

Energy Psychology Techniques for Reducing Trauma & Addiction

Presenter: Tricia Chandler, PhD, MA, LPC, MAC

Are there particular considerations when working with underserved populations and what can we do?

A: EFT and TFT have been used with a variety of populations. One study that was been done in Rwanda with victims of genocide 20 years after it occurred taught the TFT technique to children and people in prison with amazing efficacy to eliminate residual emotional trauma responses. Dr. Caroline Sakai was the clinical psychologist that returned to Rwanda seven times with her last visit in 2018.

Have you ever had a time where you retraumatized the patient? How were you able to get back on track?

A: When the client initially holds in mind a trauma it is done with minimal discussion and only to get the client to that emotional response. The tapping approach effectively reduces the emotional charge on the memory without retraumatizing the individual. If the initial tapping round does not result in bringing the emotional response down to a 0 or 1 from the initial rating up to 10 more rounds of tapping or done until the client feels no emotional charge on the memory of trauma.

Are there special considerations for assisting underserved populations, if so, what can we do?

A: These energy psychology approaches are very useful with underserved populations because the techniques are easily taught and learned for self-care application whenever emotional stress or anxiety crops up.

Have you used this method in SUD sector?

A: Yes. I have used energy psychology techniques for years, specifically to help reduce anxiety and trauma responses so that the individual can reduce triggers and cravings, while learning recovery protocols.

Do you have any articles that say acupuncture is evidenced based?

A: The National Institute of Health determined that in 1998. NIH Consensus Development Panel on Acupuncture. (1998). Acupuncture: NIH Consensus Conference. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280(17), 1518-1524.

Thought filled therapy can be connected to the Freud's views on psychoanalysis?

A: Freud believed that what was held in the unconscious mind of trauma and abuse could be brought to consciousness through free association. Thought Field Therapy uses more of an Eye Movement Desensitization Regulation approach of the individual simply thinking of a trauma or anxiety producing thought and using a physical approach to releasing the emotional triggers to the memory or thought. The individual does not have to work to release the memory or delve into any specifics, and the techniques are quicker than Exposure techniques used in CBT.

Can tapping techniques be reasonably taught to a group of clients in outpatient addiction treatment setting? (Is this effective or recommended?)

A: Yes. As the counselor working in a group setting clients can be taught the techniques and the counselor can set up the word sequences to address triggers, trauma, cravings, and anxiety. The clients then can use the technique in a self-help approach as a homework assignment.

Is there a way to see the tapping technique applied or is there a resource where we could see the technique applied, maybe a recording?

A: Absolutely. I recommend the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology to learn all about these approaches and get training certification in them if one desires to use them in clinical practice.

www.energypsych.org

Would you recommend completing a certification or training through ACEP to understand more in this field? I'm getting my master's in psychology focused on addictions and have a background in teaching Yoga...I think these techniques would be really beneficial to understand for future clients, but I'm not sure where to start so that I can be competent in the field.

A: Absolutely. I recommend the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology to learn all about these approaches and get training certification in them if one desires to use them in clinical practice.

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What delineates the difference between EFT and TFT?

A: Thought Field Therapy was developed first Dr. Callahan in the 1980's and he did not use statements along with tapping. There were many different ways to tap for different issues. Emotional Freedom Technique developed by Gary Craig in the 1990's added using phrases of identifying the emotions and adding self-acceptance comments to begin changing the internal negative self-talk of the client.

I have a patient who's been on relapse since the lockdown, she was having GAD and panic attacks. Since I can't meet with her, she has been taking substances again. Any suggestions to pull her back once I can meet her again?

A: Emotional Freedom Techniques can be used to reduce the symptoms of GAD and panic attacks. This technique could be taught to her via a Zoom meeting. Gary Craig (the original developer of EFT) still puts up YouTube videos on the techniques as well that could be supportive of her continuing to use the technique on her own.

Do you find your reiki practice to be helpful protection from vicarious trauma?

A: I do use it to protect myself from taking on others' trauma. I have also sent Reiki long distance to many clients that help them release trauma responses.

I wanted to know, like in hypnotherapy, should the client be having a certain level of suggestibility for these energy psychology techniques to work? What is the screening that you utilize while you deal with the clients?

