

Below are the three impartially produced graphs depicting results following surveys submitted by the PTSD divers to Dr Neil Kitchiner, Director & Consultant Clinical Lead at Veterans' NHS Wales and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at Cardiff University.

The slight up tick in the first two sets of results is put down to them no longer feeling the vacation effect of being on the island and diving, ie going back to the stresses of the real world.

The graphs show results in the following areas by colour from before the visit, during the visit, (the downward plunge) and then to their monthly surveys after leaving Long Island in The Bahamas

Dark Blue.. (PCL-5)...Post Traumatic checklist, actual level of PTSD, 100% or more being in probable need of
inpatient psychiatric help.

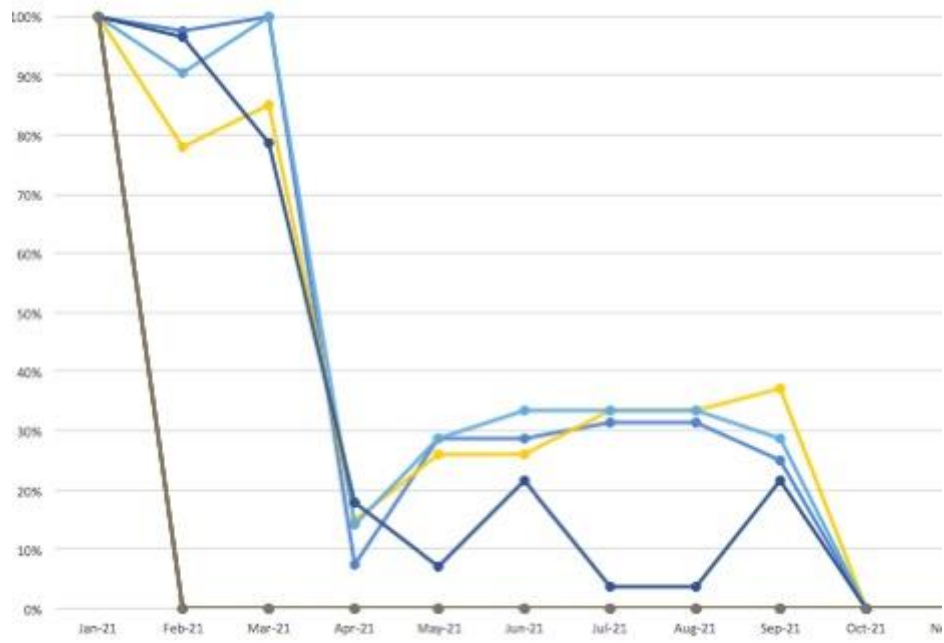
Light Blue..(GHQ-9)...Personal Health Checklist, indicating % of how the sufferer feels about their day-to-day
life, 100 % being a very unhealthy lifestyle.

Yellow..(GAD-7)..... General Anxiety level felt by the sufferer.

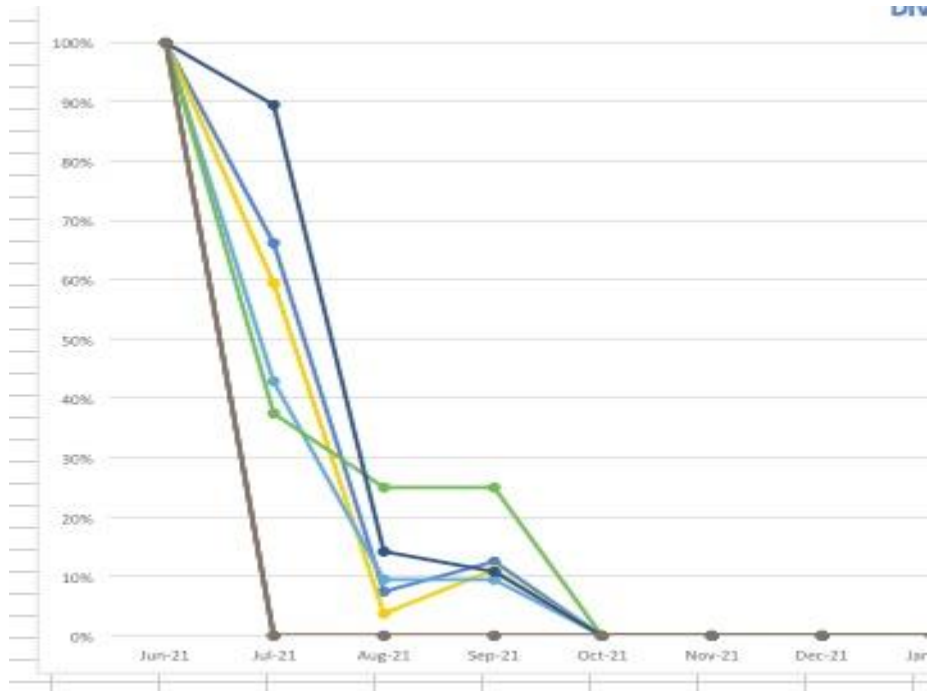
Black..(ISI).....Insomnia Severity Level, 100% shows severe issues of being unable to stay asleep or
getting much sleep at all.

