

Gracie Jiu-Jitsu in Trauma-Focused Care: An Exploratory Case Study

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Abstract

Martial arts training can be a viable component of embodied healing for survivors of trauma. This inquiry and case study explore, one method—the Women Empowered (WE) Program based on Gracie (Brazilian) Jiu-Jitsu approaches. The WE program is increasingly becoming more trauma and dissociation-informed in its approach to working with females. Anna, who contributed her lived experience to this case study, explains how this approach advanced her recovery from complex trauma. She shared her reflections using known attitudes of mindfulness as a framework for describing her experience, connected to outcomes related to her long-term trauma recovery. Suggestions and future directions for responsibly integrating programs like WE into trauma treatment and psychotherapy are discussed.

Keywords: Martial arts, jiu-jitsu, Sexual trauma, PTSD, Feminism, Embodiment, Community.

Introduction

Clinical professionals are becoming increasingly aware of the need for embodied, holistic treatment to truly heal the legacy of traumatic stress and its various manifestations. In his landmark book, *The Body Keeps the Score*, psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk (2014) states that "for real change to take place the body needs to learn that the danger has passed and to live in the reality of the present" (p.21). Van der Kolk notes that survivors of trauma typically need a combination of approaches—top-down (e.g., self-knowledge, connecting with others), technology (e.g., medications, specialty therapies that rearrange how the brain stores information), and bottom-up. He describes bottom-up approaches—working from the brainstem up through the neocortex and not the other way around—as "allowing the body to have experiences that deeply and viscerally contradict the helplessness, rage, and collapse that result from the trauma" (p. 21). The martial arts are increasingly entering the conversation as a possible option for helping survivors of trauma to heal.

The martial arts are generally described as "various sports which

originated chiefly in Japan, Korea, China as forms of self-defense or attack, such as judo, karate, and kendo" (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Caldwell (2018) posits that martial arts training is ideal for allowing survivors of trauma to engage in movements of completion tendency (e.g., allowing the body to move in a way it may have needed to for protection at the time of a traumatic incident) without turning the survivor into a bully or aggressor. The Women Empowered (WE) curriculum, developed by the Gracie University of Jiu-Jitsu in Torrance, California, meets this core description. The son and grandsons of Helio Gracie, founder of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (a derivation of Japanese ju-jitsu and its close relative, judo), initially developed the WE program based on Helio's self-defense approaches. The main characteristic of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is that it empowers smaller opponents to defeat larger opponents due to the emphasis placed on body leverage technique, as opposed to athleticism or brute strength. This quality is what makes the system ideal for women and those who feel less secure in their body strength to feel confident in defending themselves.

Within the last decade, the Women Empowered (WE) program based on the Gracie system of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu has experienced an important transformation as Eve Torres Gracie, and Victoria Gracie (the wives of Renner and Ryron Gracie, Helio's grandsons) added a much-needed female perspective to the curriculum. Now in its second edition, the program manual, video series, and in-person training curriculum (if available in one's area) have taken even greater care to be more trauma-responsive and trauma-focused (Eve Torres Gracie, personal communication, 21 June 2018; Gracie & Gracie, 2019). The program teaches women 63 specific self-defense techniques in 20 lessons, covering both the physical and psychological aspects of self-defense. WE is taught directly by the Gracie family team in Torrance, California and by instructors that they trained across the globe. However, the program can also be studied remotely via a series of instructional videos and reading. Remote students have the option to submit a video test demonstrating their skills to Gracie University and can also earn the same pink belt achievement that students can earn at in-person academies.

Women Empowered hold great potential as an adjunctive approach to therapy in helping survivors of trauma to heal, as

evidenced by the program's increasing focus on trauma sensitivity, and preliminary success stories reported from female graduates of the program. The purpose of this paper is to examine a single-case study of a complex trauma survivor's experience with the WE program in Torrence, California. The authors enlisted the help of Anna, a volunteer, to share her experience as part of their pilot research for a larger, qualitatively driven grounded theory study to explore the potential of the Women Empowered program in trauma recovery. As case study research, particularly conducted as a forerunner to grounded theory, no specific research questions were developed. Rather, the authors endeavored to examine her case in the context of a broader literature and contextual review of the role that the martial arts and jiu-jitsu can play in healing the wounds of traumatic stress or a variety of other clinical concerns.

