

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy and Resource Tapping (EMDR) in the Treatment of Chronic Pain

Presenter: Michael Bricker, MS, CADC-2, LPC

Do you know of any research on the use of ACT or EFT with tinnitus?

A: I do not, but the ACBS website may have what you are looking for. (While you're there, sign up for membership. As little as \$10 will get you more stuff than you could ever use!)

[ACBS | Association for Contextual Behavioral Science](https://contextualscience.org/acbs)

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Can you share your self-relaxation handout technique that you said is more gentle than progressive muscle relaxation?

A: A copy of the relaxation script is available on the webinar website for download and use without limitation. Acknowledgement is appreciated.

Do you have therapeutic responses that encourage patients to try these interventions with common resistant statements given by patients/clients?

A: Personally, I don't have a litany of "bumper stickers" that I use. (Well, OK, I do have a few...) But the key – as you stated – is "encouragement"! In ACT we try to invite the client into the experience, rather than impose interventions. To quote Scott Miller: "there are no resistant clients – only resistant THERAPISTS!" So we just acknowledge that what they've been doing hasn't worked as well as they hoped, and would they be interested in trying something different? Straight-up Motivational Interviewing – roll with resistance and develop discrepancy.

You said, "Emotions are not..." but forgot what the answer was.

A: If I remember correctly, it might have been "emotions are not events." It goes along with the idea that "feelings are not facts...they are just information." The idea is to help the client look at themselves from OUTSIDE the experience. For instance, "I'm a person having the experience of pain" rather than "I have chronic pain." It's a subtle distinction, but the cognitive shift is that "I have pain, pain doesn't have me."

For the experiential exercise, with all the various tapping points, are the areas alternately tapped right & left, or are you tapping right & left simultaneously?

A: Excellent question, and I wasn't very clear. For the EFT Tapping exercise that begins with the eyebrows, you are tapping with both fingers together at the same time. I may have mentioned that, on the tapping exercise that is very specific to pain, I did try tapping 25 times on the GAMUT point of each hand – instead of 50x on one hand. The bilateral influence didn't seem to make a difference one way or the other.

Has EFT been named an evidenced based practice?

A: EFT is recognized by the APA. The “parent” Thought-Field Therapy is listed in NREPP

Clinical EFT as an Evidence-Based Practice for the Treatment of Psychological and Physiological Conditions

Dawson Church
National Institute for Integrative Healthcare, Fulton, USA
Email: dawsonchurch@gmail.com

Psychology

2013. Vol.4, No.8, 645-654

Published Online August 201

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Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) has moved in the past two decades from a fringe therapy to wide- spread professional acceptance. This paper defines Clinical EFT, the method validated in many research studies, and shows it to be an “evidence-based” practice.



Thought Field Therapy for the Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms

Program Description

Thought Field Therapy for the Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms is based on the Thought Field Therapy (TFT) program developed by Roger Callahan in the 1990s. Since its development, the basic treatment protocol has been translated into 14 languages and implemented internationally. The treatment protocol can be used in self-help, peer-to-peer, and counseling settings. It is a psychotherapeutic program that uses acupressure (stimulation of acupuncture points by physical touch) to provide relief from psychological distress. Practitioners develop tapping sequences for individuals and their specific problems and use a testing and affirmation protocol to apply the treatment with their fingers on specific parts of the body of the person being treated. The treatment, delivered in sessions, is thought to influence the body's bioenergy field by tapping on these points, located along “energy meridians.”

Training in the Algorithm Level of TFT, which is used to treat posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), is taught during in-person, 1-to-2-day trainings or is available through home or online training. There are no specific educational requirements or experience necessary to be trained to implement TFT. Training and technical assistance are provided through the TFT Foundation USA; Callahan Techniques, Ltd.; or through the Thought Field Therapy Center of San Diego.

Have you come across any of the literature that compares ACT or EMDR to just mindfulness practice such as mindful meditation? I am wondering what the comparison would be, I would assume that there may not be any improvement over the general mindfulness practice.

A: Actually the research supports a robust difference, because ACT is at its core a BEHAVIORAL intervention. To paraphrase Steven Hayes: “ACT is not intended to help people think better thoughts or feel better feelings. The intent is to expand the repertoire of effective and adaptive behaviors by using mindfulness practices.”

Again, the ACBS website will give you more info that you could use in 3 careers!

How do you "sell" psychotherapy to a chronic pain patient? My experience has been that the patient is offended, as I don't carry a Mental Health dx, and feel the referring MD is saying "it's all in your head?"

A: Easy – I don't try to "sell" anything, let alone "help for your mental illness!" (I wouldn't sign up for that either!) I may say something like "a lot of folks – and lots of research – show that relaxation and mindfulness can really help turn down the volume on pain. Would you be willing to try something?" Straight-up Motivational Enhancement Therapy, I just don't tell 'em.

Seems these might be helpful with psychological pain. What do you think?

A: Absolutely! At its core, the discomfort caused by pain is as much psychological as physical. And if we're talking about emotional pain (vs. physical), it's even MORE useful... that's what it's designed for!

Can you share the resources showing the scientific studies behind these therapies?

A: Try the ACBS website – you can search by disorder

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Where can one get further training in ACT?

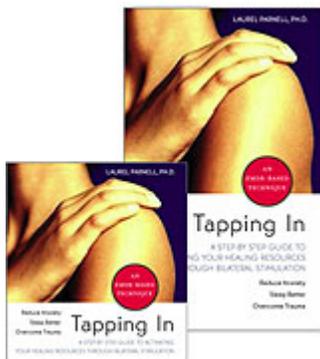
A: ACT has enjoyed exponential growth in the past 10-15 years. The ACBS website can point you in the direction of trainings in your area, the national & international conferences, groups of clinicians in your State who use ACT in their practice, etc. As I mentioned in the webinar, there is no "ACT Certification" – we're a pretty free-floating and inclusive bunch!

You mentioned a CD that you said was worth buying. What was it called and where do you get it?

A: There's a picture of it on slide # 29 – I apologize for not having the full info on the slide itself. Here 'tis:

Tapping In

A Step-by-Step Guide to Activating Your Healing Resources Through Bilateral Stimulation



Never has it been so effortless to activate your inner power and resiliency than with the remarkable technique known as "resource tapping." Dr. Laurel Parnell's book and companion audio program Tapping In make available for the first time self-guided instruction in this revolutionary EMDR-based tool. With step-by-step instruction in bilateral stimulation (a core component of EMDR), Tapping In teaches this clinically recognized system for tapping both sides of the body to release emotional and physical distress, build resilience, aid in healing, and calm the body on a deep physiological level.

Order book and audio CD:

- [Order now from Sounds True](#)