Green..(AUDIT).....Alcohol dependency, 100% indicating a potential for total dependency on alcohol.

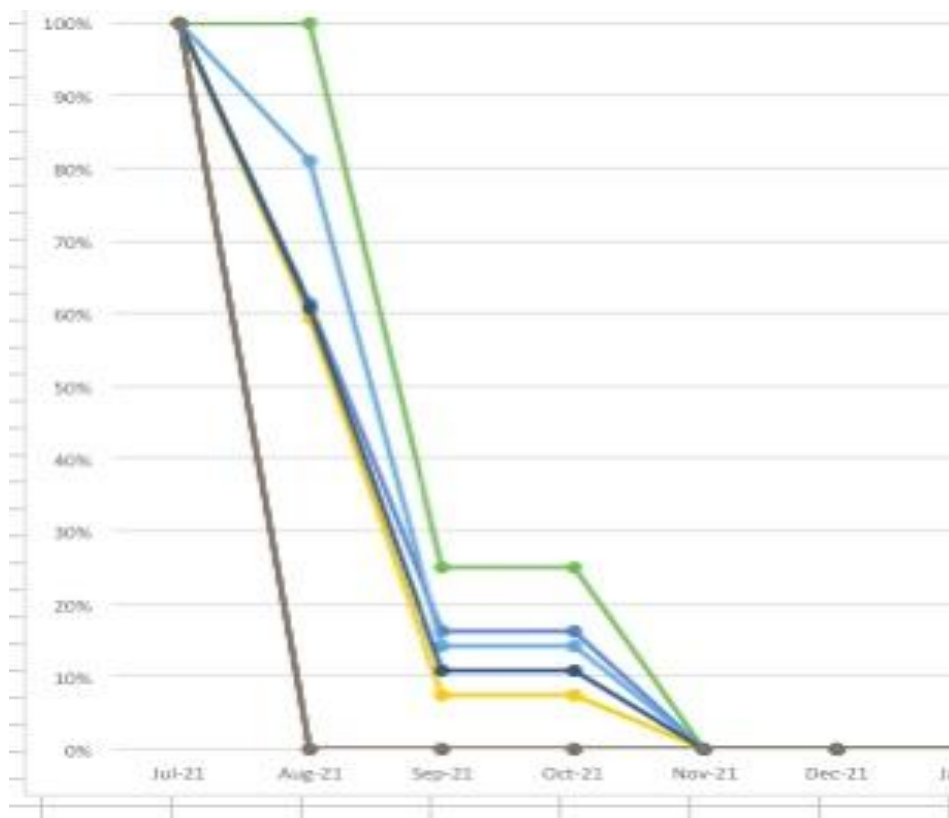
Diver D. (Mid April 2021)



Diver E (August 2021)



Diver F (Mid September 2021)



Introduction.

The diver was selected based on his previous attempt to achieve symptom reduction by going on a weeklong trip with a UK Scuba Charity. This attempt at symptom reduction did not work for him. He said the diving was very useful but the setup of the trip and the lack of a promised "Buddy network " afterwards, tipped him over the edge; using his words. He has not worked for the last year. It was decided to see if a one on one trip might work for him? Flights were very generously donated by a friend of mine, economy out, First Class home!! Some of the other necessary funding was found but there was a substantial shortfall which I paid. I do not charge for my time, equipment or expertise.