While the intention was for this initial case study to serve as preliminary inquiry for developing potential research questions or guide the methodological choice for a larger study, the case's presentation of her lived experience offers rich perspective that is worthy of its own presentation. To allow for a more balanced presentation in this presentation of the case study, the first author, who is herself a practitioner of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and graduate of the Women Empowered program, recruited the assistance of a second author with no prior experience in jiu-jitsu or the martial arts. The two authors dynamic assured a bias check throughout the preparation of this case study.

Literature Review

The research to date has tended to focus on non-specific martial arts and their value in physical empowerment. This review of the literature focuses on existing works on martial arts to give richer context in exploring the present case study. A review of the literature shows that researchers have studied classical martial arts training and its impact on women. Phillips (2011) asserted that martial arts could contribute to women's health and wellness. She also reported this type of training could improve assertiveness, release anger, and provide a framework for women's empowerment.

Similarly, Velija, Mierzewski, and Fortune (2013) studied gendered embodiment and physical power, and how they manifest in women's experiences in martial arts training. While these authors agreed martial arts training resulted in women's empowerment, they differed in approach. Phillips (2011) and Velija et al. (2013) were both informed by a feminist health lens and agreed that martial arts allowed women to take control of their lives.

There is also a body of literature stemming from a psychodynamic framework. Twemlow, Sacco, and Fronagy (2008) examined the use of martial arts training as a container for unhealthy aggressions. They used clinical vignettes to exemplify work with persons who had committed violence, using a combined approach of psychotherapy and physically oriented adjunctive treatments like yoga or martial arts. Results from this study indicated this approach contributed to the healing of psychological traumas (Twemlow et al., 2008). The authors emphasized the importance

of the social context of the therapeutic relationship but reported more study is needed on these contextual factors in the embodied treatment of trauma. Twemlow et al. reported further scholarship is required on how movement provides access to traumatic memories (2008). Weiser, Kutz, Kutz, and Weiser (1995) examined the psychodynamic traits of martial arts. Like Twemlow et al., (2008) they posited martial arts could be a useful tool in addition to talk therapy. Weiser et al. (1995) stated such treatment fosters and exposes feelings through physical movement and therapists observe and analyze these feelings during counseling. This work suggested the value of a combination of physical and cognitive approaches in conjunction with more traditional psychotherapy (Weiser et al., 1995). These studies support the utility of coupling adjunctive martial arts training with traditional psychotherapy approaches.

Some of the research of martial arts and trauma healing has focused on military populations. David, Simpson, and Cotton (2006) piloted a program called Taking Charge (TC). This course combined psycho education, personal safety, and self-defense training for female military-sexual trauma. The program included a 36-hour comprehensive behavioral intervention using psycho education, personal safety training, and self-defense training for women with PTSD due to military sexual violence. David et al. (2006) reported after completion of TC, women reported reductions in avoidance of stimuli, hyper arousal, depression. They observed increases in interpersonal interactions, activity, and self-defense self-efficacy (David et al., 2006). Furthermore, the authors suggested self-defense courses provide a sort of exposure therapy that may be beneficial in trauma recovery.

In another study on veterans, Collura (2018) used a framework of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a tool for veteran re-entry into civilian life. Collura observed training in Gracie Jiu-Jitsu in Tampa, Florida and used a neuro anthropological perspective to examine how participation in sport positively impacts re-assimilation into a non-military context. Results indicated Gracie Jiu-Jitsu promoted re-assimilation through socialization, healthy outlets for prior combat identity, exercise, and familiar experience of cultural hierarchy within the jiu-jitsu instructors and students.

Some researchers have conducted considerable amounts of published research on self-defense training for women who have survived sexual traumas (Ball & Martin, 2012; Brecklin, 2008; Brecklin, 2011; Weitlauf, Cervone, Smith, & Wright, 2001; Westrup, Weitlauf, & Keller, 2005). By and large, these studies examine the effect of self-defense training after trauma to prevent future assaults (Ball & Martin, 2012; Brecklin, 2008; Brecklin, 2011; Weitlauf et al., 2001; Westrup et al., 2005). These researchers did not advocate for any specific discipline of martial arts but instead focused on the feeling states of women after an assault and self-defense training. The most common result from these studies was a feeling of self-efficacy and reduction in fear about more sexual assaults (Ball & Martin, 2012; Brecklin, 2008; Brecklin, 2011; Weitlauf et al., 2001; Westrup et al., 2005).

