



EDUCATION & SEMINARS

## Treatment Success at the Won Institute

Janet Leidy, MAC, DHSc, LAc, Dipl Ac; Doreen Lafferty, MAC, LAc, Dipl Ac

According to the World Health Organization's 2003 report titled, "Acupuncture: Review and Analysis of Controlled Clinical Trials,"<sup>1</sup> acupuncture has been shown to improve many physical, emotional, and mental conditions. Some of those conditions include depression, alcohol dependence and detoxification, pain, headaches and migraines, addictive drug dependence, and nicotine addiction. Additionally, the National Acupuncture Detox Association (NADA) has suggested that acupuncture greatly benefits people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), drug dependence, and alcohol dependence. In fact, according to Ryan Bemis, LAc, "studies published in peer-reviewed journals support the adjunctive use of the NADA protocol for heroin, alcohol and cocaine addictions treatment."<sup>2</sup>

In Philadelphia and the U.S., veterans and persons with drug and alcohol addictions have been an underserved population with regard to the treatment of PTSD, depression, pain, and alcohol/drug dependence. The Won Institute of Graduate Studies in Glenside, Pennsylvania, has developed two off-site clinical opportunities to allow its acupuncture students to treat these underserved populations in the Philadelphia metropolitan area with acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

Every September since 2009, the Institute's acupuncture faculty and students have participated in Operation Stand-Down, an initiative that has served veterans and their families in the Delaware Valley and nationwide since 1994. Operation Stand-Down allows the veterans and their family members to be treated with resources that allow them to become self-sufficient. These services include meals, shelter, clothing, medical/dental/vision care, drug and alcohol treatment, housing assistance, and employment assistance.



The Won Institute offers acupuncture, tai chi, shiatsu, and meditation to participants at the Stand-Down initiative. Under the supervision of Ed Cunningham, LAc, Doreen Lafferty, LAc, and the Institute's clinical faculty, the Institute's students provide acupuncture treatments free of charge for the veterans, their family members, and other providers present at the event. Additionally, under the tutelage of one of the Won Institute's meditation professors, Reverend Daesung Song, veterans can learn a simple tai chi routine to help them manage stress and pain. Participants are also treated to shiatsu bodywork by the students.

Finally, participants can learn to meditate and are given some simple meditation and breathing exercises to teach them to manage their stress. These complementary and alternative medical services have been shown to decrease stress and pain and to assist in PTSD management and the drug and alcohol rehabilitation process. Despite a lack of empirical evidence concerning the efficacy of treating PTSD with meditation,<sup>3</sup> Ange Schneider, Director of Marketing at Philadelphia Stand Down, has positive compliments for the Won Institute's participation at Stand Down. Schneider states that, "I highly recommend Won to everyone I meet. The work they do for the veterans and how they are

dedicated to coming out to our event every year is incredible. When I take the time to talk to the participants of our event, it is one of the features they rave about most!"

To date, the feedback from the veterans, as well as the Stand Down organization itself has been enormously positive. Each year, the Won Institute has been assigned a larger booth from the previous year due to an ever increasing demand by the veteran participants at each Stand Down event. Students are excited to receive the opportunity to work with a clinically underserved population and are anxious to help and serve. During last year's 2015 event, Won Institute faculty and students performed 140 NADA auricular acupuncture treatments on veterans and their family members. Additionally, 52 veterans participated in tai chi classes. Amy Green, a recent Won Institute graduate who participated in last year's Stand Down as a student said, "Working at Stand Down was an experience I'll never forget. I had the privilege of giving acupuncture treatments to homeless vets, as well as vets and helpers working the event. I don't know who was more thankful, the folks I worked with or myself. It was good heart medicine and I hope this event can spread to all the cities in the country." Another recent graduate who participated as a student in 2015 was Alex Brazinski. When asked about his student experience, Brazinski said that, "Operation Stand Down is about supporting our troops at their deepest levels physically and mentally. A round of applause is nothing compared to creating physical and mental healing through acupuncture and massage. Through these forms of healing, we are able to create physiological change and bring some relief to these veterans who sacrificed so much."