Additional information

The Diver is an Ex Royal Anglian Soldier who then transferred to the Army Medical Corps. He has completed 7 operational tours in his 17-year Army career and has

considerable combat experience. His PTSD manifested itself in constant anxiety, and a feeling of never being relaxed as if he always has to be on watch and aware, which in his words is “extremely exhausting”

The Diving

Day 1. a shakedown dive was completed to a maximum depth of 33 ft (10 m). This was to achieve perfect buoyancy as most of the dives were completed in Deans Blue Hole which is 663 ft deep (202 metres). The next dive was completed to a maximum of 60 ft (18 m) to establish the geography of the Blue Hole for further diving. Diver reported feeling very relaxed and not as anxious as on the trip over.

Day 2. A single dive to a maximum of 90 ft (27 m) to establish a “work up protocol” in order for the diver to attain a maximum depth of 130 ft (40 metres) during his week. He is a qualified PADI deep diver and has completed this Max depth before. Diver reported feeling a sense of safety and less anxious thoughts.

Day 3. A single dive to a maximum of 120 ft (36 m) to continue the progress to his desired maximum depth. The visibility on this dive was poor due to rough weather. Diver reported that he thought he would be more anxious and concerned about the lack of good viz than he was. In his opinion, taking everything slowly with no agenda other than spending as much time at the depth the dive tables and his dive computer allowed was of great benefit. He felt he achieved something by not being concerned or worried about anything other than the agreed dive plan.

Day 4. A two-dive day, a morning dive to 130 ft which the diver said was euphoric because he could see the circular geology of the Blue Hole from that depth, also 6 large Tarpon fish appeared, and he reported feeling terrific. The second dive was a BSAC skills dive to a maximum of 20 ft that his club training officer asked me to complete (I am a BSAC advanced instructor) this was so he could complete a dive qualification on his return to his club.

Day 5. A single dive to 130 ft, diver reported the same euphoric feeling, with no anxious thoughts. Having full redundancy of a spare scuba tank with two regulators clipped to my gear on every deep dive, the diver said gave him the opportunity to 100% relax. This enabled him to use and enjoy his dive computer watch which I encouraged. He led all of the dives based on our agreed profile, I spent my time on the dives watching him and keeping him safe.

Day 6. Final deep dive also to 130 ft, diver reported the same feelings as above. The boat was launched on this day and a very shallow coral reef dive of 10 ft was completed

to ensure the diver understood how to enter and exit the water from the boat.

Day 7. Final day, 3 Coral reef dives, first one to 60 ft, the next 2 dives to 40 and 33 ft respectively. This allowed the diver to completely relax and use his camera to document the dives. I had used a GoPro in the Blue Hole on earlier days to ensure he would be able to relive some of his experiences on his return home.

All dives incorporated a safety stop of at least 5 minutes but most of the time 10 to 20 mins enjoying the shallow coral reef areas of the Blue Hole rim at 15 to 20 ft.

Summary.

The diver and I consumed very little alcohol during the week, a couple of beers or a glass or two of red wine most nights. There was a large amount of Army style banter being exchanged between us which the diver said he felt was equally as important to his symptom improvement as the diving. He also commented that my asking him to think really happy and joyous thoughts during the dives, especially the deeper ones, contributed to his relaxed feelings and symptom improvement. He spoke to his family on three different occasions during the week via internet video and different family members each time asked him if he had been drinking... ha ha, which to me demonstrated a visible change in him....

Please feel free to forward this report to anyone who might be interested in the divers success. I will report to you monthly about his continued symptom relief or their return. Jim the previous PTSD Diver has now been symptom free for 7 months.

A testimonial from both Jim and Trevor's wives will follow after this report to confirm how the diving helped or did not in their husbands lives, they are the PTSD barometers after all.

Regards



Fraser Bathgate
Adaptive Techniques Coordinator

PADI WORLDWIDE

Diver F – My Journey

Where do I start? Well as I sit here in the airport in Nassau on my way home after a truly remarkable journey, I guess I should start 10 days ago. I never thought much of it really, not about how I was going to write something that could possibly help others, but Kev James a truly remarkable character asked me to just write how I was then, to how I am now, so here goes.

