

Spirituality Resilience Training as a Method of Treatment in Morally Injured Veterans



Nathan A. Guyton, Vishal J. Thakkar, & Timothy M. Barth
Department of Psychology, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX



Background

- **Moral injury: Acting or failing to act in a manner inconsistent with one's moral code (Shay, 1994).**
- **Shame, as can be due to unethical actions, leading to self-shame and demoralization (Litz et al., 2009)**
- **There is a distinction between moral injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.**
- **Importance lies in veterans' ability to reintegrate themselves into civilian life after returning from deployment.**
- **Many different factors of moral injury that can be studied (e.g., perceived stress, relating to others, life satisfaction).**
- **Objective: See how a spirituality resilience training program can help veterans with moral injury, specifically in post-traumatic growth and perceived stress.**

Method and Procedure

- **Demographic Questionnaire**
- **Veterans either went through the SRT program ($n = 49$) or did not go through training ($n = 13$)**
- **Completed battery of 21 validated measures, one week apart (before and after training)**
 - **MIES (Nash et al., 2013)**
 - **PTGI (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996)**
 - **PSS (Cohen, Kamrack, & Mermelstein, 1983)**
- **Spirituality Resilience Training (SRT) built as a 60-hour program, led by peer facilitators**
- **Activities include individual reflection, keeping a diary, group discussion, outdoor exposure, writing letters, mindfulness techniques**

Scales of Interest

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I saw things that were morally wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I am troubled by having witnessed others' immoral acts.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I acted in ways that violated my own moral code or values.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I am troubled by having acted in ways that violated my own morals or values.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I violated my own morals by failing to do something that I felt I should have done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I am troubled because I violated my morals by failing to do something I felt I should have done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I feel betrayed by leaders who I once trusted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I feel betrayed by fellow service members who I once trusted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I feel betrayed by others outside the U.S. military who I once trusted.	1	2	3	4	5	6

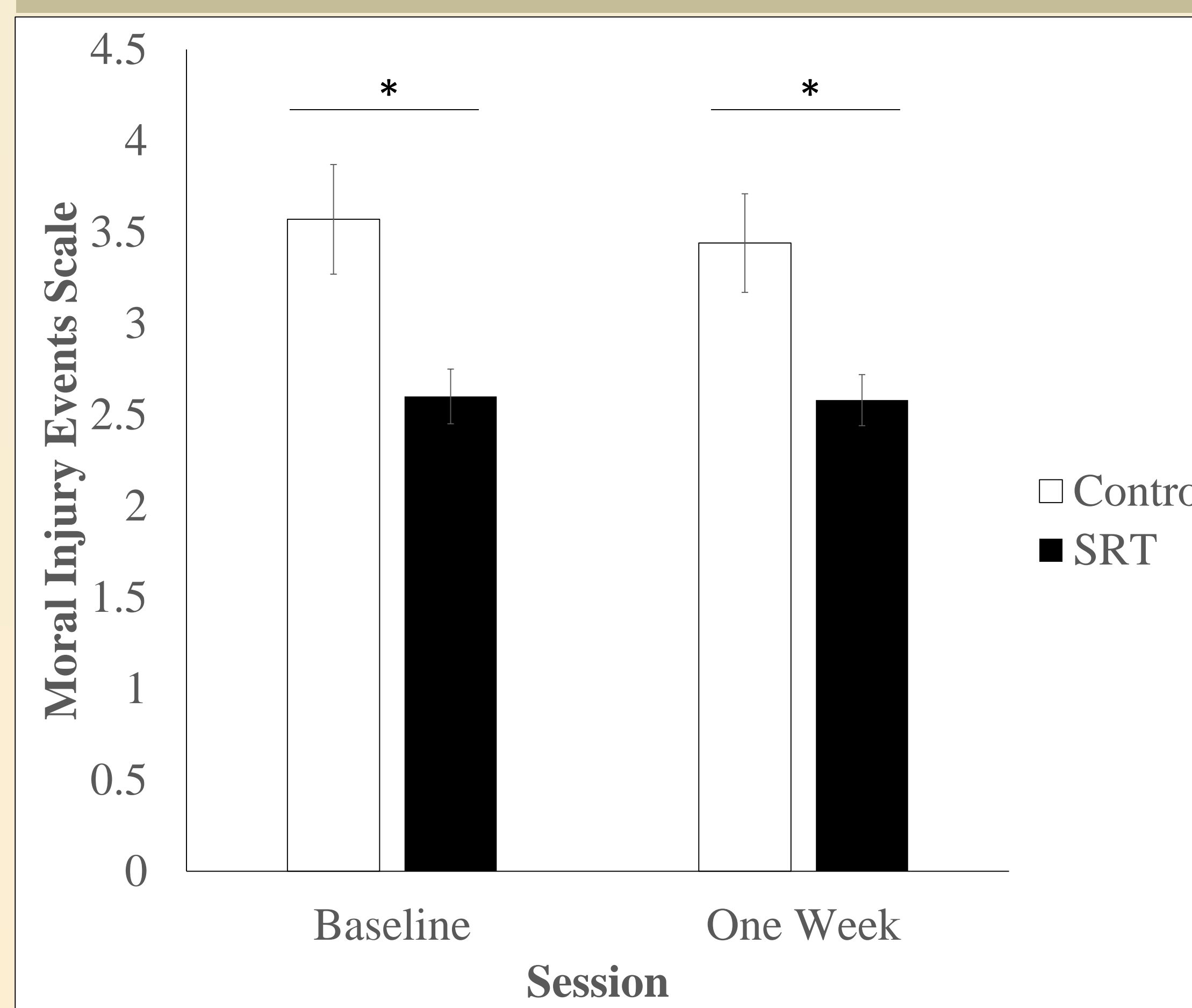
Indicate for each of the statements below the degree to which this change occurred in your life as a result of the crisis/disaster, using the following scale.
0 = I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis.
1 = I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my crisis.
2 = I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my crisis.
3 = I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my crisis.
4 = I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my crisis.
5 = I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis.

