



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **New Live Well Psychiatrist Talks About Anxiety Disorders and Mental Health Stigma Dr. Lowry Spent Decades Treating Nation's Military**

Patrick J. Lowry, MD, a board-certified psychiatrist, has spent 20 years treating service members in the U.S. armed forces. He has seen firsthand the anguish caused by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health conditions. Whether treating soldiers or civilians, he'll be the first to tell you that we all need a little help at times.

Lowry recently joined the Live Well Community Health Center team, where he provides general psychiatry services. The Live Well Centers in Buckner, Carrollton, Concordia, and Waverly are owned and operated by Health Care Collaborative (HCC) of Rural Missouri. PTSD, substance abuse, bipolar disease, depression, anxiety, ADHD (adults and adolescents), autism spectrum disorders, and psychiatric assessments are among the conditions that patients can look to Lowry to treat.

"PTSD and anxiety are among my specialties," he said. "Anxiety is under recognized. It causes so much trouble and doesn't get treated very often. Bipolar gets all the press and public recognition, but I think anxiety is more common and causes more difficulty than recognized."

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, anxiety disorders are [real, serious medical conditions] – just as real and serious as physical disorders like heart disease and diabetes. Anxiety disorders are the most common and pervasive mental disorders in the United States. Forty million, or 18 percent, of Americans experience an anxiety disorder in any given year according to AADA. A few include generalized anxiety disorder or (GAD), social anxiety, specific phobias, and panic disorders. Byproducts of anxiety include obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and PTSD.

Lowry said anxiety is caused by genetics, American culture and chemical imbalance. "Anxiety is a chemical issue that doesn't go away," he said. "Anxiety has tremendous impacts on health...it causes inflammation in the body, decreased sleep which causes a lot of problems and may be one of the worst things you can have because it affects your overall physical health."

For those who know what it's like to live anxious daily, Lowry said it's brain overdrive. "It is very hard on your body to have your brain running a thousand miles an hour all of the time. Anxiety is over thinking. If you have anxiety, you know your mind is bouncing from one thing to another all the time. You can't concentrate, and you can't sleep very well. It's like the engine on a car. How good would it be if you ran it in neutral with your foot on the gas running that engine at 10,000 RPM all of the time?"

Besides seeking treatment from a mental health provider, Lowry is also a proponent of emotional freedom techniques (EFT), also known as meridian tapping. EFT is deemed as a revolutionary treatment method that offers healing from physical and emotional pain and disease. Psychiatric journals describe it as a method of acupuncture without the use of needles. Instead, one's fingertips are used to stimulate energy points on the body – a technique that can be “easily mastered” and performed virtually anywhere. Lowry said this form of therapy can be very beneficial and encourages individuals to google EFT and even read one of the numerous books that have been written about it. Besides EFT, Lowry is also a huge proponent of utilizing exercise as a viable mental health solution. “Exercise is probably the best thing a person can do for their mental health, amazingly enough.”

As for those on the fence about seeking treatment from a mental health provider and those who stigmatize people with mental health challenges, Lowry has a simple rebuttal: “We all have emotional issues.” He said those who are in denial about their own mental health status tend to be more critical of those who are suffering. Lowry calls this reaction formation, which is defined as “the tendency of a represented wish or feeling to be expressed at a conscious level in a contrasting form.”

One can liken reaction formation to homophobia, Lowry explains. A person who has homosexual tendencies, but hasn't come to grips with it, will often vilify others with those same tendencies. “Mental health stigma is similar,” he said. We all have emotional issues, but most of us try to deny them and act like we don't. We have this reaction formation that nobody should be weak or have emotional issues...and so people put down others who have mental health issues.”

Lowry said the best way to have compassion for others suffering with a mental illness is to be cognizant of one's own emotional frailties. “We have to be more open and recognize the we all have emotional issues and would probably be better off if we talked with a psychotherapist. It's about dropping down our walls and admitting that we all are a little bit vulnerable and a little bit weak.”

Lowry, originally from Johnson City Tennessee, received his undergraduate degree in chemistry from East Tennessee State University in 1979. He earned his medical degree in 1983 from Vanderbilt University and completed his psychiatry residency in 1987 from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the last two years of his residency, and then two years at Whiteman Air Force Base. He received his board certifications in psychiatry and neurology. He established his private practices in St. Louis and later in the Kansas City, Missouri area. He then served as an assistant professor of psychiatry, and residency training director at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Lowry was activated in the United States Air Force Reserves and served as a psychiatrist. From 1989 to 1990, he provided psychiatric services for military men and women serving in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Lowry segued from the U.S. Air Force to the U.S. Army in 1993, serving as a psychiatrist until April of this year.

For more than 20 years, Lowry has treated soldier/inmates at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks – many with PTSD. Lowry is now accepting patients at HCC's Live Well Centers. Medicaid, Medicare and all major insurance plans are accepted, as well as a sliding fee scale for those who qualify. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Lowry, visit [LiveWellCenters.org](http://LiveWellCenters.org) to find a Live Well Center near you. To apply for insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace may call Iva Eggert or Shelly Harden at 660.259.2440.