



# **Symptom Management for PTSD: Mantram Repetition Program Randomized Clinical Trial Results**

**Jill E. Bormann, PhD, RN, FAAN**  
**Associate Nurse Executive/Nursing Research**  
**Clinical Professor**

**VA San Diego Healthcare System**  
**Center of Excellence for Stress & Mental Health**  
**Hahn School of Nursing & Health Sciences, University of San Diego**  
**San Diego, CA**

# Acknowledgements

**Funding: VA Office of Research & Development**

**VA HSR&D - Nursing Research Initiative (04-041)**

**VA CSR&D - Meditation & PTSD (SPLE-003-11S)**



*Contents do not represent the views of Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government. Authors have no conflicts of interest.*

# Objectives

1. Identify the components of the Mantram Repetition Program (MRP).
2. Describe the differences between two randomized controlled trials on MRP for Veterans with PTSD.
3. Describe the PTSD-related outcomes in symptom severity from two randomized controlled trials.

# POLL QUESTION 1

What is your primary role/position in the VA?

1. Administrative (non-clinical)
2. Clinician/Healthcare Provider (any discipline)
3. Principle Investigator/Researcher
4. Policy-Maker/Leadership
5. Not listed above (other)

# Objectives

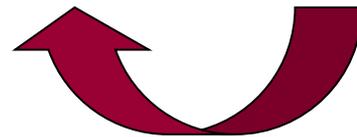
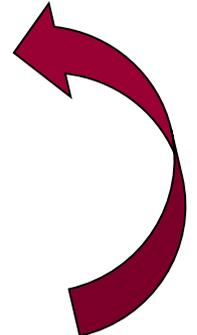
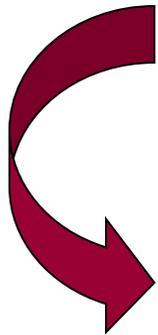
- 1. Identify the components of the Mantram Repetition Program (MRP).**
2. Describe the differences between two randomized controlled trials on MRP for Veterans with PTSD.
3. Describe the PTSD-related outcomes in symptom severity from two randomized controlled trials.

# Mantram Repetition Program\*

Meditation-based tools for emotional regulation

Ancient, universal practices, cross-cultural

1. **Mantram Repetition**
2. **Slowing Down**
3. **One-Pointed Attention**



*\*Adapted from 8 Point Program (E. Easwaran)*

# MRP Components

## Psycho-spiritual health education/skills

### 1. **Mantram Repetition** -- Sanskrit root word “mantra”

- ✓ “to cross the mind” or “set free from the mind”
- ✓ to be repeated silently, day or night, to train attention
- ✓ portable, concentrative practice; meta-cognition

### 2. **Slowing Down** – intention with awareness

- ✓ awareness of being “speeded up!”
- ✓ “intentionality” versus “automatic pilot”
- ✓ setting priorities

### 3. **One-Pointed Attention**

- ✓ doing one thing at a time versus multi-tasking
- ✓ mindful attention on mantram or some other task

USA TODAY looks

# Gill's mantra: Recruit, win, recruit ...

By Steve Wieberg  
USA TODAY



AP

**Priority:** Turner Gill  
eyes Texas players.

A mantram is *not* a

1. Slogan
2. Motto
3. Affirmation
4. Created self-talk
5. Song or poem

# **“The Mantram is . . .**

**. . . a prayer word or spiritual formula, the living symbol of the highest ideal the human spirit can respond to and love.**

**The repetition of the mantram is not a mechanical exercise – it is a key to our deepest resources of strength, patience, and love.”**

*Easwaran, E. (2008). The mantram handbook. Nilgiri Press: Tomales, CA*

**“The mantram becomes one’s staff of life, and carries one through every ordeal.”**

*Mahatma Gandhi*

# Mantram Examples

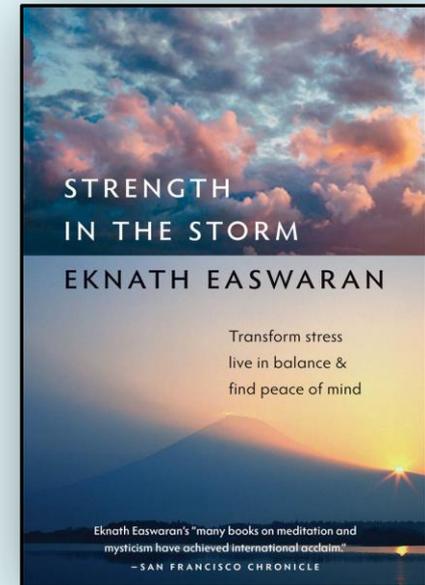
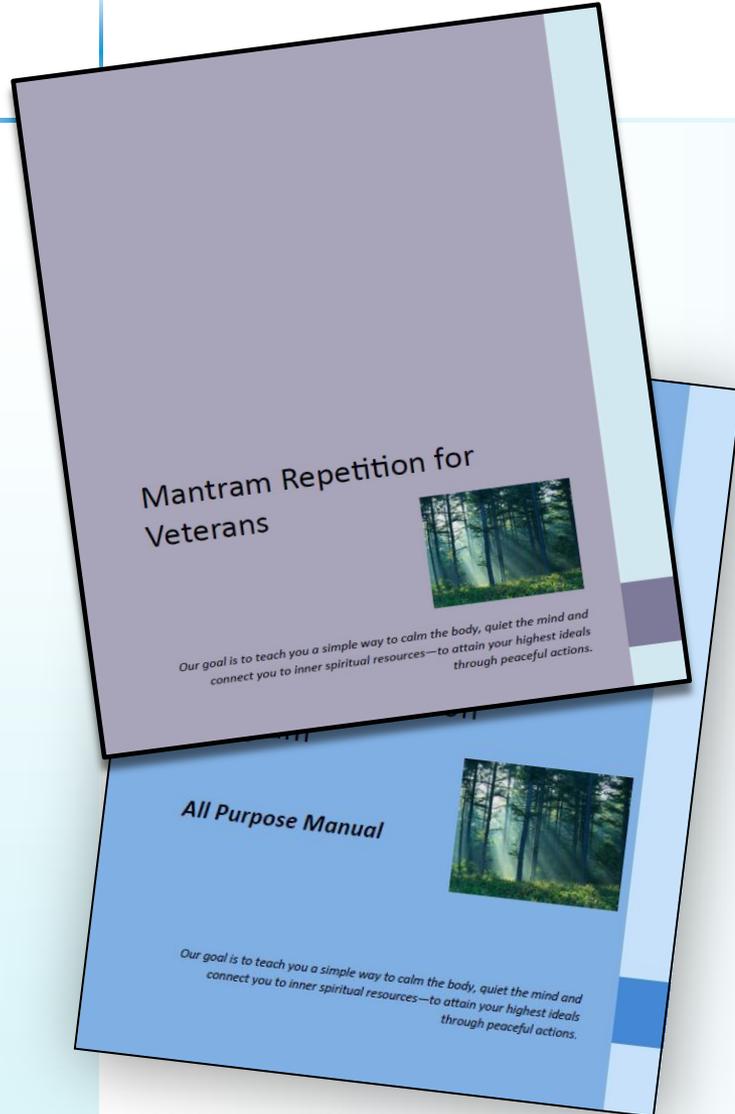
Mantram (pronunciation)	Definition
Om Mani Padme Hum (Ohm Mah-nee Pahd-may Hume)	An invocation to the jewel (Self), in the lotus of the heart
Namo Butsaya (Nah-mo Boot-sie-yah)	I bow to the Buddha
My God and my All	St. Francis of Assisi's mantram
Maranatha (Mar-ah-nah-tha)	Lord of the Heart (Aramaic)
Kyrie Eleison (Kir-ee-ay Ee-lay-ee-son)	Lord have mercy
Jesus, Jesus or Lord Jesus Christ	Son of God
Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with you	Catholic Rosary
Om Prema	A call for universal love
Rama	Eternal Joy within (Gandhi)
So Hum	I am that Self within
Om Shanti	In invocation to eternal peace
Shalom	Peace, wellness
Sheheena	Feminine aspect of God

# How to Use a Mantram

1. Choose a mantram word or phrase
2. Repeat it silently
3. Passively ignore other thoughts
4. Repeat silently as often as possible throughout the day/night
5. Use it when *you don't need it first!*
6. You will automatically use it when you **DO** need it!

# Standard Course Materials

Portable  
counter  
&  
tracking  
log



Easwaran. E. (2005). *Strength in the storm*.  
Nilgiri Press: Tomales, CA.