Possible Areas of Growth and Change	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. I changed my priorities about what is important in life.						
2. I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life.						
3. I developed new interests.						
4. I have a greater feeling of self-reliance.						
5. I have a better understanding of spiritual matters.						
6. I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble.						
7. I established a new path for my life.						
8. I have a greater sense of closeness with others.						
9. I am more willing to express my emotions.						
10. I know better that I can handle difficulties.						
11. I am able to do better things with my life.						
12. I am better able to accept the way things work out.						
13. I can better appreciate each day.						
14. New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise.						
15. I have more compassion for others.						
16. I put more effort into my relationships.						
17. I am more likely to try to change things which need changing.						
18. I have a stronger religious faith.						
19. I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was.						
20. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are.						
21. I better accept needing others.						

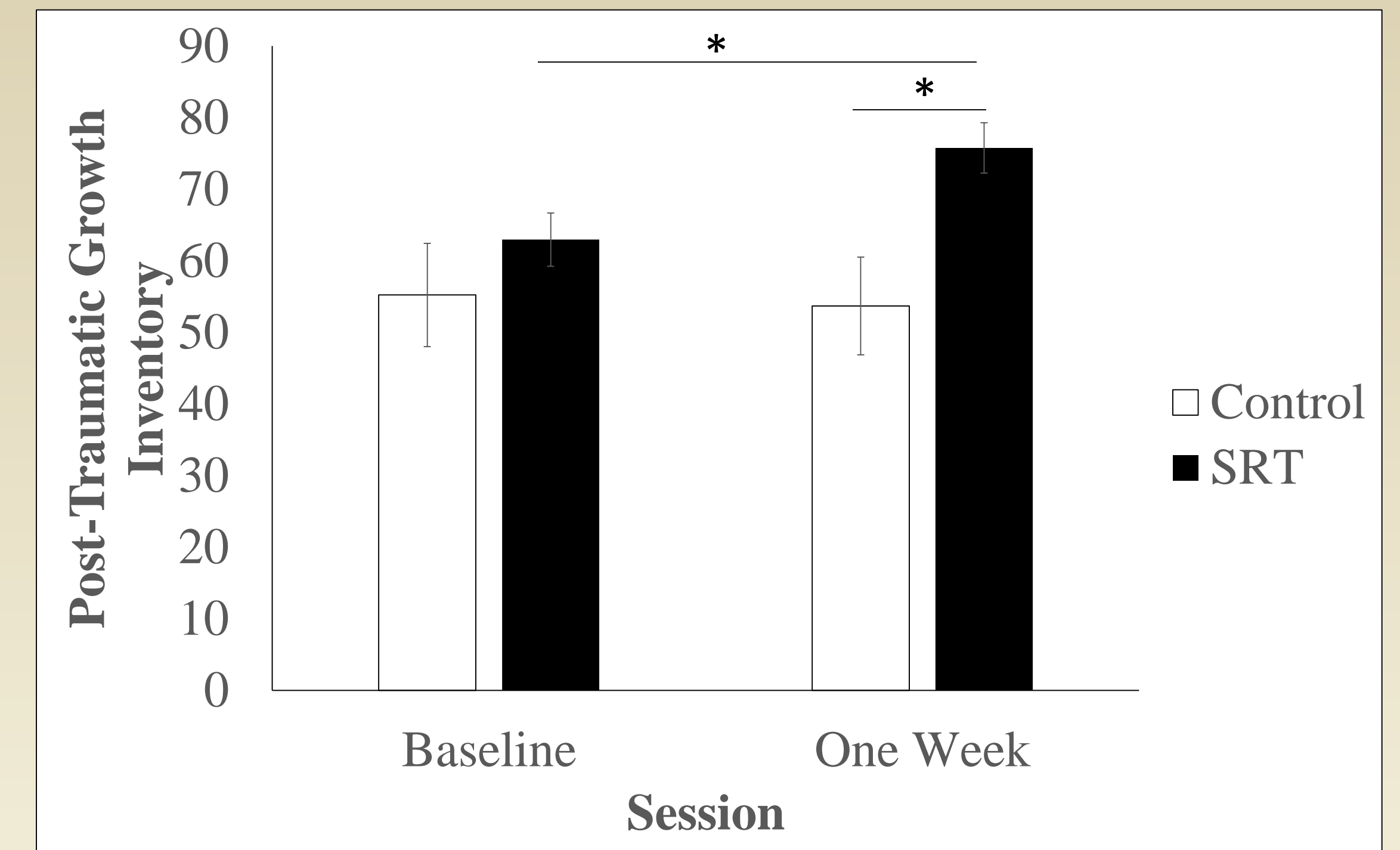
0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	0	1	2	3	4
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0	1	2	3	4
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	0	1	2	3	4
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	0	1	2	3	4
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4

