Science writer Moyra Bremner explores how ‘tapping’ – in the form of EFT and TFT – is changing lives in hours, not years.

Most forms of psychotherapy are expensive and lengthy. Moreover, even the best psychotherapy may fail to heal deep emotional wounds and do nothing for physical ill. However, two innovative psychotherapies, which use tapping on acupuncture points, have been achieving results that far exceed anything yet achieved by more conventional therapies. And one has achieved such remarkable results, with both emotional problems and serious medical conditions, that it is taking the world by storm.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

‘John’ was repeatedly beaten at a boarding school for young children with learning problems. In his teens, he was kidnapped and held for ransom under threat of death. Traumatized, he later put a gun in his mouth, pulled the trigger and died – briefly. Resuscitated, medicated and let out in a fog, he began talking. Then, in prison, psychologist Dr Caroline Sakai noticed he had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and gave him Thought Field Therapy (TFT) – which uses tapping on acupuncture points (see box, p13).

PTSD is one of the hardest conditions to treat. Yet he saw this tapping therapy changed his life. ‘I don’t know how this therapy works, but it really works. Before it, nothing mattered to me. Nothing seemed real. Everything seemed like in a movie... I’ve been walking around in a fog all my life. And now, it’s like stepping out of a fog into a not bright sunny day.’

‘My anxiety has disappeared, my depression has disappeared. With depression I used to write backwards. I don’t think I’ve done that for months. I used to have panic attacks — the author has disappeared too. I had chest pains and used to have nightmares. Those have disappeared, and it has helped me control pain... Medication just put me deeper in fog, but this has really helped me.’

He isn’t alone in that response. When 50 Rwandan children were given TFT by Dr Sakai and other therapists, they responded even faster. These children had seen their parents murdered in the genocide which left over 800,000 dead. Yet, after only three 20-60 minute sessions the children’s symptoms of PTSD fell by 60-75 per cent.2

Restoring soldiers

Such swift recovery from severe PTSD is normally impossible. Yet remarkably, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), which combines tapping on acupuncture points with words based on NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming), achieved an even better result with American soldiers that strongly impressed the US military.

The US government estimates that one in three US veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan suffer the flashbacks, nightmares, chronic pain and other symptoms of PTSD. Hearing this, Gary Craig, creator of EFT, obtained permission for himself and other top EFT therapists to offer it to traumatized soldiers.

In a striking film of this project (available on the web) some soldiers, before treatment, seemed like the walking dead. Others were a danger to their children. And many were using drugs and alcohol to escape flashbacks like those: ‘I want to pull him into another world and pull out half of him.’

A small child was walking up to the post and he just blew up! Right there in front of me. There was blood everywhere and screaming... and people looking at me like “You’re the reason that child’s dead.”’

‘I can see it. I can smell it. And I can taste it. It’s like it’s here. It’s nothing but blood and body parts everywhere.’

Such multiple, extreme traumas are notoriously hard to treat. Yet, after only six sessions of EFT therapy the men changed dramatically. One who, after EFT, stopped institutionalizing himself with drink and drugs, said, ‘Before I did EFT, for me to say “I’m happy” would be weird, but I say it 10 times a day now.’

Another: ‘I haven’t felt this good drinking. I haven’t felt this good taking, creating.’

A third had threatened to shoot his children and violently before EFT. Yet, after EFT he held his wife’s hand tenderly, clearly at ease.

A father, almost in tears, said, ‘I never could have imagined she’d change, the complete resolution of all his pain and problems. I never could have imagined him coming back to us.’

Tests by psychologist Dr Kowalski.
Church confirmed these remarkable, and astonishingly rapid, changes. After only six EFT sessions the men’s PTSD scores had dropped to around normal. As many of the men had also been traumatized in childhood as well as in the war that was doubly remarkable.

Widening uses

Positively, some people suggest that these therapies only work because people believe in them—or in the therapist. However, the traumatized soldiers didn’t expect tapping therapy to work. Moreover, Steve Wild’s published research on phobias also showed that EFT can work very well, even when people least expect it.

He chose people who had been diagnosed with a long-standing phobia for creatures such as rats, mice and cockroaches, and never expected to conquer their fear. They were just told about EFT and given a 30-minute session of EFT, before being offered a chance to meet the creatures they feared. To their surprise most of them found that their fear had gone or become far more manageable.

Before EFT one woman had been so terrified of mice that when a mouse got into her home she slept in her car. But after EFT, the calmly went right up to a mouse. Another cradled a cat, while a woman who’d had cockroach phobia, calmly picked one up and examined it—and said she felt a huge increase in confidence and self-esteem.

Banishing pain

EFT has also proved successful with severe pain. Top New York therapist, Dr Carol Loos was one of the therapists who used EFT so successfully with the US soldiers who had PTSD. She says EFT is equally successful for pain control and that she has ‘never had a failure with migraine’.

Self-administered EFT for pain can also work remarkably well, as Russell Cunningham’s experience of using EFT for the agonizing pain of a kidney infection shows. It also illustrates the importance of the words used when tapping.

Russell woke with acute pain. In hospital infected kidneys and a kidney stone were diagnosed. Refusing morphine he used EFT, but without immediate success. So he adjusted his words until the pain vanished. Against medical advice he then discharged himself from hospital, went home, passed a kidney stone and then gave an all-day seminar!