# Research on MRP for PTSD

1. Bormann, J. E., Weinrich, S., Allard, C. B., Beck, D., Johnson, B. & Holt, L. (2014). Mantram repetition: An evidenced-based complementary practice for military personnel and veterans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In C. E. Kasper & P. W. Kelley (Eds.), *Annual Review of Nursing Research*, 32, (pp. 79-108). New York, NY: Springer.
2. Bormann, J. E., Oman, D., Walter, K. H. & Johnson, B. D. (2014). **Mindful attention increases and mediates** psychological outcomes following mantram repetition practice in veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *Medical Care*, 52(12)Supp5:S13-S18. doi: 10.1097/MLR.0000000000000200
3. Bormann, J., Liu, L., Thorp, S., Lang, A. J. (2012). **Spiritual wellbeing mediates PTSD change** in Veterans with military-related PTSD. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. 19(4), 496-502
4. Bormann, J. E., Thorp, S. R., Wetherell, J. L., Golshan, S., & Lang, A. J. (2013). Meditation-based mantram intervention for Veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder: **A randomized trial**. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*. 5(3):259-267. doi: 10.1037/a0027522
5. Bormann, J. E., Hurst, S. & Kelly, A. (2013). Responses to mantram repetition program from veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder: **A qualitative analysis**. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, 50(6), 769-784. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1682/JRRD.2012.06.0118>.

# POLL QUESTION 2

What I am most interested in learning from this seminar is --

1. The Mantram Repetition Program
2. Any new treatment for PTSD
3. Complementary therapies in general
4. The strength of evidence for Mantram Repetition & PTSD
5. Research methods to study complementary therapies

# Objectives

1. Identify the components of the Mantram Repetition Program (MRP).
2. Describe the differences between two randomized controlled trials on MRP for Veterans with PTSD.
3. Describe the PTSD-related outcomes in symptom severity from two randomized controlled trials.

# Study Differences

## Study 1:

**6-week** (90 minute) **MRP Group**-led

**1-site:** San Diego

**Control:** Treatment as Usual (TAU)

MRP viewed as complement to TAU

## Study 2:

**8-week** (60 minute) MRP **Individually**-led

**2-sites:** San Diego, CA & Bedford, MA

**Control:** Present Centered Therapy (active)

MRP viewed as a stand alone treatment

# **Study 1: Efficacy of Mantram Repetition on PTSD Symptoms in Veterans (2005-2009)**

**Jill E. Bormann, PhD, RN  
Steve Thorp, PhD  
Murray Stein, MD, MPH  
Ariel Lang, PhD  
Julie Wetherell, PhD  
Judy Schnack, FNP**

**Shah Golshan, PhD  
Madeline Gershwin, MA, RN  
Jeffrey Matloff, PhD  
Dilip Jeste, MD  
Wendy Belding, MA  
Patricia Bone, BS, RN**

**Funded by VA HSR&D, Nursing Research Initiative (04-041)**

# Hypotheses (Summarized)

Veterans randomized to Mantram Repetition Program (MRP) + Treatment as Usual (MRP + TAU) will have greater improvements in **symptoms** than those in TAU alone from baseline (week 0) to post-treatment (week 6).

Interviews 3 months follow-up “in what ways have you used mantram?”

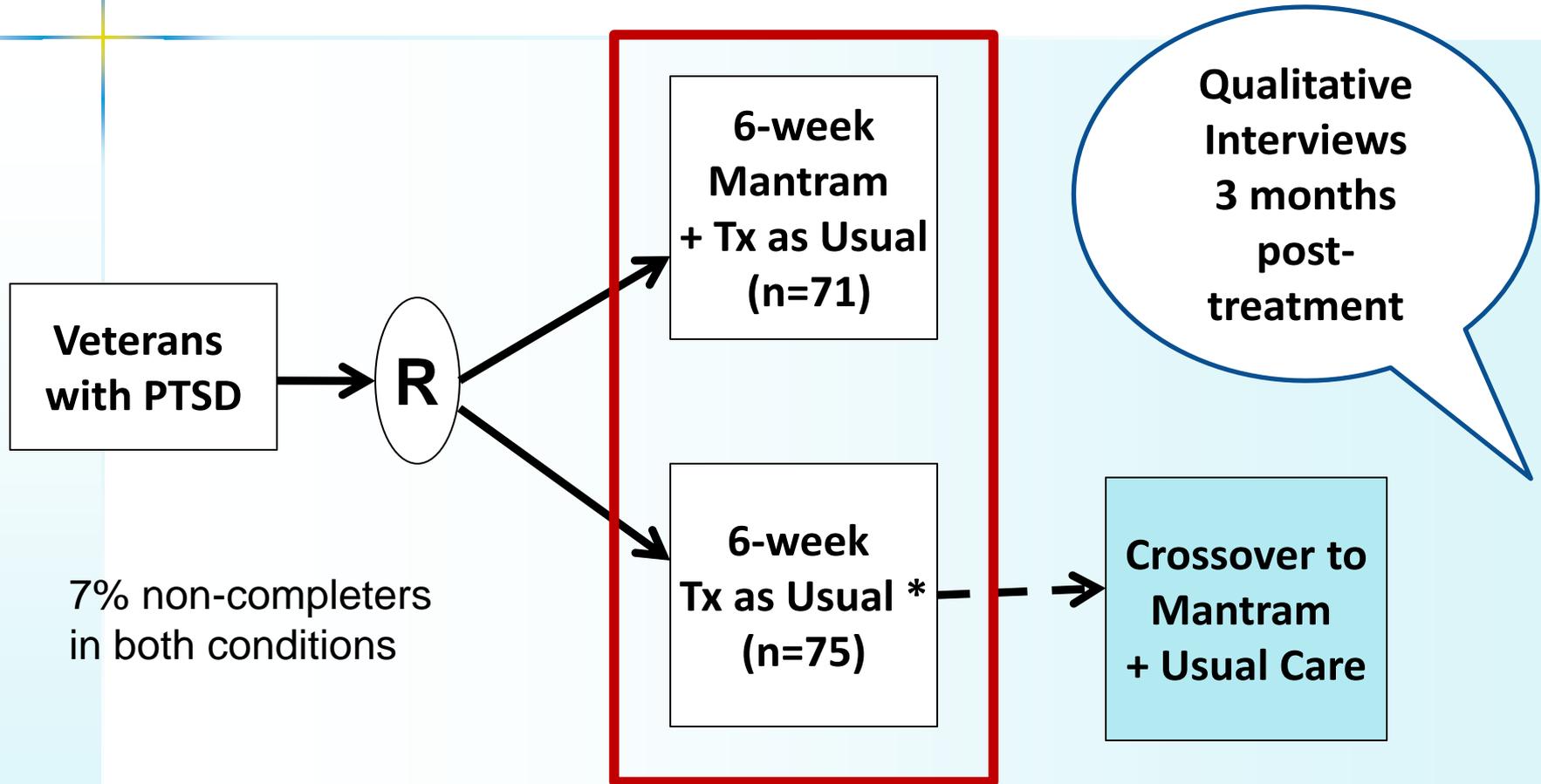
**Analysis:** Repeated measures ANOVA (2 group by 2 time)

# Study 1: Group Descriptions

Mantram Group (n=71)	Control Group (n=75)
<p>6 weeks usual care</p> <p>Psycho-pharmacology</p> <p>Case-management</p> <p>Provider visits prn</p>	<p>6 weeks usual care</p> <p>Psycho-pharmacology</p> <p>Case-management</p> <p>Provider visits prn</p>
<p><b>along with</b></p> <p><b>Weekly mantram group sessions (90 min/week)</b></p> <p>How to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Choose &amp; use mantram repetition</li><li>- Slow down thoughts &amp; reactivity</li><li>- Practice one-pointed attention to manage PTSD symptoms</li></ul>	<p><b>*Usual care between groups was equivalent</b></p>

# Study 1: Design

## Mixed-Methods Randomized Controlled Trial



\*Treatment as Usual = meds & case management for 6 weeks

# Inclusion/Exclusion

Outpatient veterans 18 years or older  
Assessed for PTSD diagnosis using CAPS\*  
Stable on PTSD-related meds for 6 weeks

Not actively abusing substances  
No psychotic or personality disorders  
Not actively suicidal  
No current complementary therapy practice