I woke up at my parents' home in East Sussex and hadn't slept well. I was full of anxiety about the coming trip. It was a potential turning point in my life where I could hopefully get rid of some of the demons in my life.

I was a soldier for 23 years and understood the role and lived the life. Moving and sacrifice has always been in my blood and being subservient for the cause and even to my family had been part of me. However, here I was climbing into a car being sent off by my folks and sister, my biggest support group. My other 2 brothers couldn't be there but as a family they are the best and helped me to get to this pivotal moment in my life.

I'm 47 years old, married twice, 2 children, 1.5 divorces and I am now embarking on a journey of a lifetime, and to be honest I was very skeptical. I had Kev from PTSD scuba diving texting me day after day to see how I was doing and tying in all aspects of the journey to make sure I was on my A game and that I had the best possible result. I was unsure of his methods, but he was an old friend of my dad and I had met him a very long time ago, so I was willing to give it a shot. I mean what did I have to lose.

The trip over was uneventful apart from the shock I gave Kev when I was texting him in mid-flight telling him how long I had left and what I was eating for dinner. So, the support was still strong even though I hadn't done anything amazing yet. It was good to know I had that outlet from him.

I landed in Nassau and went into the heat of a sunny afternoon and settled into the hotel that had all been pre-arranged. I had that wave of anxiety again as the uncertainty and realization that, I am here. I had been diving extensively before and had also spoken to a friend of mine who had completed the program and he had said it would blow my mind and cleanse it. I was worried I was a fake or a sham and that there was nothing wrong with me, but I had to trust what I had been told time and again by the Military doctors and even more accurately, those close to me.

Setting out on the connecting flight the next morning I reached Long Island where for the next 9 days I would be worked on by one of the world's best divers in my book. Stepping off the cigar tube of an aircraft which Kev had jokingly teased me that I might need to take up a door gunner's position (my old job) and fight off bandits if required. Typical of an ex PT instructor but it put me at ease none the less.

I walked towards the air head on this small strip of tarmac surrounded by a paradise of palm trees and sand. Behind all the other people waiting for their loved ones I saw the well-built ex PTI waving at me. It was good to see Kev in the flesh and I gave him a hug as we greeted. I knew already I was in good hands. Audrey wasn't there but Kev said she was sorting things out ready for my stay etc., which was ok as it gave me a chance to go through the day's events with him. He knew all of my issues and immediately reassured me of what he thought I needed to do to get the best out of the program. He explained in detail what we were going to do and how the speed was all down to me in terms of what I wanted to try, I was on board 100% and agreed. I knew what I was doing would be classed as dangerous to anyone else who was undertaking this with some other two-bit diver, but I could tell straight away that Kev was on his game. He has done lots of research but didn't claim to be some healing guru, he was up front and honest. Explaining the process in finite points and admitted that doing what he did appeared to be working as he had positive results for all of the 5 people prior to me and was confident that it should be the same for me but only time would tell.

So, before we could do anything I needed to get to my digs. PTSD scuba wants to accommodate the divers before and after the dives allowing for extreme solace and peace to reflect on their experiences. As we pulled up to the one bed villa I was in awe of the level of quality, and after a spot of lunch, we were in the truck again, heading for the beach with the dive gear.

Walking down to the water's edge the beach sprawled out in front of me and stretched left and right as far as the eye could see, with white shell sand that was cool on the feet and clear blue seas. It was truly amazing and for the first time I knew things were going to be ok. I trusted Kev and I knew we were here to ensure he was happy that I was able to conduct myself in the water for the week safely and with confidence. If I hadn't done a lot of diving before I would have had to stay for up to 14 days to learn the basics and gain a qualification. As we entered the water and went through the drills it all came back to me. Kev was happy for a shakedown dive starting at 1 meter and dropping down to 10 meters on a gradual slope to see how it all felt again.

My mouth was dry and the images pouring through my eyes and into my conscious brain gave me such a feeling of self-awareness and joy.

