

# Structured Approach Therapy for PTSD in OEF/OIF Veterans

Frederic Sautter, Ph.D.

Shirley Glynn, Ph.D.

SLVHCS Family Research Team

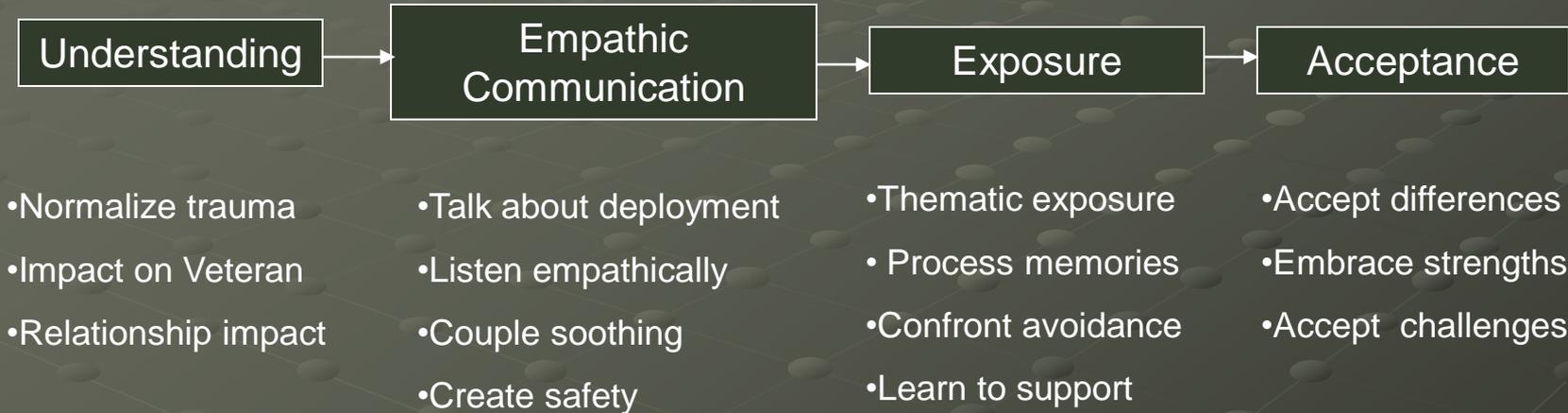
# Using the SAT Program

- SAT is for the treatment of PTSD, not for the treatment of marital or relationship problems.
- It is difficult for couples, thus more functional couples are more likely to show benefits.
- SAT should be administered by clinicians with experience with both couples therapy and PTSD treatment.

# Objectives of SAT Program

- Adapt exposure concepts to couples therapy to decrease trauma-related anxiety and allow couples to process deployment experiences.
- Help couples to increase intimacy and positive emotions and decrease emotional numbing.
- Help couples to improve their ability to accept uncomfortable emotions in their relationship.