**Treatment naïve *except for PTSD orientation***

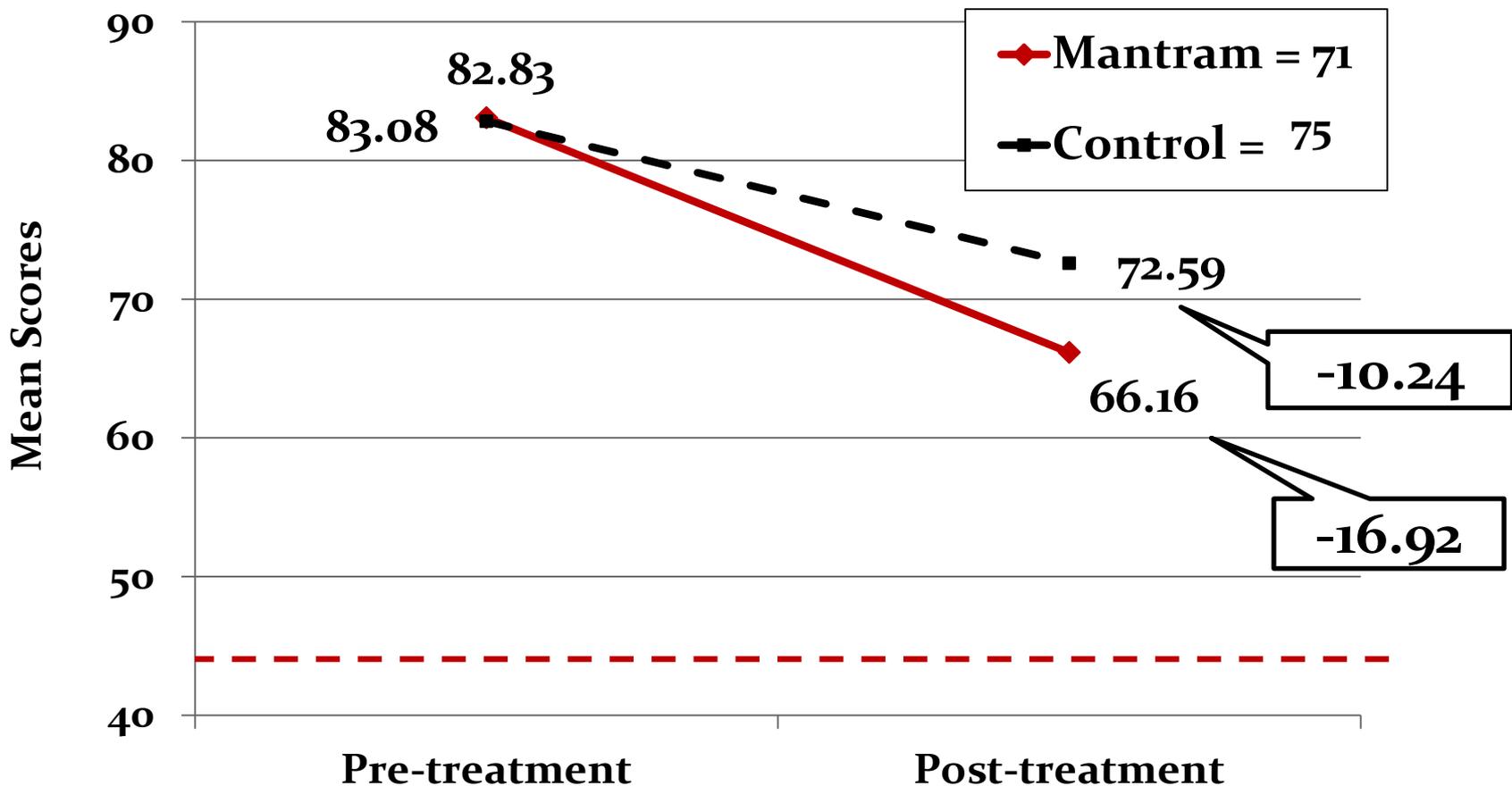
\* Clinician Administered PTSD Scale  $\geq 45$

# Study 1: Group Results



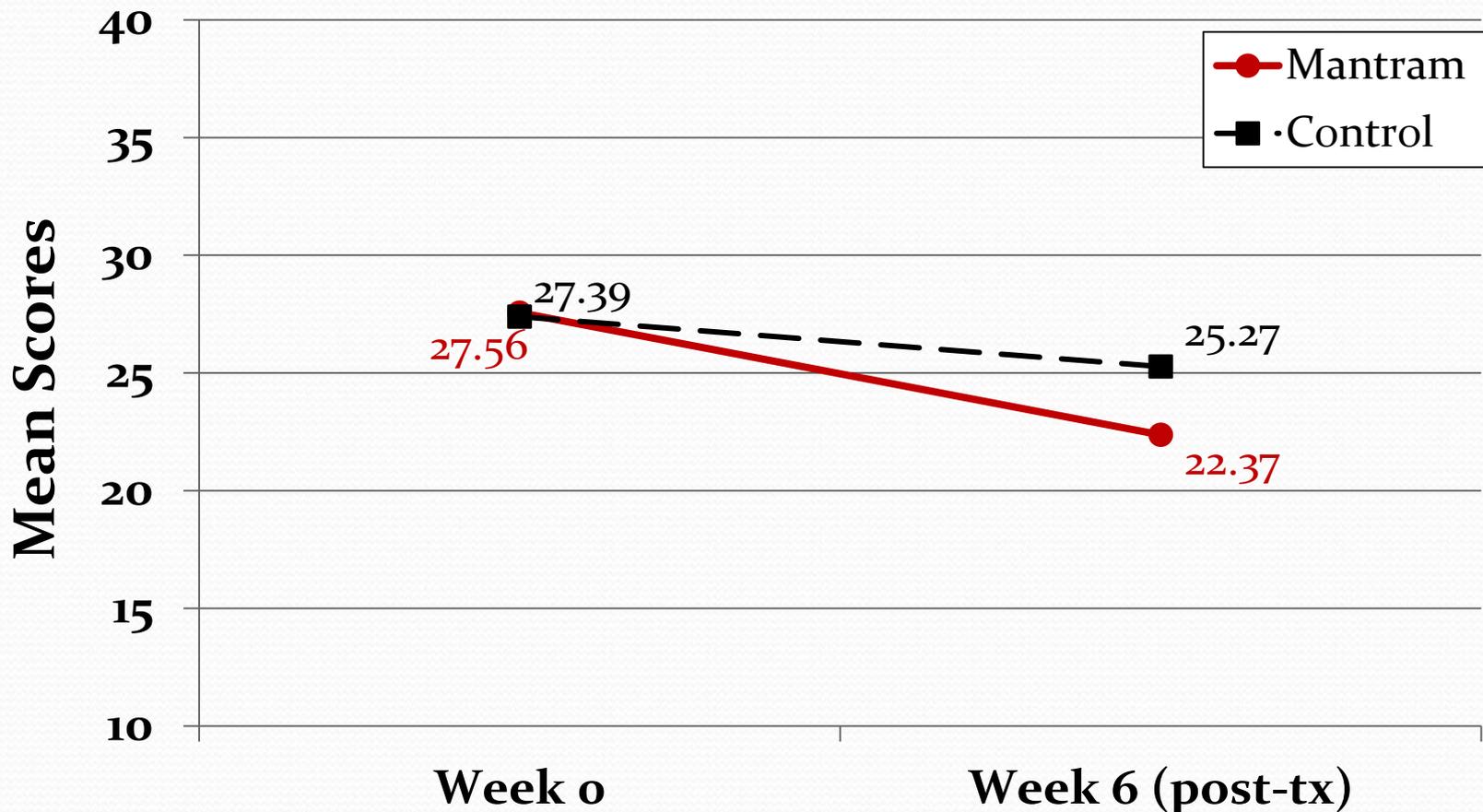
# Study 1: Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS) Total Scores - 6 week groups