A: No this is not suggestibility. This is actually a biological response of soothing the polyvagal nerve that goes from the heart up to the brain stem and limbic brain and gives the message to the hippocampus and amygdala that it is safe to calm down. One way to test the client for an issue is using kinesiology that will confirm an emotional response. From the standpoint of screening a client for the usefulness of the using EFT if there is evidence of emotional trauma, anxiety, cravings, and triggers I would offer the approach as a way to increase emotional regulation and releasing distress.

Can we incorporate Healing Touch similarly to the other techniques mentioned?

A: I am not as familiar with Healing Touch as a modality, but you can find more about these techniques through the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology. www.energypsych.org

Do you consider addiction is also connected with Hedonism? More or much more than trauma?

A: I have worked with clients with co-occurring disorders and significant childhood trauma throughout my 27 year clinical work. I view addiction more as self-medicating psychic and emotional pain. I also adhere to the belief that Adverse Childhood Experiences are very much the gateway issue to developing substance use disorders (CDC, Felitti et al., 1998).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Kaiser Permanente (1995-1997). Adverse childhood experiences.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/about.html>

Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P. & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *American Journal of Prevention Medicine*, 14(4), 245-258.

Is there a way to minimize re-traumatizing clients while still using an effective "set up" statement?

A: The client only has to get in touch with the emotional connection to the anxiety or trauma without really delving into the painful memory in detail. The act of tapping while working with the set up statement will reduce the stress from the polyvagal nerve in the heart and will send that message to the brain stem and hippocampus and amygdala in the mesolimbic brain and those areas of the brain will effectively come out of the hyperemotional state.

Is kinesiology & EFT evidence-based treatment by SAMHSA?

A: In 2016 Thought Field Therapy was validated by NREPP (the National Repertory of Evidence Based Practices and Procedures, a division of SAMHSA) as an evidence-based treatment. In 2017 the US Veterans Administration added EFT to List 2, approving it as a "safe therapy".

How does one protect themselves from vicarious trauma?

A: Energy practices that mindfully close one's energy field to absorbing others' trauma can include using EFT on oneself after listening to others if triggered, mindfulness practices, grounding one's energy after each session by walking outside, and other considerations.

Is there a risk to using these methods without any further education on them?

A: The more training one has clinically in the approaches the more effective one will be using them with clients. Using the techniques as part of self-care can be taught to self without any risks.

Is this type of therapy covered by most insurance companies?

A: Undoubtedly not at this time.

Can you speak to the role of the vagus nerve in energy psychology and addiction? Is this the same system energy psychology intervention utilize?

A: Yes. The polyvagal nerve runs from the heart into the brain stem and mesolimbic brain. When an energy psychology approach is used like EFT the polyvagal nerve is the first to calm down into a relaxation response. The nerve sends a message to the brain stem and mesolimbic brain, which leads to the hippocampus and amygdala calming down. As these parts of the mesolimbic brain also are related to the reward center of the brain calming the amygdala and hippocampus will ultimately soothe the reward center of the brain from cravings and triggers.

McCarty, R. & Shaffer, F. (2015). Heart rate variability: New perspectives on physiological mechanisms, assessment of self-regulatory capacity, and health risk. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine: Improving Healthcare Outcomes Worldwide*, 4, 46-61.

What resources would you recommend for a counselor to explore and train for energy work such as described with tapping?

A: The Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology is the organization promoting the scientific research in these therapies and is the best place to learn more and get certified in these approaches. www.energypsych.org

Which of these techniques are evidenced-based?

A: Both EFT and TFT have been considered evidence-based by SAMHSA since 2016, and by the Veteran's Administration since 2017. Veteran providers have seen success in using EFT with veterans in reducing the emotional charge to PTSD symptoms.

Is there an age limit for whom this can be used/successful?

A: No. This technique was taught to children in Rwanda with no problem for years by Dr. Caroline Sakai. Not only can young children learn to use the techniques they can become proficient in teaching them to others.

Are there any resources/books you recommend on this topic

A:

Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology. www.energypsych.org

Feinstein, D. (2018). Energy psychology: Efficacy, speed, mechanisms. *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, 15(5), 1-15.