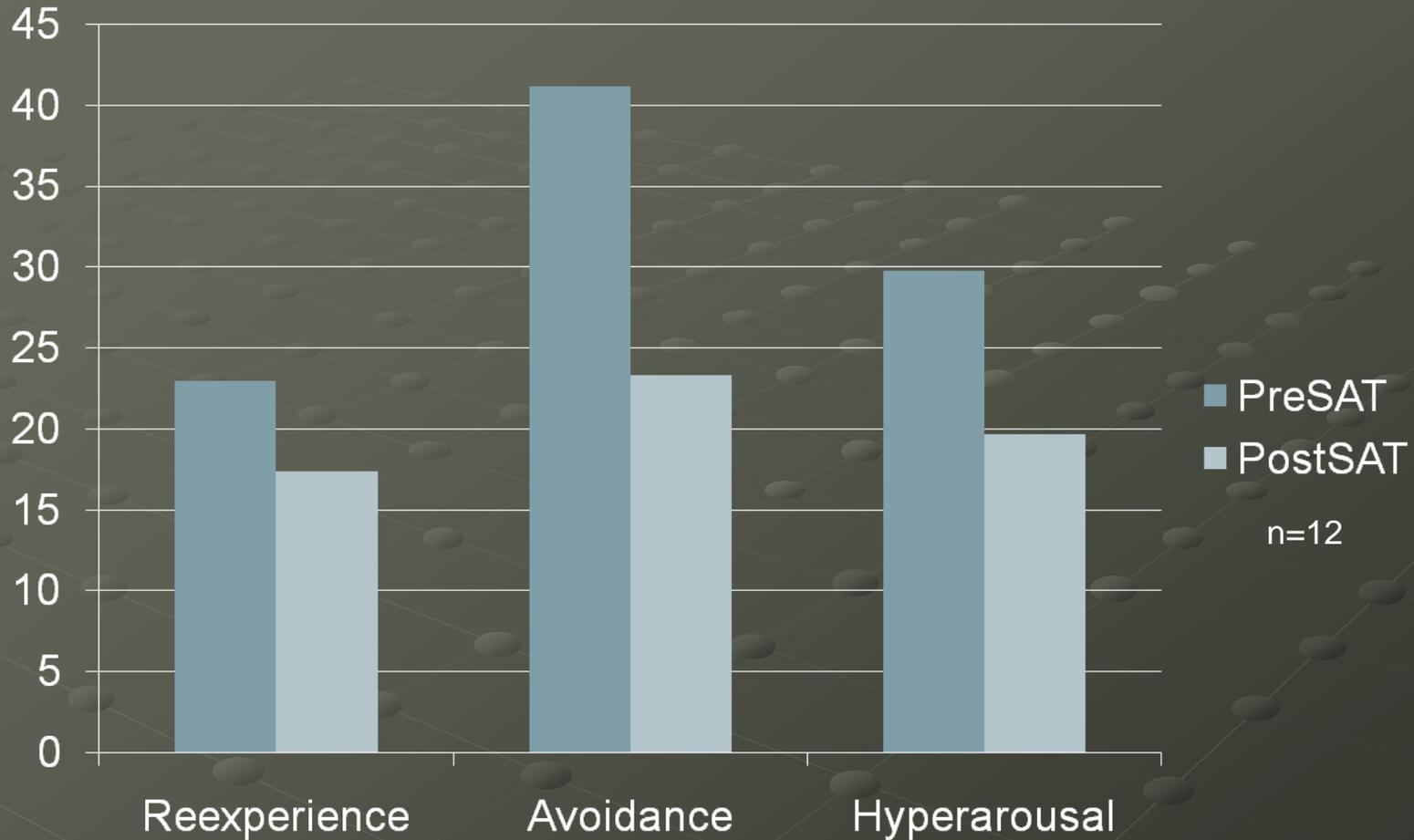
# Processes of Strategic Approach Therapy



# Session Content of Structured Approach Therapy

Sessions 1-3	Trauma education and empathic communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Learn about PTSD.</li><li>•Empathic communication skills.</li><li>•Talk about deployment experiences.</li></ul>
Session 4-6	Increase exposure to positive emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Contract for intimate behaviors.</li><li>•Identify and communicate emotions.</li><li>•Develop strategies to decrease numbing.</li></ul>
Session 7-10	Increase exposure to trauma-related fear and aversive emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Couples choose an exposure task.</li><li>•Option1: Process trauma memory.</li><li>•Option 2: In vivo exposure.</li><li>•Dyadic anxiety management.</li></ul>
Session 11/12	Acceptance of partner differences and psychological challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Explore differences between partners.</li><li>•Discuss resiliency and challenges.</li><li>•Strategies for future growth.</li></ul>