Researchers suggested martial arts are beneficial for youth populations. Vertonghen and Theeboom (2010) reviewed

significant journal findings articles concerning the psychological-social outcomes of martial arts practice for youth. Results indicated although a substantial amount of research has been conducted on the topic, there is no clarity or consensus on the effects of martial arts training. Vertonghen and Theeboom (2010) surmised areas for future research include specific influencing features like characteristics of participants, type of training, social settings, and structure of the training.

Zivin et al. (2001) studied the impact of a traditional martial arts program for violence prevention with at-risk boys in middle school. After taking the program they found statistically significant improvements on teacher ratings regarding resistance to rules, inappropriate social behaviors, and impulsive behaviors, but no reduction in violence. Zivin et al. (2001) also identified areas for future investigation are studies to target the influence of instructor characteristics on program effectiveness, research on specific schools of martial arts, and the effect of movement and mindfulness on program success.

Chinkov and Holt (2016) studied the transfer of life skills through participation in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. In a qualitative inquiry, Chinkov and Holt found themes amongst the experiences of adults who participated in a jiu-jitsu training program. Students reported learning respect for others, perseverance, self-confidence, and health habits (Chinkov & Holt, 2016). In a related study, Croom (2014) examined mental health factors that are strengthened through martial arts practice. He found psychological wellbeing (e.g., positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment) can all be improved through the practice of martial arts.

Case Study: Anna

Existing research fails to examine the impact of specific, embodied, holistic treatments for trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other related psychological issues. In this case study, the perceived effectiveness of one training program using Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, Women Empowered (WE) is presented. Anna is a marriage and family therapist, and board-certified art therapist, a complex trauma survivor, and a graduate of the WE program in Torrance, California. Anna initially reached out to the first author after hearing her give an interview on the impact of martial arts in healing trauma. The first author then asked her about sharing her experiences with the WE program and the larger experience of training jiu-jitsu through the lens of embodied mindfulness. Since Anna indicated that she was a mindfulness practitioner, the two agreed that presenting her experience through the framework of mindfulness attitudes would offer a trans theoretical and applicable dimension to what Anna wanted to share.

One of the leaders in the secular mindfulness movement, Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003, 2005, 2011), identifies seven primary attitudes of mindfulness that develop through regular engagement in any consistent mindfulness practice: non-judging, patience, beginner's mind, trust, non-striving, acceptance, and letting go. These are not the only attitudes that one can develop through mindfulness practice, although Kabat-Zinn emphasizes them as

foundational. In the sharing of her lived experience, Anna reflects on other attitudes and qualities that she cultivated through her development with WE and Gracie Jiu-Jitsu training.

Increasing attention is being paid to the possibility of practicing mindfulness not just in seated meditation, rather, through other practices like dance, expressive arts, and the martial arts that more directly work with body movement (Caldwell, 2014; Marich & Howell, 2015). In the literature, mindfulness is described as the self-regulation of attention to the conscious awareness of one's immediate experiences while adopting an attitude of curiosity, openness, and acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004). The case study interview is shared with Anna's permission after she carefully reviewed the presentation of the interview as it appears in this article for accuracy in representation.

Background

As a result of her trauma history, which included over eighteen years of neglect, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, Anna experienced somatic trauma and triggers around touch, men, women, and assault scenarios. She decided to try trauma-informed empowerment and prevention at Gracie University's home base in Torrance, California. She began the WE program in August 2016 and eventually earned her pink belt and a blue belt in Master Cycle. Anna stated she never intended to heal via WE but credited her healing as a total surprise and wonderful side effect of always wanting to try self-defense. Although her decision to enter WE was not planned, she described WE as central to her healing and described her lived experience with this healing process through the lens of mindfulness attitudes. These reflections were presented after two years of training, generally multiple times a week.