His experience, and the experience of Dr Carol Loos with her patients, is supported by research. For example, a controlled trial with matched groups of patients found that self-administered EFT significantly reduced the pain of hymenalgia.

Visible proof

EFT can also cause visible physical changes. One striking example of this occurred when a doctor who uses EFT found that a patient’s red blood cells were dense clumps — and unable to carry enough oxygen. So she asked him to do two rounds of EFT tapping while intending the blood cells to space themselves out.

He did so. And when a second blood sample was taken, only 12 minutes later, it was dramatically different; his blood cells were perfectly spaced out and able to carry the oxygen his body needed (see illustration opposite).

The British EFT Master Emma Roberts, who specialises in using EFT with cancer patients, is unsurprised by these blood changes. She is one of many therapists who find EFT a very valuable tool for those with cancer and other serious medical conditions. Moreover, like many EFT therapists, she finds that even telephone sessions of EFT work extremely well and uses them when clients are too ill, or too far away, for face-to-face sessions.

She says that one of the great benefits of EFT is that it can remove blocks that make even the best medical treatment less effective. She says, ‘The mind speaks through the body. So, almost every physical problem has emotional components. EFT helps to dig those out and banish them. And when someone can do that, extraordinary things can happen.’

Dr Carol Loos agrees with Emma and also works with clients on the phone. She also does EFT successfully with whole halls full of people working simultaneously on the same issue.

Moreover, she applies EFT to every aspect of living. So she even uses EFT to
enable her clients, worldwide, to "clear their clutter" and "attract abundance" -- not just materially but in every sense.

Having multiple qualifications as a therapist, she says EFT is the most satisfying tool she has ever used. "Talk therapy doesn't get into the body. But EFT can help clients re-wire their connections.

And the great thing about EFT is that it's a tool which people can put into their 'back pocket' and use for themselves."

It's also a tool that parents and teachers who learn it can put in the back pockets of children. Most children go through a stage when they can't tell parents about the kids who teased them. But they can use EFT to heal wounds that might otherwise destroy their confidence and ability to learn. For EFT teaches people to 'totally and completely love and respect themselves' whatever others see, which is a good lesson for any child to learn.

Today EFT is increasingly used for physical conditions as well as psychotherapy. Already there are reports of it being found to help more than 35 different medical conditions, from poor eyesight to cancer. Published research has also shown that it can significantly improve sporting performance in both professionals and amateurs. Who knows which Olympic contestants will be using it in 2012?

Tapping an ancient mechanism

Ironically, although EFT and TTE are achieving levels of success unknown in psychotherapy, that success is based on energies not recognized by conventional medicine. For both EFT and TTE involve tapping on acupuncture points (see box).

Acupuncturists claim that stimulating key points on the body's energy networks promotes healing. However, whether the stimulation removes blocks, opens channels or just prompts the body to heal itself has yet to be fully proved. But, clearly, it works.

Fortunately for the Rwandan children and US soldiers with PTSD -- and for the thousands of people worldwide who have benefited from tapping therapy -- the acupunctures points function whether doctors or patients believe in them or not.

Neurologist Dr Robert Scarr says that EFT's remarkable power to bring about change probably stems from the way that its combination of carefully chosen words and gentle, physical stimulation of acupuncture points reaches deep into the most ancient and influential centres of the brain, undoing conditioned neural or physical responses that can undermine us. Some illness or inhibit healing. That would explain EFT's extraordinary versatility. For it has proved itself able to deal with a multitude of problems -- from a child's fear of public speaking to deep emotional wounds, such as the post-traumatic stress of war veterans. Yet it is still not to change the structure of blood, and severe pain and help to reverse serious illness.

Gary Craig has calculated that if EFT was applied in America's hospitals it could cut costs by billions. Undoubtedly, if any drug showed even half that power EFT demonstrated with the soldiers, it would be on the lists of treatment approved and funded by every major government.

Undoubtedly both TTE and EFT can be highly effective therapies. However, I have focused mainly on EFT here because its subtle use of words seems to give it an edge and because, although an EFT therapist is usually needed for major problems, basic EFT is so simple that everyone can use it -- even a child. That was Gary Craig's aim when he created EFT and the reason he made it freely available on the web. However, for both techniques it is better to seek a therapist's guidance initially.

Moreover, whenever EFT is used to increase sporting performance it does so. So there is every reason to suppose that it could increase performance in schools, colleges, companies, hospitals -- and, perhaps, even governments.

So, surely, the most surprising thing of all is that medical tapping, such as EFT, can do so much and act so fast, but that a tool that can cure nothing, use no energy, cause no pollution, can be used anywhere and can dramatically cut the cost of health care, isn't being taught in schools, colleges and universities and hasn't even become part of the curriculums oftrained doctors, dentists, nurses and other health care workers.

So, in a world mired in economic, social and environmental threats, and with medical costs soaring, perhaps the question is not, what can EFT do for us, but what can we do to get this free tool into every school, college, university and medical school in the world?

As one US veteran put it: "We've got the most incredible healing tool the planet has ever seen and we've got to get it to the people who need it."

References
1. YouTube video featuring Dr Sueat.
7. EFT Universe, the official EFT website with research, newsletters and free materials.

Best-selling author and broadcaster Maya Broemer has a special interest in medicine, science and the environment.