**Distant Thunder: Drumming with Vietnam Veterans**

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**Abstract**

Vietnam veterans receiving treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder consistently show current symptomatology reflective of their war traumas. Music therapy using improvisation on hand drums is used to help the veterans modulate their often misdirected, exaggerated, and unrecognized emotions. Once rage is expressed, expressions of sorrow and fear surface, and eventually a joyful group cohesion is formed. By controlling the volume, tempo, rhythm, and timbre of the drums, the veterans learn to channel their often misused sense of power. The goal is for the veterans to generalize these skills to their everyday life. Drumming allows the men to be heard, provides the opportunity for their feelings to be expressed and controlled, and helps build a sense of connectedness and group mission.