Non-Judgment

Before her training in US, Anna reported chronic negative judgment as a part of her childhood trauma which was a continued barrier to trauma healing. She credits the instructors at Gracie University for helping her to minimize these personality characteristics through humor and gentle instruction. Instructors praised her for what she was doing right, and made small adjustments, about not overwhelming students with many directives. Anna reported this mindful approach helped her to silence the voices of her abusers, which in turn resulted in the sense of safety and encouragement to continue the process. Says Anna, "This was exactly what I needed to stay motivated and feel a sense of mastery developing throughout the process."

Patience and Persistence

For Anna, the WE approach promoted mindfulness tools like patience and persistence. Anna reported she struggled with patience, but ultimately, she benefitted greatly from learning how to stay positive and tolerate the often frustrating, counterintuitive Gracie Jiu-Jitsu techniques. The counter-intuitiveness can be a challenge when one is shown how trying to pull away from an attacker will be much less effective than stepping towards the attacker in certain moves to maximize the leverage for escape.

Such approaches can promote a sense of distress tolerance, according to Anna. Anna cited the skills she learned at Gracie often transferred to her daily life. For example, Anna said that before WE she was an aggressive driver, often speeding and weaving in and out of traffic. As she left WE training, she noticed she was a more patient and mindful driver.

Willingness and Beginner's Mind

Anna reported that WE instructors helped her to understand better willingness and a beginner's mindset to promote growth. They often share personal experiences of their path to learning jiu-jitsu. This humanistic approach provides a model of how to stay motivated and encourages enthusiasm for learning new things with curiosity. Instructors model how coming from a place of not knowing and say that no matter how much of an expert one might be, there is always something new to learn. Anna reported this mindset was particularly important to her in learning the clinch move. This counterintuitive move requires a learner to move into a punch, rather than moving away from it. The clinch, which requires a student to move towards a person who is trying to hit them, is against our self-protective instincts. Anna reported she still often struggles with this move but employing a willingness to learn more keeps her motivated.

Trust

Training in Gracie Jiu-Jitsu requires high levels of trust, which is often an area of struggle for trauma survivors. Gracie instructors in the WE program teach with a specialized eye towards trauma-informed practices. For example, it requires a level of trust for a trauma survivor to allow someone to put their hands around the neck. To teach trust and demonstrate how to develop confidence, instructors gradually approach trigger-likely moves. For instance, students often begin by lightly placing their hands, with permission, and work progressively toward putting the hands lightly on the neck, and then hands on the neck with pressure.

Safety is also a priority at Gracie University. Instructors stress the importance of keeping your training partner safe. Significant emphasis is placed on learning how to break a fall, and to prevent injury while accomplishing the goals of jiu-jitsu training. Anna reported instructors and assistants go around the room, assessing techniques and safety. Newer students are paired with more advanced students so that safety is always emphasized. Extensive techniques like moving slowly, tapping early, frequent communication, continued verbalizations of safety tips throughout practicing provide a structure of security. This safety structure offers visible reassurances for students that they can train and trust they will remain safe. For Anna, this organized system of safety and trust enabled her to correct her prior beliefs of vulnerability and helplessness. She shares, "It has been a significant corrective experience for me to have many women and men take careful consideration of my safety while training."

Non-Striving

WE emphasize taking breaks when needed and trusting the messages sent by the body. For example, instructors often

convey that trying too hard and training too hard can be counterproductive to learning. Instructors encourage students to take care of their bodies and to take breaks or merely observe others. To a student who has survived trauma, this attitude of non-striving is empowering. Anna reported it was vital for her to learn to take breaks, as jiu-jitsu training can be powerful and intoxicating. Due to the nature of these feelings for a survivor, it is essential to learn balance and health, as these attitudes inspire healing and recovery.

Acceptance

In Gracie Jiu-Jitsu it is vital to learn acceptance of sex, age, and strength while learning that these factors can also be used to one's advantage. With mastery of the techniques, Anna was able to level the playing field of size and muscle. Through WE, Anna reported she now knows that she needs to comprehend the procedures better than the men to enact safety and control.

Anna explains, "I have successfully executed the double leg takedown technique on a 250-pound man. I also managed to keep control of a 250-pound man in side-mount control. I have had to accept the limitations of my age and strength, but in doing so, I have also learned how to manage my limitations effectively."

Letting Go and Attunement

Achieving an attitude of letting go can result in having fun while making mistakes is central to WE training. One credo of Gracie Jiu-Jitsu is to go with the flow and not take errors seriously. This mindful, mirthful attention to the present moment helps students to attune with a sense of physical and emotional self while accepting perceived faults and missteps. Anna reported a vital aspect of WE training is to remain fluid and attuned to what your opponent is doing.