$F(1,144) = 4.12, p < .05 \quad n^2p = .03$



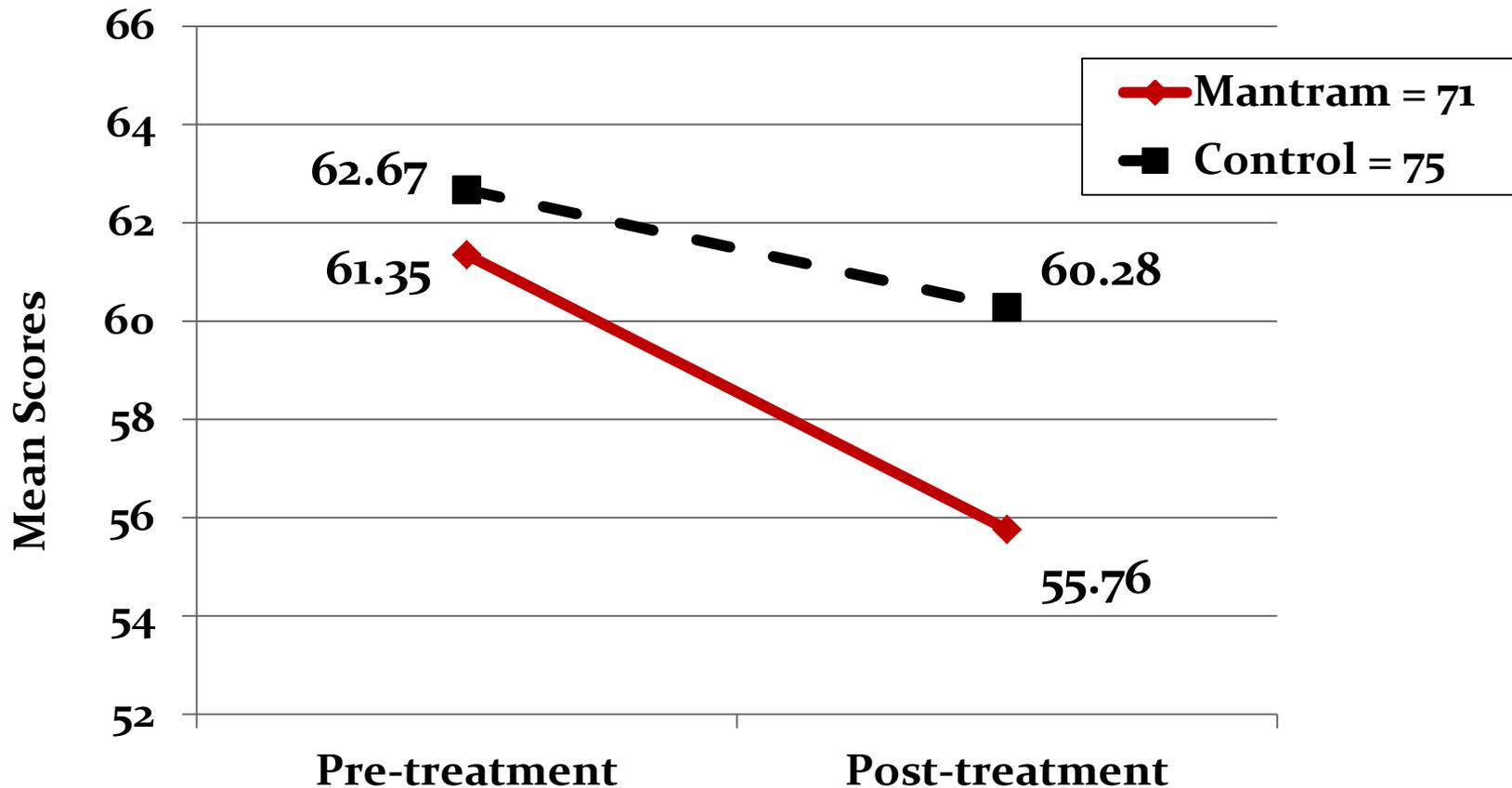
# CAPS Hyperarousal Change by Groups over Time (range = 0-40)

