

What type of treatment is this?

Written Exposure Therapy (WET) is an individual therapy for PTSD in which you will write about your trauma and the feelings you have about it. It lasts for 5 sessions.

How does it work?

People with PTSD often avoid thinking about the trauma because it feels too stressful to manage. Avoiding things that remind you of the trauma can help you feel better in the moment, but not in the long term. WET works by having you write the details of the trauma. By learning that you can tolerate the negative feelings that come up, you will start to experience the memory with less distress over time. You also will find that physical responses like rapid heartbeat or sweating will decrease. And talking with your clinician about your writing sessions can help you develop new ways of thinking about the traumatic event and what it means to you.

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I strongly recommend WET. It was tough for me at the beginning, but it got easier and easier. I couldn't help feeling liberated and empowered.”

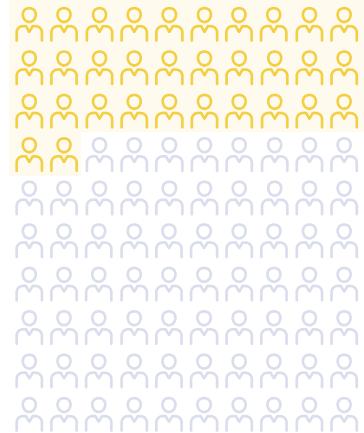
What can I expect?

Your clinician will start by giving you an overview of PTSD symptoms and treatment. In each session, your clinician will give you a specific writing direction and ask you to write about it for 30 minutes. After writing, you will talk briefly with your clinician about how the writing went. You will give your writing to your clinician so that they can read through it and make sure that your writing is on track to help you benefit from the treatment. In between sessions, your clinician will simply ask you to try not to avoid any trauma memories that come up, but there will be no specific assignments between sessions. Over time you will learn to manage thoughts and feelings about the event and to find new meanings that help reduce your PTSD symptoms.

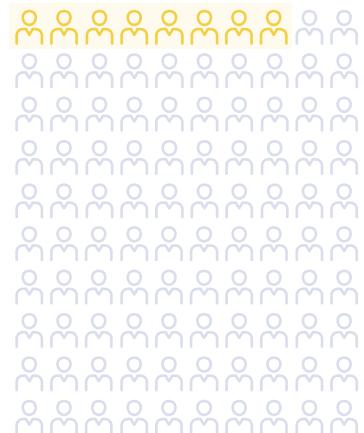
Is it effective?

Yes, Written Exposure Therapy is an effective treatment for PTSD.

32 out of every 100 people with PTSD who receive Written Exposure Therapy will have meaningful symptom improvement after about 3 months.



8 out of every 100 people with PTSD who do not receive treatment will have meaningful symptom improvement after about 3 months.



How long does treatment take?

WET usually takes 5 weekly sessions, so treatment lasts about 1 month. Sessions are 1 hour each. And the benefits of WET often last long after your final session with your clinician.

What are the risks?

The risks of doing WET are mild to moderate discomfort when writing about trauma-related memories. These feelings are usually brief, and people tend to feel better as they keep doing WET. Most people who complete WET find that the benefits outweigh any initial discomfort.

Group or individual?

WET is an individual therapy. You will meet one-to-one with your clinician for each session.

Will I talk in detail about my trauma?

You will not need to talk about your trauma. You will write in detail about your trauma. Your clinician will read your writing between sessions.

Will I have homework?

No, you will not have homework. You will be asked to allow yourself to think about any trauma memories that come up naturally.

How available is this in VA?

Somewhat. Some VA Medical Centers offer WET in their specialized PTSD programs. Smaller VA facilities that do not offer WET may be able to use videoconferencing to have you receive WET from a clinician at another location.

Does VA have an app for that?

No, currently VA has not developed an app for WET.



See what patients have to say about WET

“Do it! WET was one of the most liberating therapies that I have ever done ... I feel a control over my trauma that I’ve never had before, and it has changed everything.”

“The first positive changes were ... during the writing portion to find that I was not at fault. I was abused sexually. I was just a child. So the positive was that I started to take away this guilt. I wasn’t at fault and that was a great relief to me.”