Furthermore, she noted in many aspects jiu-jitsu is more like a dance than an act of combat. When students are unable to achieve this fluidity, it often creates an opportunity for an advantage by the opposing student. Letting go of attachments to winning or losing also helps increase flow and attunement.

Friendliness and Gentleness

At Gracie University, students and instructors maintain gestures of kindness and gentleness. Anna reported smiles, handshakes, hugs, and laughter abound at WE training. This affableness increases a sense of safety, respect, and caring for all. Instructors take great care and time to encourage these positive exchanges between staff, students, and visitors. Instructors are taught to set and maintain healthy boundaries around training. For example, if a student becomes too aggressive, or does not demonstrate friendliness, safety, and caring they may be quickly asked to leave if the problems continue. Anna reported these boundaries made her feel comfortable to learn and progress, knowing the process would be safe, fun, and gentle.

Non-Reactivity and Confidence

Trauma survivors often become triggered by stimuli that remind them of a traumatic event. In trauma recovery, survivors benefit

from coping with physical and emotional triggers in ways that signal to the body the trauma is over. In jiu-jitsu, students are taught non-reactivity, which helps them to develop self-confidence in their growth. Students who are still in a phase of reactivity could potentially react to a trigger in a way that is not safe for them or others.

For example, Anna reported that she feared she would be triggered during testing and punch one of the instructors. She understood from this that she was not ready to test and needed further preparation to be non-reactive. Anna did this by pushing herself out of her comfort zone slowly, in a controlled, safe manner. She tested first with stronger female partners and then progressed sparring with other students, all the while building her confidence and decreasing her reactivity. Very gradually, throughout weeks, she increased her confidence and practiced non-reactivity. When she was ready, she attempted testing with a male instructor who reminded her of one of her abusers. Before taking the test, she opened her attacker's Facebook page and noticed body tension, nausea, shortened breath, and tightness in the chest and stomach.

Anna passed the test, using the emotional and physical skills she learned in the WE program. Anna recalls, "I opened up my attacker's Facebook page again. Now as I looked at it, my body was calm. There was no reaction, no nausea, no chest tightening. I felt peaceful, and I said out loud, you are not a threat to me anymore, and I forgive you." After years of therapy to recover from trauma, my logical mind knew I was safe, but my body had to catch up.

The victim becomes a warrior in the WE program, according to Anna. "It's the complete opposite of the trauma suffered. I particularly like that almost all of the training emphasizes control over your attacker without submitting or hurting them. I can remain compassionate and kind while strong in relationship to my attacker. I don't have to become them (angry, aggressive, violent) to defend myself."

Discussion

Assuming that a benchmark for deep trauma healing is that a survivor can learn to live in the reality of the present, knowing that the danger has passed (van der Kolk, 2014), the impact of WE and Gracie Jiu-Jitsu training on Anna's trauma recovery was significant. As reported through her lived experience, Anna directly credits her training in Grace Jiu-Jitsu (which began with the WE program) to allow for much progress in her trauma recovery and overall confidence. Trauma recovery can be described as allowing someone to move from a victim to a survivor or thriver mentality. Anna's specific description of how WE facilitated movement from victim to warrior mentality is primarily descriptive, and a strong endorsement of what the approaches in WE can offer. Her specific perspectives also confirm some of the benefits of martial arts noted in the literature view, while beginning to answer some questions posed by the literature related to specifics. What program or martial art might be best suited to bring about

the mental health benefits noted and how are those programs being operated to achieve these benefits? Anna's case begins to provide some insight into answering this larger question. While further investigation must be conducted to respond conclusively, her case offers investigators an initial framework for carrying out future research through a feminist, qualitative lens.

Anna's participation in WE allowed her to work through barriers of silencing the voices of her abusers that existed in her previous attempts at trauma healing. Learning how to take breaks, be gentle with herself, and practice balance was also a significant component of her successful experience. She learned the importance of letting go of attachments, noticing that when she was able to do that, attunement and performance improved. Women Empowered also gave her the opportunity to practice distress tolerance and to work through frustrations with a beginner's mind, especially when she was shown moves that initially seemed counterintuitive.