A second clinical initiative that the Won Institute has recently undertaken is the establishment of an acupuncture clinic at Pro-Act, a drug and alcohol addiction and detox center in North Philadelphia. According to Pro-Act, the center "support[s] all pathways to recovery and embraces the Recovery-Oriented System of Care. Recovery-oriented systems support person-centered and self-directed approaches to care that build on the strengths and resilience of individuals, families, and communities to take responsibility for their sustained health, wellness and recovery from alcohol and drug problems." The center serves anyone who is struggling with alcohol and drug addiction.

Won Institute students and their clinical director, Doreen Lafferty, treated drug and alcohol addicted patrons at the clinic with the NADA auricular protocol for alcohol and drug detox from April 24th to June 11, 2015. Lafferty, who developed the program, and her students performed 95 treatments over the course of the 8-week period. The NADA protocol has also been used at the Won Institute's onsite Veteran Clinic to treat local veterans suffering from PTSD, pain, and drug and alcohol addiction. Lafferty based her Pro-Act program on Won's Veteran clinic. Patrons of the 8-week Pro-Act clinic reported decreased cravings for drugs and alcohol, increased feelings of well-being and inner peace, and less pain. Patients gave anonymous feedback on survey forms at the end of the program. The feedback included, "I felt good after the treatment, relaxed." "Sleep is increased." "This is better than drugs!" "I am so stress free!" And, "Breathing a lot better."

At the Pro-Act clinic, students were able to observe the efficacy of drug and alcohol detox acupuncture through the NADA protocol first-hand. Jason Krantz, LAc, was a third year student at the Won Institute when he participated in the clinic. Krantz said, "I joined the project a few weeks in and upon meeting the patients realized what an impact it was having. The people who had been there before all explained to the new patients how much it was helping them stay calm and sleep and that the needles would pinch for a moment but they would be fine. The sense of community in the room was inspiring." Kelly Tong, LAc, was also a third-year student when she participated in the program. Tong said, "Volunteering for Pro-Act as an acupuncture intern during my senior year was one of the most

rewarding experiences I have had. Aside from having the experience of doing and seeing the NADA protocol working its wonders on our patients, I was deeply touched by the human spirits and the collective power of healing when everyone comes together to achieve a common goal."

It proved to be a very fruitful experience for the Won Institute, the acupuncture students, the Pro-Act staff, and most importantly, the clinic patrons. Denise McCulley, Senior Peer Services Coordinator at the Philadelphia Recovery Community Center, has asked Lafferty and the Won Institute students to return to establish additional acupuncture clinics at Pro-Act for its alcohol and drug detox program and the Institute plans to do so in the near future.

As the Won Institute continues its off-site clinical initiatives, it will be seeking other opportunities to support people from all walks of life with acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. Through these interesting and innovative clinical opportunities, students have expanded their compassion, awareness, and social responsibility as acupuncturists and healers. The Won Institute is thrilled to offer acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in the city of Philadelphia and its surrounding suburbs.

For more information about Operation Stand Down, visit [www.philastanddown.org/](http://www.philastanddown.org/). For more information about Pro-Act, visit <https://www.councilsepa.org/programs/pro-act>.

#### *References:*

1. World Health Organization, Acupuncture: [Review and Analysis of Reports on Controlled Clinical Trials](#).
2. Bemis, Ryan (n.d.), [Evidence for the Nada Ear Acupuncture Protocol: A Review of Literature](#).
3. Lang, A. J., Strauss, J. L., Bomyea, J., Bormann, J. E., Hickman, S. D., Good, R. C., & Essex, M. (2012). [The Theoretical and Empirical Basis for Meditation as an Intervention for PTSD](#). Behavior Modification, 36(6):759-86 (June 2012).

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