Over the next few days, we went to the big blue hole and dived using the free diver's line for safety, venturing off to explore the "Howland Shelf" at 60 ft (18 meters) on the first day, down to 100 ft (30 meters) on the second, 130 ft (40 meters) on the third, repeating that on the fourth. During these dives I was in a state of either euphoria, slight panic, or reflection, occasionally all three at the same time.

The first day was just to get me used to seeing the vastness of the blue hole and how dark it was as the light very slowly decreased as I went deeper. I sat on the shelf and Kev told me to look around and take it all in. Open your mind and let those happy thoughts come through. It was breathtaking and when I pushed off to return to the surface, I did feel like Peter Pan flying underwater with my happy thoughts propelling me and filling me with feelings I hadn't felt in a very long time.

Kev took me back to the villa each day letting me review my footage from the dive and fill in my journal which I had brought with me to record these events. Then in the evening we would either go out for something to eat or Audrey would kindly cook some fantastic food to make me feel even more at home. Each time we would discuss how I felt and where I felt I wanted to be in order to further my journey on the next day's activities.

On my dive to 130 ft, I came across my first hurdle. As we were fitting the Go Pro to the rope at 80 Ft (25 meters) I started to hyperventilate, panic was coming over me and as I looked around, I couldn't focus on anything. I remembered what Kev had said and to just stay calm, Stop, Think, Breathe, Act, and then I reached out to get his attention. As soon as I touched his shoulder and he looked at me he knew I was in trouble. We locked eyes and he immediately gave me his spare regulator on the safety tank, as at this stage he had no idea what was wrong. I switched it over with no effort as we had practiced this near the surface, but I was still in a state of panic. He gently motioned for the surface, and we went up the line very slowly, his finger hooked in my diving jacket. On reaching the surface I told him it was a panic attack and that I freaked out a bit at the depth. He responded with reassurance and praise for the way that I had handled the situation so well. At this stage there was no mention of going back down there! I suggested we do what we came to do and get back down and get it done! Happy with that we descended back into the depths and eventually reached our target of 130 ft. Here we focused on my breathing, and I slowly took in the environment. Down at this depth you are at the mercy of your equipment, hence the redundancy of extra tanks and regulators. Much like in space

if you make a big mistake, you could hurt yourself or worse. My mind's focus was sharp and on the elements of my life that had positive meaning to me. I pushed all the bad crap away and out of my mind. It was no longer relevant! I wanted to see my kids and family pleased that I was well again, so come on brain work the magic!

On the occasion we were at our deepest depth, I looked around and up and saw majesty in its purity, a view to open my mind to the possibilities and future happiness for me and my kids, and how they would love to experience this view one day. I was looking up at the world from inside it instead of just being on it.

Each time we went in I was reminded that we should be cautious, even as we ventured from the line and moved over to the cave entrance in the wall where you felt so insignificant it was euphoric and mind blowing. I was a small piece of the puzzle and at this point I realized that I didn't need to worry about the little things all I had to worry about was me and to try to improve how I felt.

Kev on the fifth day took me to the coral reef in his boat. It was a day of 2 dives that would be no deeper than 60 ft but would allow me to see the contrast of open water and close forming coral reef. A treat for all the hard work I had put in, and great footage.

My final dive in the hole came on the Friday and I needed to make the most of it. I was so much more relaxed with diving now and didn't even notice two barracuda in the water shadowing us as we went about our business. As I got out of the water for the last time and looked back at that previously scary hole, all I saw now was a portal that released me from my mind's inability to process my issues, a kind of brain reset. Astonishingly all it took was diving with a friend to depth and soaking up as much nitrogen as we could to get rid of the brain fog.

I was like a new-born man. Giddy at the dive and the experience. Thankful for the opportunity to be able to sample the Bahamas unlike I would ever have imagined. This was my turning point; this was my new start. And as I boarded that plane, I looked back knowing that he was right! It was all as easy as sitting on the sandy ledge at 60ft (18 metres) and letting nature do the rest.

So here I am in Nassau about to board my homeward leg happy in the fact that I am happier, stronger, more enlightened about how the process works and extremely thankful to Kev, Audrey, Magi and Jim for the opportunity and support in making this happen for me. Also so thankful to my family who even now are continuing to support this worthy cause.

Diver F.....