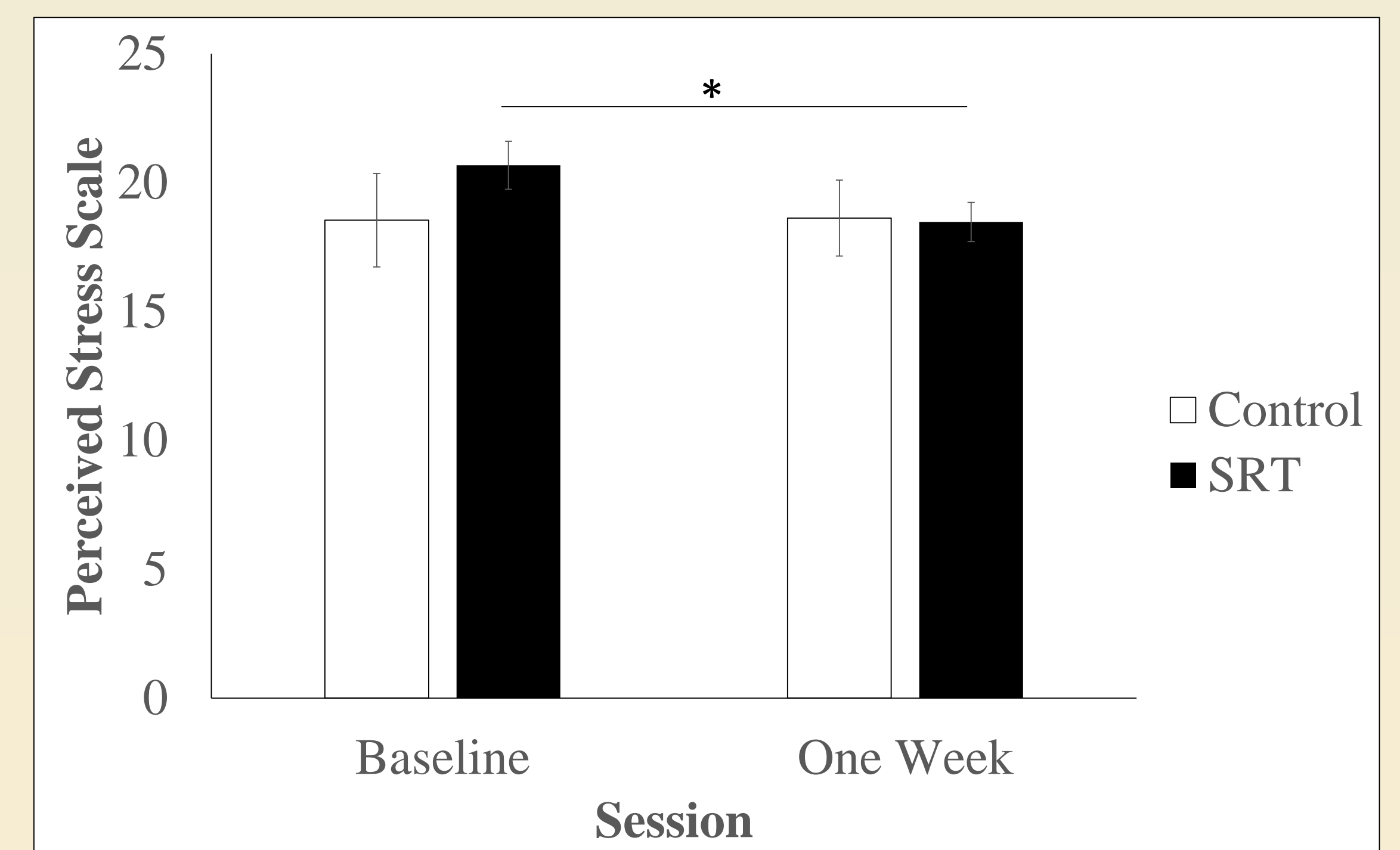
Results



At both baseline and after one week, the SRT group scored higher (i.e., lower scores) than the control group.



After one week, veterans in the SRT group had higher PTGI than the control veterans. SRT group also increased from baseline to after one week.



The veterans in the SRT group decreased perceived stress (lower bars) after the training.

Discussion/Future Directions

- **Complete enrollment for control group veterans for a more clear direction.**
- **Investigate the SRT program further to see what specific parts of the program are more beneficial.**
- **Conduct a follow-up study that has a more focused set of surveys, as some veterans reported fatigue from a 1.5-hour survey.**