading to eligibility to sit for the
American Holistic Nursing Association
Certification exam. For more
information, contact Peg Baim at
617-643-6090 or mbaim@partners.org.

WAYS TO GIVE

For information about ways to
support the clinical care, research,
education, and community health
activities of the Benson-Henry
Institute for Mind Body Medicine,
please contact Nan Doyle at
(617) 643-9477 or at
nadoyle2@partners.org, or visit
www.massgeneral.org/bhi/support/