

Tapping into healing

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



Gary Craig gives EFT therapy to veteran Alex (Image copyright Dr. Moore, OGDWDC's Emotional Freedom)

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 outstrip 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 very young children with learning problems. In his teens, he was kidnapped and held for months under threat of death. Traumatized, he later put a gun in his mouth, pulled the trigger and died – briefly. Resuscitated, medicated and lying in a bed, he began reading. Then, in prison, psychologist Dr Caroline Sakai

realized he had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and gave him Thought Field Therapy (TFT) – which uses tapping on acupuncture points (see box, p12).

PTSD is one of the hardest conditions to treat. Yet he says 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 round in a fog all my life. And now, it's like stepping out of a fog into a nice bright sunny day."

"... My anxiety has disappeared, my depression has disappeared. With dyslexia I used to write backwards. I don't think I've done that for months. I used to have panic attacks ... the asthma has disappeared too. I had chest pains and used to pass out. 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 massacred 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. On 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 web³) some soldiers, before treatment, seemed like the walking dead. Others were a danger to their children. And many were using drink and drugs to escape flashbacks like those:

"I went to pull him [his comrade] out – and pulled 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 sticking 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 anaesthetizing 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 ecstasy."

A third had threatened to shoot his children and visibly shook 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 the change, the complete resolution of all his pain and problems. I never could have imagined him coming back to us."

Town by psychologist Dr Dawson

Church confirmed these remarkable and astonishingly rapid changes. After only six EFT sessions the men's PTSD scores had dropped to normal levels.⁴ As many of the men had also been traumatized in childhood as well as in the war that was doubly remarkable.

Widening uses

Pedagogically, 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 Well's published research on phobias also showed that EFT can work very well, even when people least expect it.⁵

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 she calmly went right up to a mouse. Another cradled a rat, 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 acute pain. Top New York therapist, Dr Carol Look 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, gained a kidney stone and then gave an all-day seminar!

His experience, and the experience of Dr Carol Look 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 fibromyalgia.⁶

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 in clump 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 specializes in using EFT with cancer patients,⁸ 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 use them when clients are too ill, or live 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 Look 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 issues. Moreover, she applies EFT to every aspect of living. So she even uses EFT to

How TFT and EFT developed

TFT was the brain-child of American psychotherapist Roger Callahan.¹⁰ With remarkable lateral thinking he realized that, since acupuncture seemed to bring about physical healing, it might also aid emotional healing. In acupuncture, fine needles are used to stimulate appropriate 'energy points' on the client. Callahan had the vision to realize that lightly tapping acupuncture points might be equally effective.

Gradually he developed a protocol in which a therapist used muscle-testing to discover which acupuncture points should be stimulated to aid emotional healing, then gently tapped those points on a client's face, hands and body with the finger tips. Remarkably, it worked and he called it Thought Field Therapy (TFT).

As word of it spread people came to train with him; Gary Craig was one of them. Finding that TFT could help people faster than conventional therapy, Craig wanted it to be available to everyone – even those who couldn't afford a therapist. So he decided to develop a version of TFT that people could use for themselves.

As an engineering graduate he was expert in making things work. And his Masters Degree Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) gave him advanced skills in the therapeutic use of words.

To remove the need for a therapist to do muscle testing, he decided everyone could tap on all the tapping points. Then, knowing how powerfully the mind and emotions respond to words, he used his NLP skills to add carefully chosen words to the tapping. The words gave tapping a totally new dimension, which other therapists have built on since. So, in adding powerful words – especially those which help people to love and believe in themselves – Craig supercharged tapping therapy.

It is said that Craig offered his protocol to Callahan as an alternative version of TFT, but that Callahan turned it down. Certainly they parted company.

Craig then called his tapping therapy Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). Wanting it to reach everyone, he put a free EFT manual on the web and then created inexpensive EFT CDs, saying anyone who bought them could make and give away up to 100 copies.

Before long so many people were sending him success stories that he created a newsletter to circulate them. Then, as open-minded therapists and doctors found new ways to use it, a community of EFT therapists grew up and recognized EFT training courses were established. Soon, with no PR, EFT became the world's fastest growing psychotherapy – and perhaps its most effective.

enable her clients, worldwide, to 'clean 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 'truly and completely love and respect themselves' whatever others say, 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.¹ 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 TFT are achieving levels of success unknown in psychotherapy, that success is based on energies not recognized by conventional medicine. For both EFT and TFT involve tapping on acupuncture points (see box).

Acupuncturists claim that stimulating key points on the body's energy network promotes healing. However, whether the stimulation removes blocks, opens channels or just prompts the body to heal itself has yet to be totally 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 therapies – the acupuncture 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, inducing conditioned mental or physical responses that



Left: Dark field microscope image of red blood cells clumped before EFT. **Right:** 11 minutes later, red blood cells evenly distributed after EFT for cell spacing (from 1).

can undermine us, foster illness or inhibit healing.²

That would explain EFT's extraordinary versatility. For it has proved itself able to deal with a multitude of problems from a child's tears or fear of public speaking to deep emotional wounds, such as the post-traumatic stress of war veterans. Yet it is equally able to change the structure of blood, end 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 the power that EFT demonstrated with the soldiers, it would be on the lists of treatment approved and funded by every major government.

Undoubtedly both TFT 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 not that meridian tapping, such as EFT, can do so much and act so fast, but that a tool that can cost nothing, use no energy, causes 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 curriculum of trainee doctors, dentists, nurses and other health care workers.

So, in a world rife in economic, social and environmental threats, and with medical costs soaring, perhaps the question is not, what can EFT do for us, it is 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.' **Q**

References

1. YouTube video featuring Dr Sahai.
2. Sahai CS et al. TFT with geneticists interview in *Brussels*. See *J Ener New Health* (in print).
3. www.acupuncture-essentials.com in view Eric Hearty's Box of soldiers being treated.
4. Church D. *The Gene is Not Genes*. Easy Psychology Press, 2007 (www.easypsych.com).
5. Wells S et al. *J Clin Psych* 2003;59(1):943-66.
6. Church D, op cit, p 223.
7. EFTuniverse.com, the official EFT website with research, newsletters and free materials.
8. Robinson E, Burr S. *Even Though I Have Cancer, a Self-Help Book for Cancer and Other Serious Illness*. The EFT Centre, London, 2010. (www.eftcancer.com).
9. Scott BC. *The Body Does the Healing: Science, Disillusion and Choice*. Bantam, London, 2007. (see also Radkoff H. *The Body Remembers: The Neurobiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*. Norton Professional Books, London, 2000).
10. Callahan H, with Trish K. *Tapping the Healer Within*. Parkes, London, 2001 (www.orgofcallahan.com).

*Best-selling author and broadcaster
Mayra Bromber has a special
interest in medicine, science and the
environment.*