$F(1,144) = 7.82, p < .01 \eta^2p=.05$



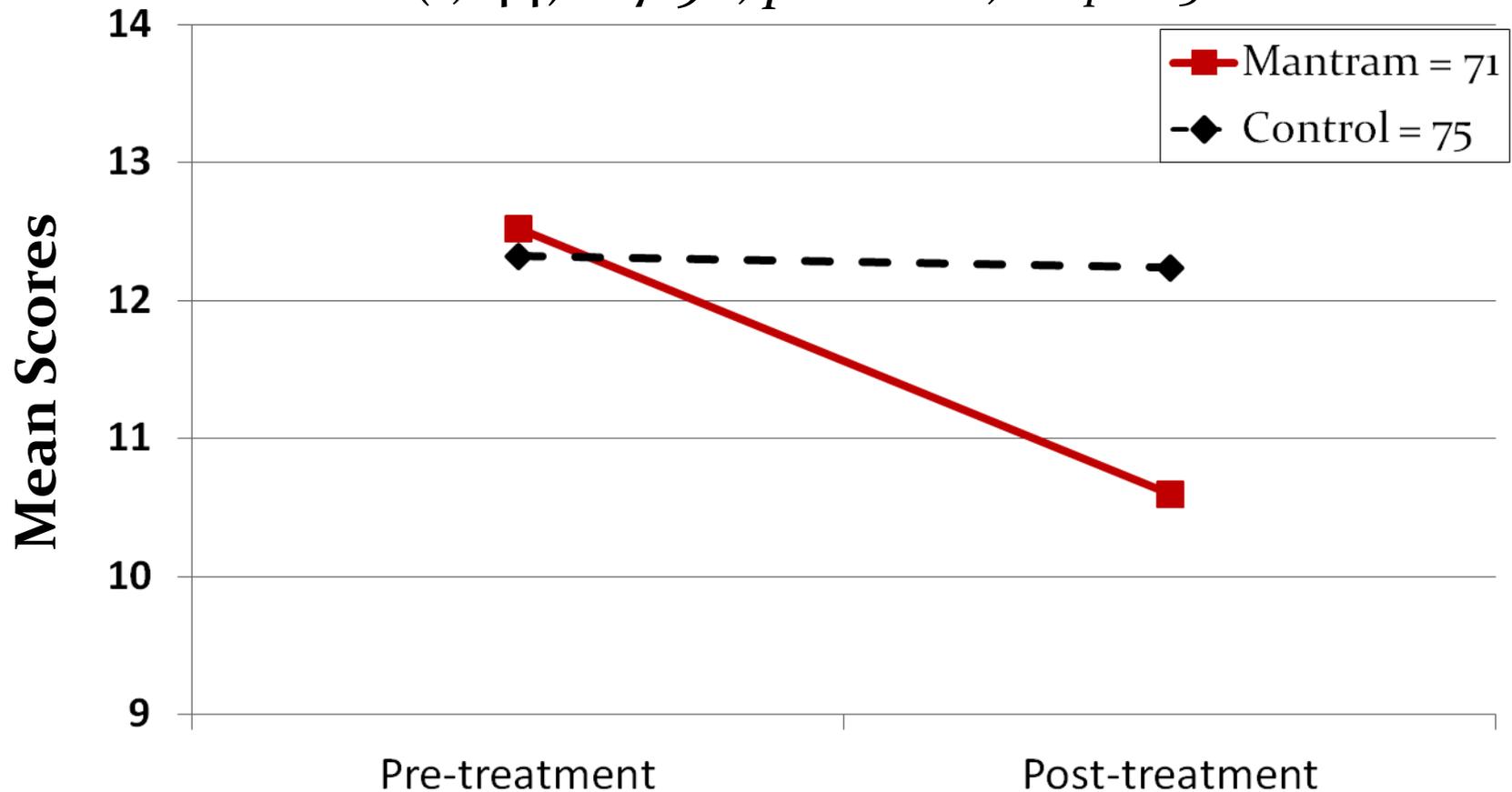
# Study 1: PTSD Checklist-C

$F(1,144) = 4.15, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$



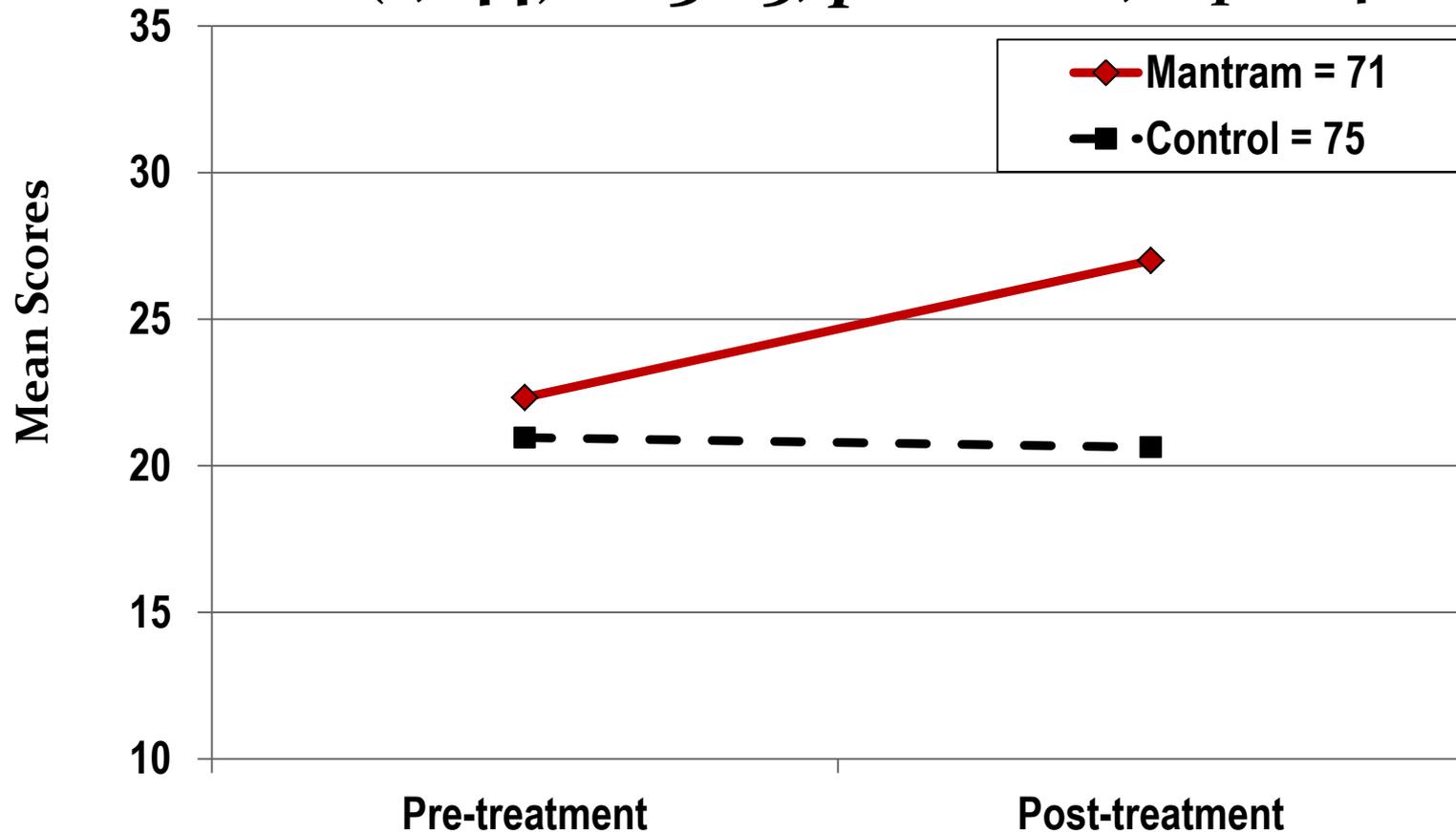
# Study 1: BSI-18 Depression Subscale

$F(1,144) = 7.90, p < .0001, \eta^2p=.05$



# Study 1: Spiritual Wellbeing (FACIT-Sp)

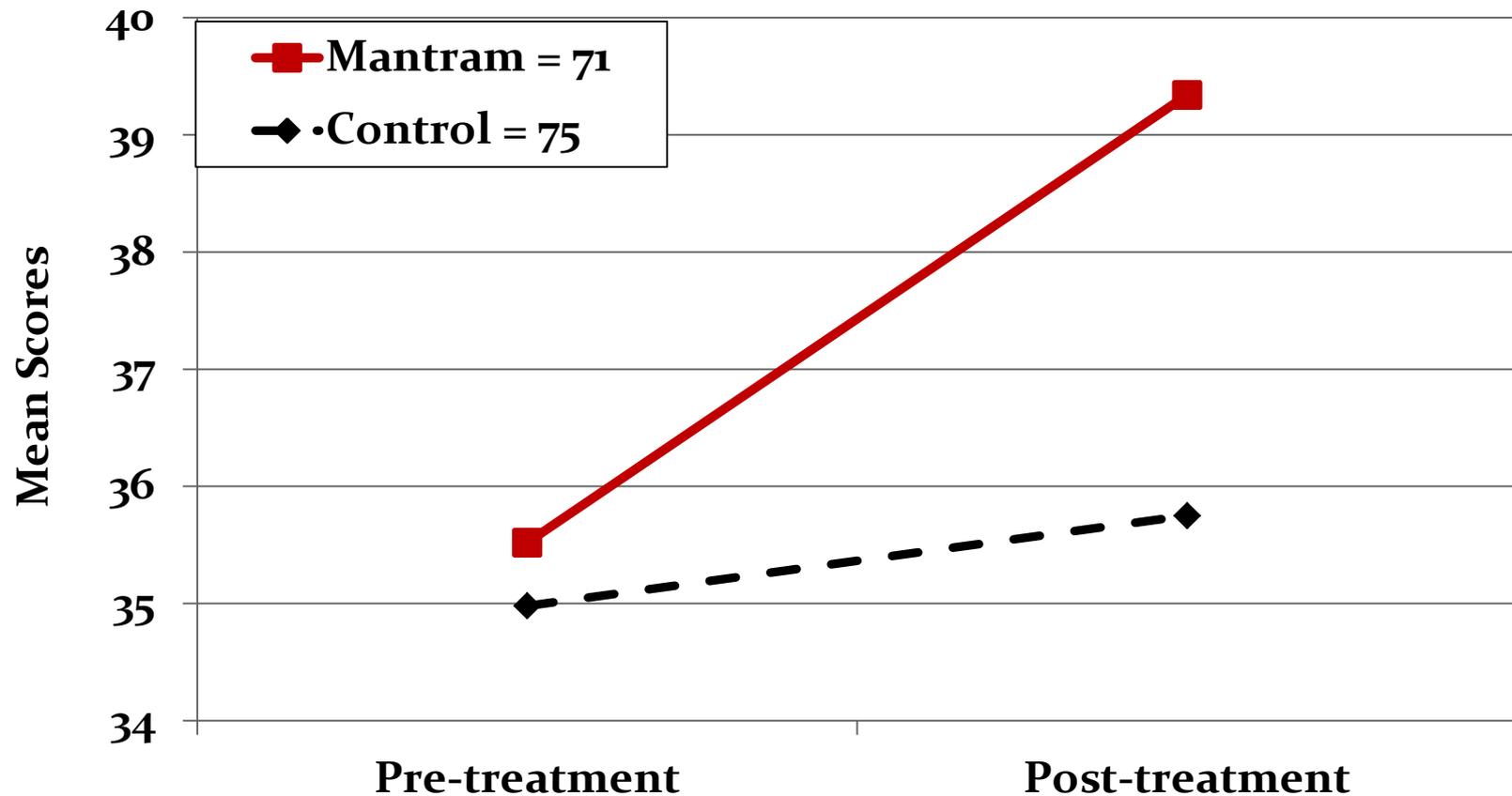
$F(1,144) = 23.85, p < .0001, \eta^2p = .14$



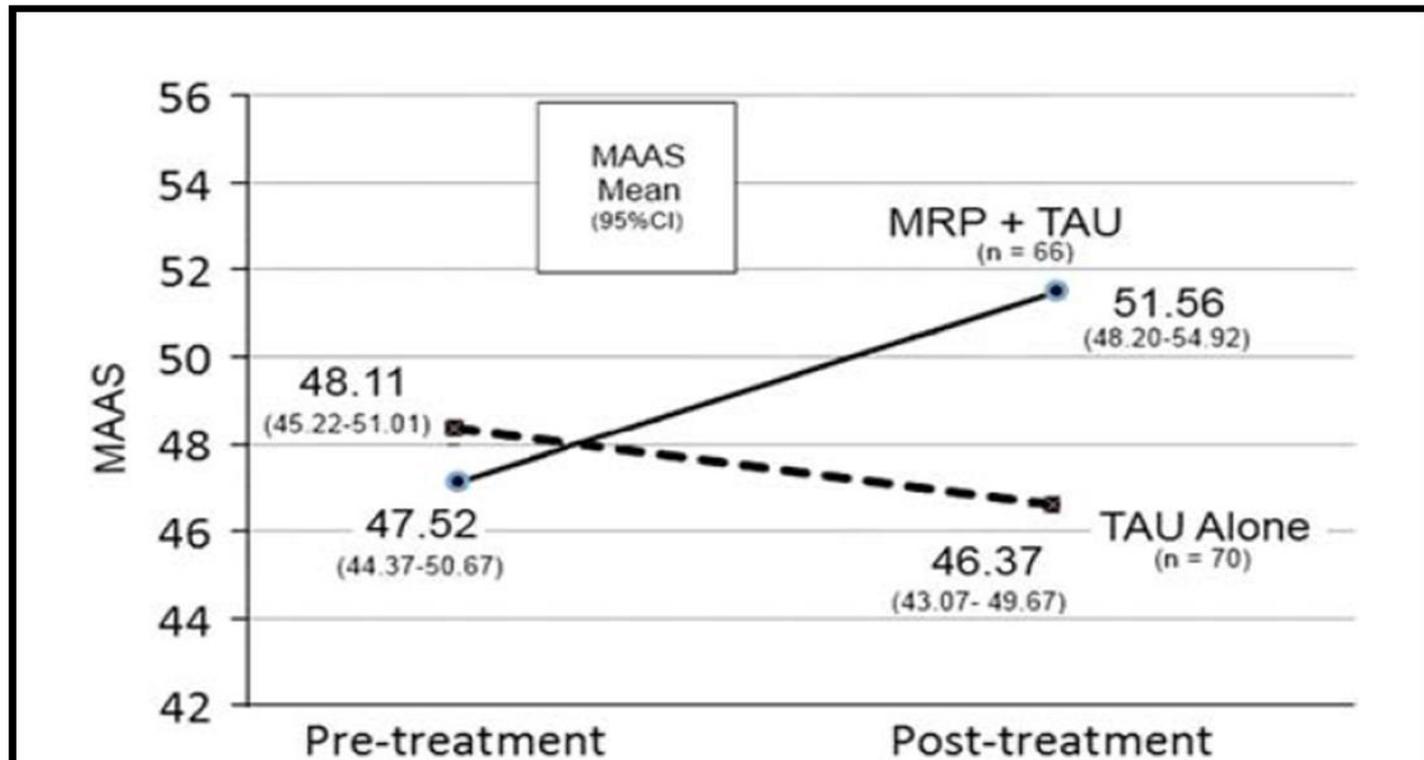
# Study 1:

## Quality of Life Enjoyment & Satisfaction

$F(1,134) = 9.33, p = .003, \eta^2 p = .03$



# Mindfulness Attention Awareness



**FIGURE 1.** Changes over time in MAAS mean scores, by treatment condition. CI indicates confidence intervals; MAAS, Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale; MRP+TAU = mantram repetition program with treatment as usual. Treatment effect was 5.79 ( $P=0.002$ , 2-tailed), a standardized effect size of  $d=0.46$  (complete data analyses).