The applications of this learning to her life are also clearly noted in Anna's presentation, including her increased sense of calmness and patience with driving. Perhaps most marked is how she was able to shift from a reactive place when engaging in test preparation (e.g., punching an instructor), to eventually being able to work through her reactivity and take the WE pink belt test with a lead instructor who looked just like an attacker. Her description of how she responded differently to the attacker's picture online after she successfully passed her test suggests that the test preparation and test itself allowed the memory to shift how it is stored in the brain and ultimately reconsolidate. This entire experience and its outcome is an example of what van der Kolk (2014) and many others in the field describe as bottom-up healing, or allowing the body to have experiences that deeply and viscerally contradict the helplessness, rage, and collapse that result from the trauma.

Anna indicates many features of the Gracie University approach in WE that facilitated these healing shifts. Several components of their approach Anna described as "corrective experiences," such as being able to train in an environment where instructors are attuned to safety. She reported the benefit of experiencing systematic desensitization via gentle hands near her throat. This gradual process allowed her to eventually achieve near complete reflex development intensity. Other features of the faculty's approach meet standards of trauma-informed martial arts instruction as described by Marich and Bender (2017). These features include, but are not limited to: praising what students are doing right while making small, non-overwhelming adjustments, sharing their experiences and beliefs that there is always something new to learn (even if you've been training a long time), and explaining that what you have traditionally perceived as disadvantages may actually be advantages in jiu-jitsu. They helped Anna to move out of her comfort zone in a safe and graduated manner. Perhaps most importantly, as perceived by Anna, the faculty makes learning fun and encourages students not to take themselves too seriously.

Future Directions

Anna's case study seems to suggest that the Gracie Jiu-Jitsu WE program can play a role in helping survivors of complex trauma to accelerate their healing process in a more embodied way, particularly in the context of such trauma-informed instruction. To further explore this potential, interviews and outcome measures will need to be gathered from other participants in the WE program, perhaps looking at those cases where the instructors were different than Anna's core team in Torrance, CA. The team connected to this paper is currently in the process of preparing such a study with WE participants using a grounded theory approach.

Additionally, there is rich terrain to explore from an interdisciplinary perspective on how martial arts instructors in a program like Women Empowered could partner with clinicians and psychotherapists to assist survivors of trauma. Rich conversations are continuing to explore how therapeutic healing is not just an office-bound activity. Anna's case demonstrates how a program like Women Empowered can supplement where other therapies stopped short, and this phenomenon must be further explored. Anna went through the WE program in the community with instructors who were trauma-informed, although not necessarily clinicians. Future research has significant potential to explore how martial arts and traditional therapy can be best combined. As with Anna, making referrals of clients to competent providers in the community may prove to be a best practice.

Anna's case is already serving as the pilot for a larger research study of this nature. In addition to linking the needs of trauma survivors with other community resources like Women Empowered, the authors and their team also intend to explore whether it is appropriate for clinicians and psychotherapists with adequate jiu-jitsu or martial arts training to bring their instructional skills into clinical sessions. Body movements to work with completion tendency and repetition compulsion are well-known in approaches like Gestalt, Somatic Experiencing, and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, setting a precedent for well-trained clinicians to work in the physical realm.

Other mixed methods and empirical approaches comparing treatment as usual conditions with a method like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or eye movement desensitization reprocessing (EMDR) therapy to treatment as usual combined with martial arts training would be vital to advancing this discussion forward. Van der Kolk et al. (2014) conducted landmark research published in a psychiatric journal that studied women with a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis. The study compared treatment as usual group to treatment plus weekly yoga trauma-sensitive classes. The yoga group showed significantly reduced PTSD symptomatology, with effect sizes comparable to well-researched psychotherapeutic and psychopharmacologic approaches. The authors concluded that yoga might improve the functioning of traumatized individuals by helping them to tolerate physical and sensory experiences associated with fear and helplessness and to increase emotional awareness and affect tolerance. A similar study with Women Empowered/jiu-jitsu and

other martial arts ought to be explored, and would be ideal to show the impact of treatment alone versus treatment combined with jiu-jitsu training. Naturally, there is also room to explore the use of similar jiu-jitsu based approaches with survivors of trauma regardless of gender.

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