

Testimonials - TBI Intervention using HeartMath

"I have been using the emWave® 2 handheld with soldiers returning from combat and have been more than pleased with results. The emWave surpasses all of my expectations, as it is very sensitive, and because of that has proven useful in resource building of safe place/calm place mental relaxation, and to ensure that my clients are emotionally congruent with their words and able to leave sessions more relaxed."

"It is so sensitive that I was taking a client through safe place/calm place after some desensitization work and he was relaxed and 'green' until I mentioned the lake he has in his calm place. I asked him about the lake after the emWave turned red. He reported that he cannot swim. The sensitivity of the emWave picked up on this and he decided to omit the lake from his relaxing mental imagery and get back to a relaxed state. "Thanks for a great tool! It has become an essential part of therapy with the soldiers."

Travis Slonecker, LCWS, Fort Knox, Ky

"I suffered a traumatic brain injury when I was struck by a car while cycling. My experience with TBI and using the HeartMath techniques is remarkable. Due to the acute nature of the injury in the early weeks and months the techniques made an undeniable and profound difference. The swelling in the brain induced rapid heart palpitations that replicated panic attacks. The first doctor said this is normal with a TBI and gave me Xanax for this. The second doctor, a TBI specialist, said "don't take it," but gave me no remedy for the symptoms. The pounding palpitations would wake me up with a startle. I started using the HeartMath techniques when the roll of palpitations would wake me up. I could not use my emWave2 at first as I could not tolerate any noise or lights. I had to rely on my training and what I knew to do!

Not only did the heart settle down, but the throbbing in my head diminished significantly, and I fell gently back to sleep. I continued to do this for weeks & weeks. As I could tolerate more I used my emWave2 without the sound, then later could add the tones. I was syncing up my heart and brain, which impacted my comfort and healing. It was empowering to not only understand it was a mis-firing due to the brain injury/swelling, but to have such an efficient way to calm my system and improve the healing process. I'm now functioning normally and continue to use the HeartMath techniques daily."

Anonymous

Police Officer Shares His Recovery from Brain Injury using HeartMath Techniques

On a cold, rainy December night, Mark, a police officer, experienced a brain injury as a result of his work. He lost consciousness for a brief period of time and had post traumatic amnesia for less than 24 hours. His persistent post-concussion symptoms included: headache, dizziness, sleep disturbance, irritability, changes in personality, memory problems, depression, difficulty in problem solving and diminished attention span. The mild brain injury he sustained was a life altering event—he could no longer serve as a police officer in his pre-injury capacity. The insurance company was eager to get him rehabilitated and so the emWave Desktop and his health professional's sessions were fully covered as stress management

feedback techniques. At their very first session Mark was able to practice getting coherent on the emWave without difficulty, which he purchased to begin practicing at home. Here is what Mark has to say in an interview about how HeartMath techniques have helped him in recovery:

"HeartMath has helped me control my stress and control pain. My TBI was a very stressful and life altering event. HeartMath allowed me to feel positive emotions. Using the HeartMath techniques I am able to be more attentive for longer periods of time. I have the ability to remember many more things than I had before. It has helped me through many projects that I would have otherwise not been able to accomplish. I have the ability to control my emotions much more than I was before HeartMath. Although I still struggle from time to time with depression, I have the tools with HeartMath to diminish the length of episodes. I am a more peaceful man; my family has really seen a difference."

Mark has also been using Quick Coherence to help him stay focused and clear to solve math problems in taking tests as part of his vocational rehabilitation. *"I believe HeartMath has allowed my doctors to discontinue many medications. I went from six medicines down to two since I have been using HeartMath."*

Brain Injury Success Story using HeartMath

During an episode of driving tired I fell asleep at the wheel, with my car cartwheeling several times. The accident resulted in a closed head or diffused axonal injury followed by several years of rehabilitation.

While my brain was healing and rewiring itself I experienced a high level of anxiety which was treated with several medications ranging from tranquilizers to anti-depressants and for a short period an anti-psychotic. Naturally a gregarious person, I was very sad and was losing hope that I would get better.



A family member suggested that I call the Veterans Administration to see if I could meet with their doctors. I was introduced to a world-class team of medical professionals including a top notch occupational therapist who recommended using the HeartMath® Quick Coherence® breathing technique and the emWave® system to help with my anxiety. Within days I was feeling better and within weeks I was able to sleep a full night and wake refreshed, something that I had not experienced in many years. Slowly I began to take back my life.

Each morning I wake to use the emWave program for 15 minutes. I also use the emWave handheld unit before I sleep and at times during the day especially when I feel a wave of stress or anxiety. I am truly blessed having such caring and gifted people help me through what had previously appeared impossible. Thank you HeartMath for being part of my team.