# POLL QUESTION 3

Do you “regularly/consistently” practice one of the following?

1. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction practices
2. Transcendental Meditation (TM)
3. Loving Kindness or Compassion Meditation
4. Mantram Repetition Program tools
5. Other type of meditative practices (i.e., yoga, etc. )

# Study 2: Portable Mantram Meditation for Veterans with Military-Related PTSD (2012 - 2014)

## San Diego

Jill E. Bormann, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Steven R. Thorp, PhD  
Ariel J. Lang, PhD  
Erik Groessl, PhD  
Susan R. Tate, PhD  
Pia Heppner, PhD  
Carie Rodgers, PhD  
Danielle Beck, MPH, CCRC  
Katie Warren, NP, RN  
Alexandra Badone, MA, SW  
Michelene Wasil, MFT

## Bedford

A. Rani Elwy, PhD  
Mark Glickman, PhD  
Dorothy Plumb, MA  
Princess Osei-Bonsu, PhD  
Tu Ngo, PhD  
Lawrence Herz, MD  
Shibei Zhao, MPH  
Jennifer Johnston, PhD  
Emily Mohr, PhD

Funded by the Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Research & Development,  
Clinical Services Research & Development (CSR&D) SPLE-003-11S

# Hypotheses (Summarized)

Veterans randomized to Mantram Repetition Program (MRP) will have greater improvements in **symptoms\*** from:

- 1) baseline (week 0) to post-treatment (week 8)
  - 2) baseline (week 0) to follow-up (week 16)
- than Veterans randomized to a Present Centered Therapy (PCT) control condition.

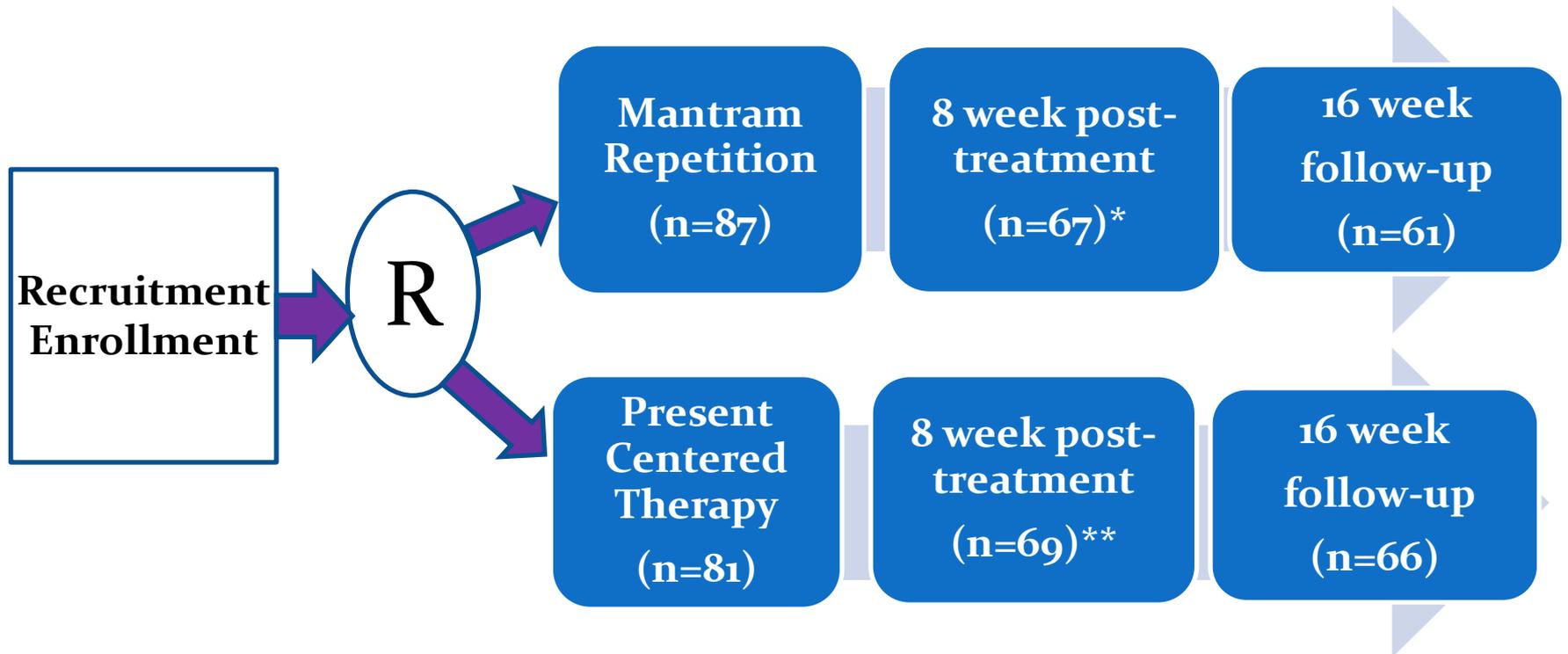
**Analysis:** Random effects normal linear regressions target variable as the response variable; adjusting for pre-treatment socio-demographic and clinical control variables. Estimate the treatment-by-time interaction as the effect of interest.

\*CAPS + subscales, PCL-M, Insomnia Severity Index (ISI), others

# Study 2: Treatment Conditions Delivered Individually

<b>Treatment Condition</b> <b>Mantram Repetition Program (n=89)</b>	<b>Control Condition</b> <b>Present Centered Therapy (PCT) (n=84)</b>
<b>8 weeks (1 hour/week) Individual sessions</b>  <b>PTSD Education Therapeutic Relationship No trauma discussion</b>	<b>8 weeks (1 hour/week) Individual sessions</b>  <b>PTSD Education Therapeutic Relationship No trauma discussion</b>
<b>Skills training on how to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>choose &amp; use mantram</i></li><li>• <i>slowing down</i></li><li>• <i>one-pointed attention</i></li></ul>	<b>Current issues only Problem-solving</b>

# Study 2: Randomized Trial



\*23% non-completers in MRP

\*\*15% non-completers in PCT

# Inclusion/Exclusion

Outpatient veterans 18 years or older  
Assessed for PTSD diagnosis using CAPS\*  
Stable on PTSD-related meds for 6 weeks

Not actively abusing substances  
No psychotic or personality disorders  
Not actively suicidal  
No current complementary therapy practices