Mollon, P. (2007). Thought Field Therapy and its derivatives: Rapid relief of mental health problems through tapping on the body. *Primary Care and Community Psychiatry*, 12(3-4), 123-127.

While using the tapping technique are we to use only one hand and one meridian at a time? Or can both hands be used simultaneously?

A: You can use only one hand or two if so desired. It is not necessary to tap under both eyes, but tapping on one meridian site at a time is needed.

Are these approaches helpful for personality disorder struggles? Are there suggestions to engaging in these therapy techniques for this sub-group?

A: The approach works on reducing emotional triggers and the charge to memories of trauma, or on anxiety levels, so I would see it as a helpful approach for these issues even in those with personality disorders.

Do you use bilateral stimulation and when is it's use most effective?

A: Yes EFT and TFT are considered to be like EMDR as bilateral stimulation and helps to reduce the emotional charge from those trauma memories. It is effective immediately after a trauma, as in a car accident, and has been used years later with veterans with PTSD to reduce that emotional charge to trauma memories.

Can energy psychology techniques be used for somatic symptoms?

A: Somatic symptoms that are due to anxiety and emotional dysregulation could be treated with these techniques.

How long does it take for clients to experience benefits of EFT? Are the benefits long lasting or do they have to have additional sessions?

A: Typically research has indicated that in as few as 8 sessions the emotional charge from trauma memories can be eliminated. The benefits have been noted as permanent in many people and the individuals having learned the techniques can use them in a self-help approach for any issues that come up in the future.

Are these techniques generally covered by health insurance?

A: I am unaware of health insurance that covers these approaches. They can be used as an adjunct therapy in addition to billable approaches.

I would love to try these techniques, but how do you increase buy-in for skeptical person to actually try this in a counseling session?

A: I would suggest that you check out the resources from the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology as to the many ways that these techniques can be introduced to a client. www.energypsych.org

Is energy psychology used with children? Since some children are exposed to trauma via domestic violence, do their parents tend to accept getting counseling for the child?

A: I would think this would be an excellent approach to working with children that have been exposed to trauma. Parents providing approval for counseling for their child in domestic violence cases may be difficult despite the type of therapeutic approach. A child's self-efficacy would raise with knowing how to reduce their own emotional responses to the trauma they have experienced.

How is energy psychology being used virtually?

A: There are a plethora of YouTube videos that demonstrate the techniques and how to use them. Gary Craig who developed EFT still has videos available online.

Which specific holistic integrative medicine-oriented self-care techniques are most effective to assist in reducing vicarious trauma?

A: I recommend mindfulness approaches, using TFT or EFT on one's self, taking mega doses of vitamins like B-12, D3, and others to support neurotransmitters, grounding one's energy through being in nature, and improving one's sleep patterns.

Are there any concerns re: Psychology licensure in terms of touching patients/clients?

A: These energy psychology techniques do not require that the counselor touch the client. The counselor teaches the client how to do the techniques and assists in developing the set up dialog.

How accepting have clients been towards this type of therapy?

A: Those who have been introduced to them and see the results are quite accepting of them.

Didn't this come from Roger Callahan which was at first (c. 1991) the Callahan Method that became TFT and just keeps changing names but initially was Roger's daytime TV demonstrations rather than research?

A: Callahan created TFT in the 1980s and wrote the book the Five Minute Phobia Cure in 1985. When the techniques were first being developed and was demonstrated to the public. However since that time there has been over 50 randomized controlled trials and 50 + pre-post outcome studies that have shown the scientific efficacy of the techniques.

"Every day in every way I get better and better", is what Coue used (famous 19th century hypnotist) - so is this not a hypnotic suggestion paired with a distraction rather than hypno-induction?

A: No, this is not a hypnotic suggestion as the actual biological process of the tapping soothes the polyvagal nerve in the heart that sends messages to the brain stem and mesolimbic brain (specifically the hippocampus and amygdala to calm itself). Thought Field Therapy uses no dialog, only tapping and bilateral stimulation to produce these calming results. Emotional Freedom Technique adds dialog to also help the individual to develop self-acceptance.

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