

New Therapeutic Approach For PTSD Licensed By University Of Connecticut

University of Connecticut



TARGET Inventor Julian Ford.

Millions of people live with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental health condition that develops in response to a traumatic event, such as natural disasters, war, experiencing or witnessing violence, sexual abuse, or the injury or death of a loved one. Trauma has a significant impact on how people respond to everyday stressors.

A group based out of the University of Connecticut in Storrs created Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET), a copyrighted educational and therapeutic approach that explains why PTSD develops and how it can be overcome by learning new ways to manage stress reactions. TARGET helps those with PTSD or have otherwise experienced trauma without having to relive memories of the traumatic experience.

“There are a number of psychotherapies for PTSD but most, if not all, of them require the person in therapy to relive

traumatic memories,” said the lead researcher, Julian Ford. “That’s not something all people want to do, and it’s not the only way to treat PTSD.”

Through a series of grants supported by the Department of Justice, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the National Institute of Mental Health from 2001-2006, Ford and his colleagues showed how TARGET could help adults in addiction treatment, mothers with PTSD, girls in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, women incarcerated at the York Correctional Institution, and men who were combat veterans combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2008, UConn licensed a small business established by Ford and his wife, Judy Ford, a marriage and family therapist, to disseminate TARGET. With the guidance of the UConn [Technology Commercialization Services](#), the Fords established that business, Advanced Trauma Solutions (ATS).

“It was something that was useful and valuable,” Gregory Gallo, director of technology transfer at UConn says. “It’s nice to know this technology is getting out there and helping people.”

TARGET has been translated into Spanish, German, Korean, and Dutch, and is being translated into Urdu. TARGET has largely been implemented in juvenile justice departments and substance abuse treatment programs.

Last year, the Fords retired from the company, but three employees kept it going as Advanced Trauma Solutions Professionals.

“We weren’t ready to say goodbye to this work,” Katy Reid, Advanced Trauma Solutions Professionals CEO, says.

Reid teamed up with Kami Ochoa, ATS Professionals CFO, and Christine Kopcyk, ATS Professionals COO. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic halting travel, ATS Professionals quickly worked to develop online training protocols that allow people the flexibility to work at their own pace.

“Thanks to COVID we really had to put on our thinking hats and get creative about how we deliver these services,” Reid says.

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