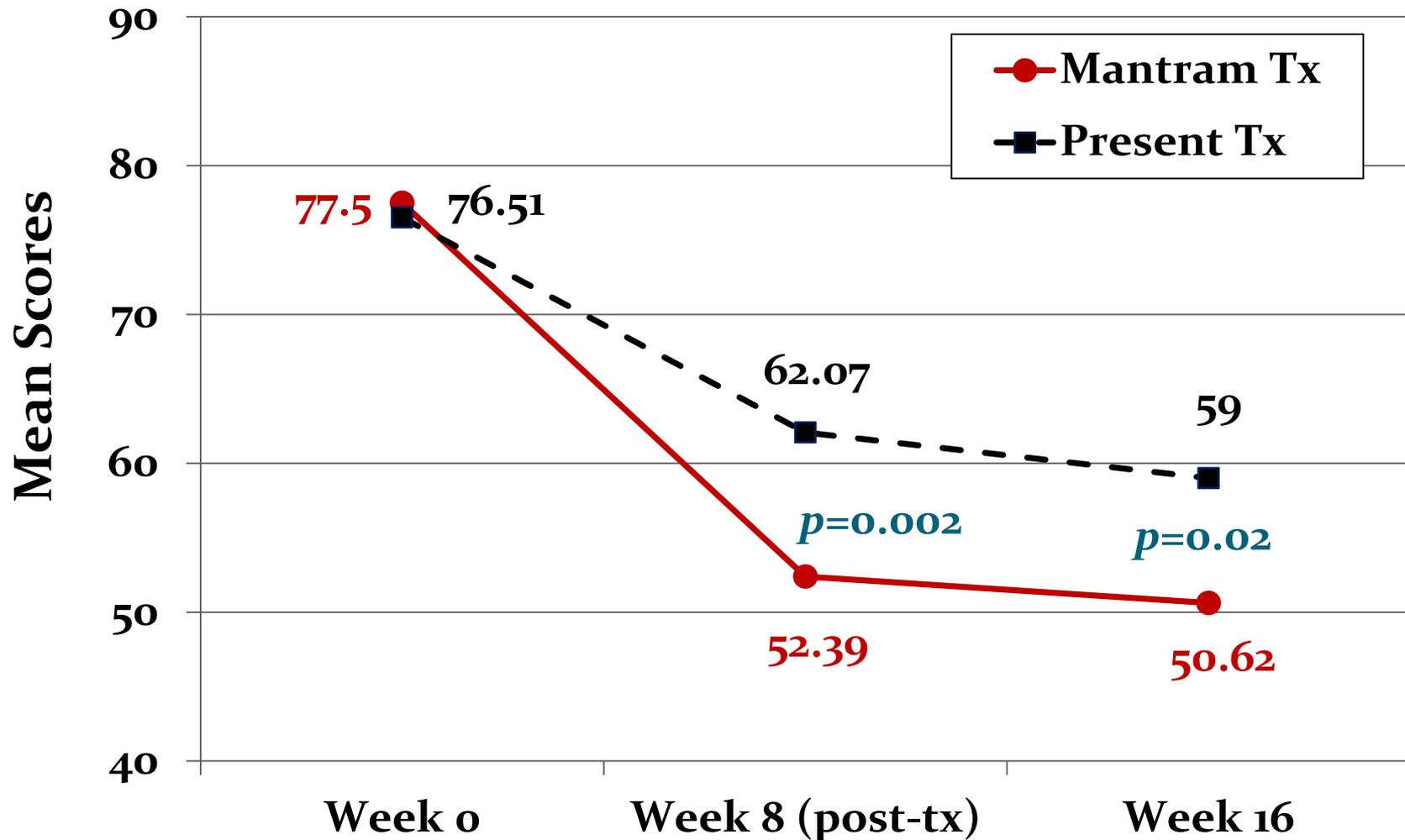
\* Clinician Administered PTSD Scale  $\geq 45$

