

<http://news.stv.tv/stirling-central/236304-stirling-university-to-offer-reprogramming-therapy-for-ptsd-sufferers/>

NHS to offer 'reprogramming' therapy to traumatised war veterans

STV 16 August 2013 15:16 BST

[Tweet](#)



Combat experience: The number of armed forces personnel diagnosed with PTSD has doubled in four years.

Scottish nurses are to be trained in a treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder that works by reprogramming the brains of combat veterans.

The University of Stirling is offering courses in Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) to senior NHS nursing staff after teaming up with the [American university](#) that pioneered the procedure.

ART is a talking therapy which aims to replace negative psychological responses with positive ones using a technique known as voluntary image replacement.

The patient is asked to move their eyes back and forth while recalling traumatic events, a process which is thought to “unlock” the memory and enable the therapist to start a discussion aimed at detaching the associated negative emotions.

Scientists at the University of South Florida, where the therapy was pioneered, say it is a fast, safe and straightforward procedure that does not require the use of drugs and produces measurable improvements in as little as four weeks.

The potential breakthrough comes at a time when cases of PTSD among British forces have been rising sharply. In the 12 months to last September 305 new cases of the condition were diagnosed, almost twice the 153 cases recorded in 2007-08.

Armed forces personnel who had been in Iraq or Afghanistan were significantly more likely to suffer from mental disorders. Women, soldiers, members of the RAF and non-officer ranks were also at greater risk.

Symptoms include depression, anxiety, sleep disorder and flashbacks to traumatic events.

An initial study carried out among 80 war veterans in the US found that the proportion showing signs of PTSD fell from 90 per cent to 17 per cent after four sessions or fewer. Incidences of depression in the same group dropped from 80 per cent to 28 per cent.

Professor Kevin Kip, executive director of the research centre at University of South Florida, and Laney Rosenzweig, founder of the ART programme, are due to arrive in Stirling next week.

The training and visit are part of a formal [partnership agreement](#) with the University of South Florida, signed earlier this year. The university will also set up a workshop for its own students.

James Taylor, of the University of Stirling's [School of Nursing](#), Midwifery and Health, said: "Working with our partners in South Florida, we've been successful in obtaining funding to pilot the use of ART by nurses in the UK to treat veterans with combat-related PTSD.

"We're delighted to welcome Professor Kip and Ms Laney to Stirling to train senior NHS nursing staff and to talk about the therapy with our student and staff population.

"All going well, senior clinicians in Scotland should be using the ART therapy on veterans later this year. The initial findings from this pilot project will be reported in 2014.

"Hopefully it will provide new support and hope for people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder."

[People who read this story also read](#)