# Reductions in Clinician-Rated PTSD



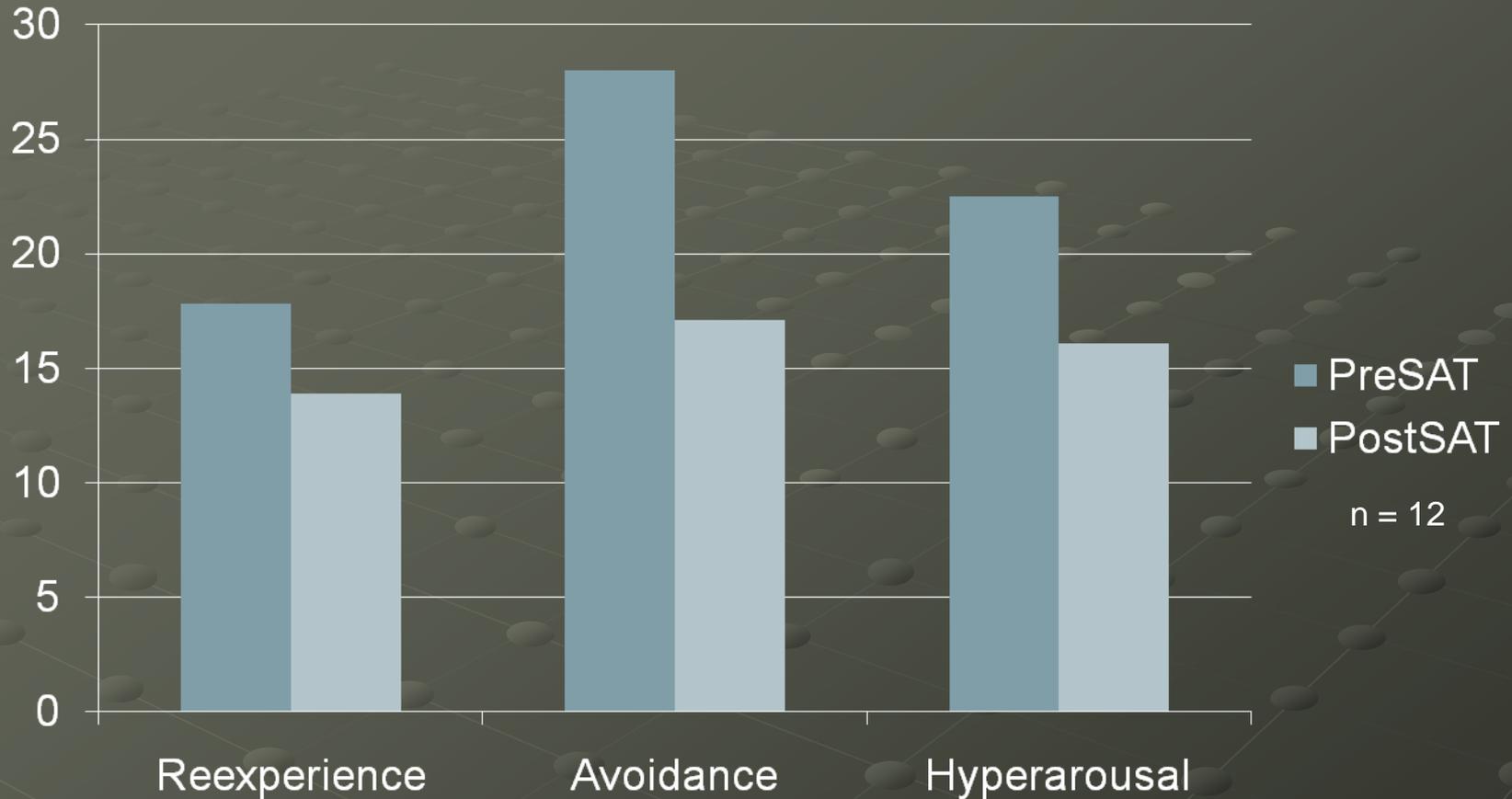
**Overall PTSD Reduction (35.3%)**

Pre SAT Mean = 93.8

Post SAT Mean = 60.1

$t(11) = 4.78; p < .01$

# Reductions in Self-Reported PTSD



## Overall PTSD Reduction (30.1%)

Pre SAT Mean = 68.3

Post SAT Mean = 47.2

$t(11) = 7.67$ ;  $p < .001$

# Conclusions

- Structured Approach Therapy (SAT) shows promise as a brief, couple-based treatment to increase empathic communication, decrease PTSD, and increase relational acceptance of uncomfortable emotions.
- A randomized clinical trial is being conducted using SAT with a much larger sample of OEF/OIF Veterans.