# Study 2: Individual Results

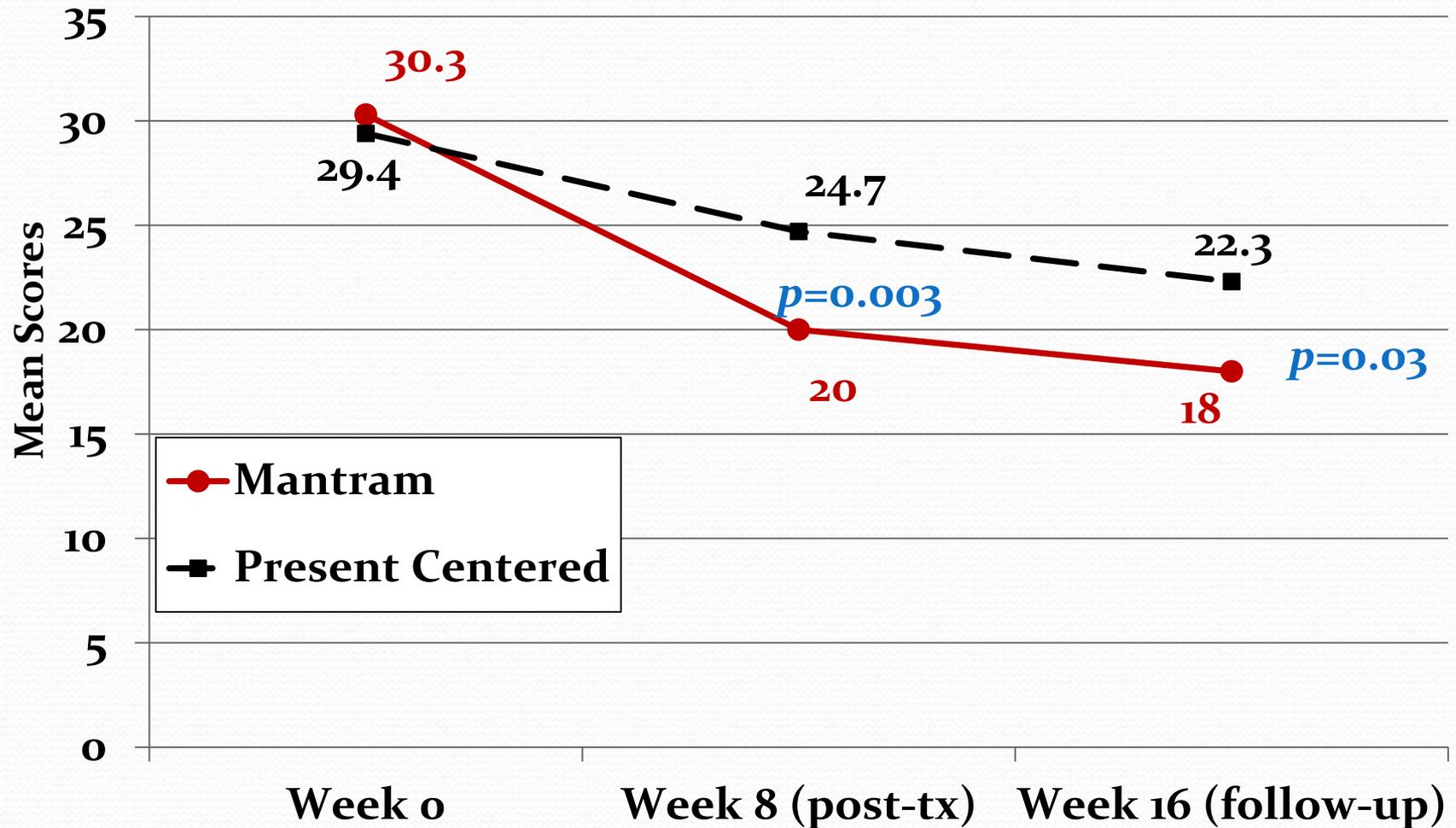


# Change in CAPS Scores by Groups over Time

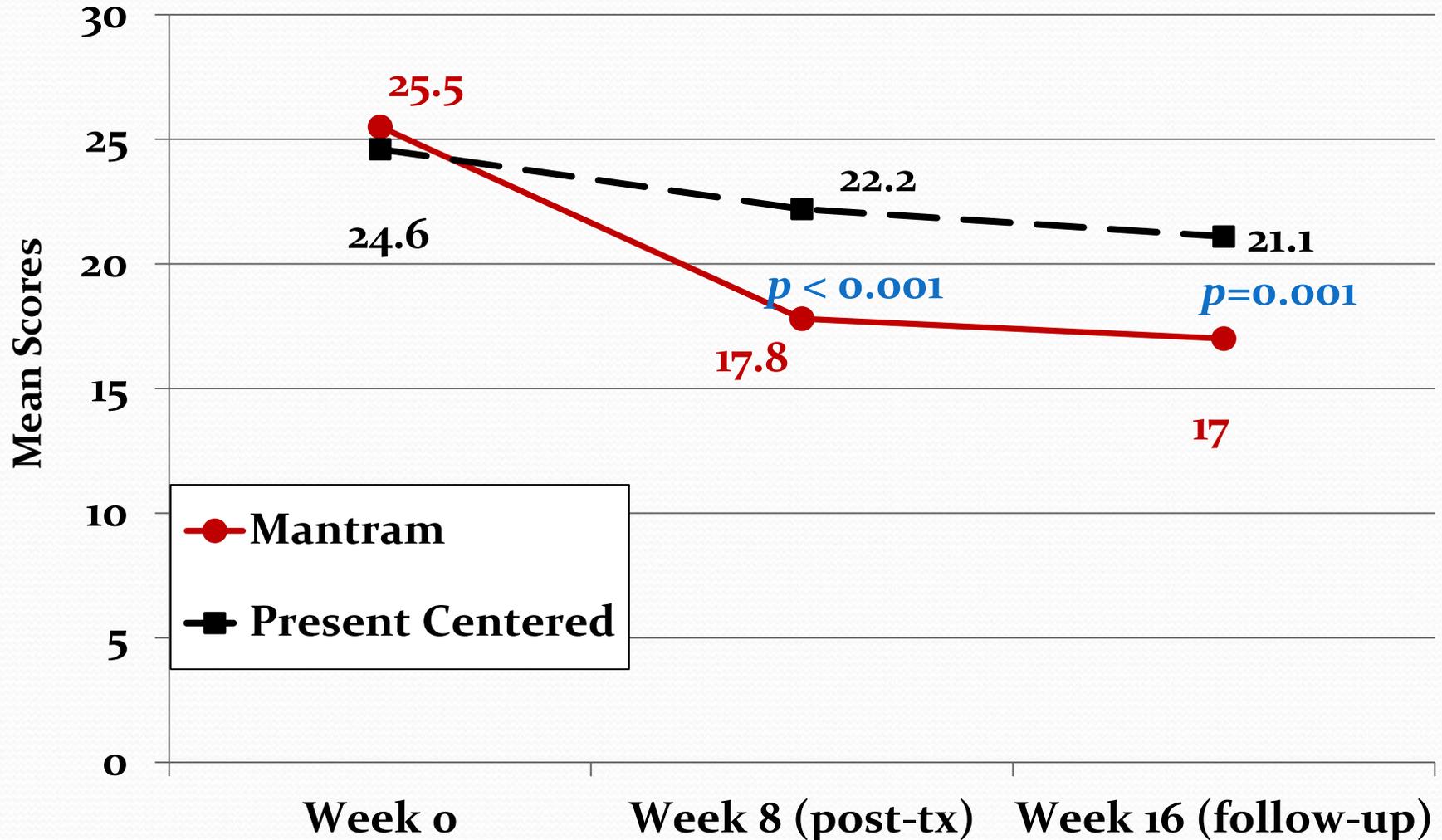
Range 0-136



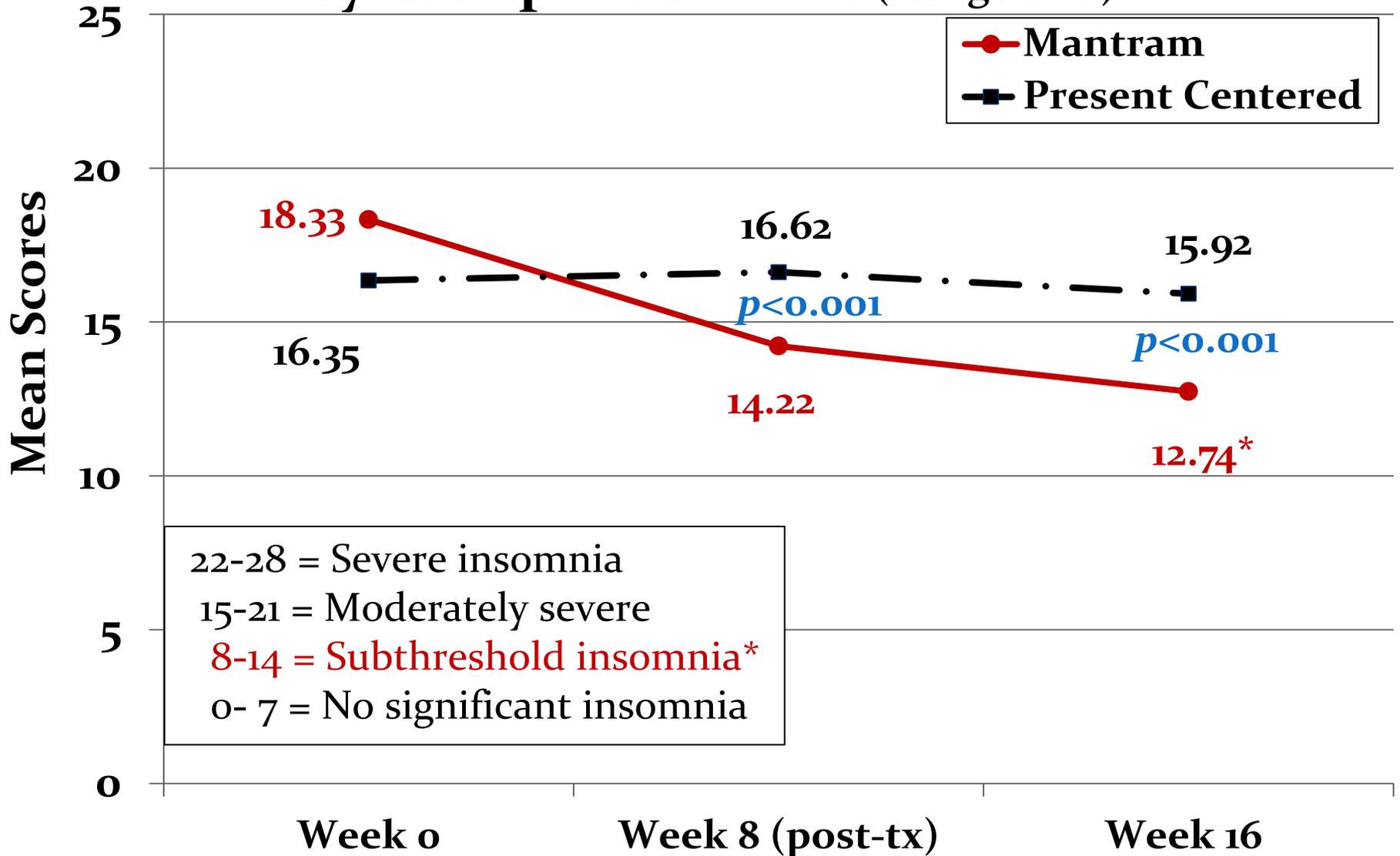
# Change in CAPS Avoidance Scores by Groups over Time (Range 0-56)



# Change in CAPS Hyperarousal Scores by Groups over Time (Range = 0-40)



# Change in Insomnia Severity Index Scores by Groups over Time (Range 0-28)



# Objectives

1. Identify the components of the Mantram Repetition Program (MRP).
2. Outline differences between the MRP and study control conditions.
3. **Describe the PTSD-related outcomes in symptom severity from two randomized controlled trials.**

# Comparison of Results

## Study 1: Short-term improvements in:

1. PTSD symptoms = Total CAPS, hyperarousal & PCL-C
2. Depression, quality of life, spiritual wellbeing & mindful attention
3. Mindful attention & PTSD mediated by frequency of mantram practice

## Study 2: Longer-term improvements in:

1. PTSD symptoms = Total CAPS, hyperarousal & avoidance
2. Post-treatment improvements in PCL-M, depression (PHQ-9), quality of life (WHOQOL-BRIEF), spiritual wellbeing (FACIT-Sp)
3. Other results pending

# Next Steps?

Collaborate on future studies to include:

- Delivery of MRP by chaplains
- Military sexual trauma
- Homeless women
- Employee burnout/nursing “presence”
- Early schizophrenia
- Bio-markers/brain imaging/HRV
- Enlist other PI’s to study MRP

# Mantram for Employees

## 6-session series w CEU's

- Session 1 – **TMS #17457** – How to Choose and Use a Mantram–*Self Study (anytime)*
- Session 2 – **TMS #18538** - Using the Mantram, How it Works, Stress Response–*Self Study (anytime)*
- Session 3 – **SAVE THE DATE –TMS #(to be announced) – 1:00 EST - LIVE meeting via Adobe Connect—** Integrating Mantram Repetition into Work, Life & Veteran Care.

# ***Portable Mindful Strategies for a Healthy Workforce: Mantram Repetition Series***

## **What employees are saying after taking Mantram Repetition:**

*“I’m able to focus on projects one at a time, better. I’m able to assist Veterans in a calmer manner.”*

*“Slowing down will help me focus on the Veteran's goals, rather than focusing on my goals as a provider.”*

*“The subject matter helping me normalize some of my internal struggles, allowing me to explore the issue more deeply, with the goal of facilitating change.”*

*“It was the greatest gift given to me for the rest of my life.”*

# **PORTABLE MINDFUL STRATEGIES**

**FOR A HEALTHY WORKFORCE:**

## **MANTRAM REPETITION**

**SERIES OF 6 SESSIONS**

**HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE A MANTRAM**

(EES TRACE CODE: 13.MA.SC.V22.PMSHW)

**EES Program Evaluation**

**Report of Results**

# Other Resources

**Vets Find Mantram Repetition Helps PTSD Symptoms – YouTube (KPBS April 3, 2012)** <http://www.kpbs.org/news/2012/apr/03/vets-find-mantram-repetition-helps-ptsd-symptoms/>

**Mantram Technique benefits Veterans with PTSD: May 2013 VA Research Currents**  
<http://www.research.va.gov/currents/may13/may13-04.cfm>

**Study: ‘Mantram’ Meditation Eases PTSD: March-April 2012 Research Currents**  
<http://www.research.va.gov/currents/mar-apr12/>

**13048 - Mind-Body-Spiritual Strategies for a Healthy Workforce: The Mantram Repetition Program.** VA electronic Health University (VeHU): [www.vehu.va.gov](http://www.vehu.va.gov)

[www.jillbormann.com](http://www.jillbormann.com)

# Contact Info

[jill.bormann@va.gov](mailto:jill.bormann@va.gov)

[www.jillbormann.com/](http://www.jillbormann.com/)

<http://vaww.visn22.portal.va.gov/MR/default.aspx>

*For permission to access contact: [victoria.etienne@va.gov](mailto:victoria.etienne@va.gov)*

**“We are shaped by what gains our attention  
and occupies our thoughts.”**