Jasmina Story of Brain Recovery

Never in my wildest imaginings did I ever think I would go on this journey! It just wasn't in my life plan. On March 5, 2001, I was operated on for collapsing at home from an undiagnosed brain tumor. I had begun experiencing myself physically, emotionally and mentally as "falling apart." The surgery was long and complicated. As I was facing the possibility of my own death, I was also thinking "what's it going to be like if I live? Isn't brain intelligence everything, what we rely on, what we know?" I prayed that I be allowed to live, to get a second chance for a whole new life!



The surgery was very successful. However, nothing could have prepared me for the debilitation of brain recovery. I faced many physical and cognitive challenges. I am not able to convey to you the full devastating impact this had on my family.

At ten months into recovery, I seemed to have reached a plateau in my cognitive recovery and was thinking that my brain had healed as much as it could. It was then that I began practicing the HeartMath® System. I learned to use techniques that combine heart focus, breath and positive emotion to create a balanced physiology that is referred to as 'coherence'. With a tool called Quick Coherence® I was able to feel good in the moment, a state I could achieve anytime and place. It was almost like a magic pill! This was especially appealing to me because it was easy to do and non-drug related.

By learning to send feelings that create coherence into my body while breathing through my heart, I was able to gain more control of my physiology than I ever had before. To help me do this I used the emWave® Desktop that allowed me to see in real time the changing rhythms of my heart. I learned to produce more smooth and coherent (balanced) heart rhythms which signaled all parts of my brain and nervous system to operate in sync. This had a tremendous impact on how my brain functioned. The effects were immediate. I felt more peaceful, calm, focused and clear thinking—no small thing in brain injury recovery!

Regular practice of sustaining heart coherence helped me to maintain a balance in my physiology over a longer period of time. This helped stabilize my brain, enabling it to heal faster while I stayed more

mentally and emotionally balanced. I even gained pain control. Over time, under the guidance of my neurologist, I was able to wean off seizure medications and pain meds for migraines.

After seeing how amazingly well I was recovering, my neurosurgeon commented. “Do you know how lucky you are to be having this recovery?” My cognitive recovery has been most profound and successful. It has been exciting and like a miracle to experience the re-wiring of my neural circuitry – almost like I grew another brain! I have re-gained full use of all my cognitive functions. I have a new normal now.

Jasmina, now a HeartMath coach, teaches HeartMath to other brain injury survivors.

Tom’s Story of Recovery

“Tom’s brain injury recovery goals were to use heart coherence tools to help relieve anxiety, to help his attention, memory and reading comprehension, and have more clarity in using the Quick Coherence® technique. He was able to make the heart-brain connection, noticing that he felt less anxiety and stress in his body, felt calmer and able to think more clearly. He liked the feeling of being in a calm neutral feeling place. It gave him a feeling of having more control when so much of his brain injury deficits were beyond his control. Tom was excited to go home and look up the word Neutral in the dictionary.



To help his brain retain the steps of the Quick Coherence technique he needed to say it, write it and read it in his notebook which he carries with him at all times. Tom reported on his second session that he practices getting Neutral a lot during the day and its becoming a habit. His anxiety is better, he feels calmer and he’s sleeping better. His notebook and cue cards were very helpful to remind him to practice—he posted them around his apartment. At our fourth session Tom indicated that he was ready to practice getting coherent on the emWave® PC! It was a challenge for him because of his attention deficit issues to look at the HRV pattern and get coherent. Considering all the challenges he was able to get 20% high coherence in less than 5 minutes!

Tom’s embarrassed feelings about being judged for his brain injury deficits often prevented him from communicating with others and getting the help and information he needs. He often misses going on favorite outings because of this. He was very excited to tell me that this time he recognized his embarrassed feeling, moved through it by getting neutral and was able to make the call to get information about a special outing. Recognizing this shift gave the confidence to do it again when the

embarrassing feeling came up. He became so successful that he was able to advocate for himself and get the speech and language rehabilitation he very much needed.

By Tom's seventh session, he was able to maintain coherence on the emWave Balloon Game while listening to the music, an indication that his multi-tasking attention deficit issues were improving. Gaining more control of his attention issues seemed to be the gateway to using coherence to help improve his memory. In subsequent sessions Tom would practice sustaining coherence hooked up to the emWave PC while playing memory games with a deck of cards. Appreciating himself and his accomplishments became part of his daily coherence practice. His ability to think more clearly and make decisions was getting better. He felt confident enough to consider vocational rehabilitation."