


Can Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) be effective in the treatment of emotional conditions?

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EFT: what is it?

- ▶ **“Emotional Freedom Techniques”**
 - ▶ A gentle and pleasant therapy, used for a wide range of emotional issues
 - ▶ Sometimes called “*tapping*” or “*acupuncture without needles*”
 - ▶ Increasingly used by counsellors and health professionals
 - ▶ Involves tapping on acupressure points on the body (mainly on head and hands), while focusing on a specific memory / traumatic event
 - ▶ Once learned, clients can self-administer
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What can EFT be used for ?

Anything!

- ▶ Painful emotions/memories
 - ▶ Physical pain
 - ▶ Fear, anxiety, panic attacks
 - ▶ Depression
 - ▶ Grief and loss
 - ▶ Negative emotions
 - ▶ Phobias
 - ▶ Allergies
 - ▶ Addictions
 - ▶ Food cravings
 - ▶ Weight loss
 - ▶ Low self-esteem
 - ▶ Compulsions and obsessions
 - ▶ Sleeping problems
 - ▶ Low confidence
 - ▶ Traumatic memories
 - ▶ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - ▶ Exam stress
 - ▶ Presentation anxiety
 - ▶ Gaining energy
- ▶ *and much more...*



Does EFT work?

- ▶ Can be highly effective, and swift relief is possible
- ▶ Found to be a useful alternative / adjunct to other forms of therapy
- ▶ Results are usually quick and long lasting
- ▶ Can be done face-to-face / phone / Skype
- ▶ Mechanism of action not known, but incorporates acupressure, NLP, hypnosis



Is EFT safe?

- ▶ Very safe, with practically no side-effects
- ▶ Minimises retraumatisation – few abreactions reported
- ▶ No needles, drugs, chemicals involved
- ▶ EFT is not a **cure** for chronic diseases
- ▶ ... but it can reduce, or even eliminate the stresses and fears surrounding the illness - and in the process, can ease symptoms



AAMET International

- ▶ Professional body for EFT
- ▶ Codes of Ethics and Conduct, Practice & Training
- ▶ Members can be removed from list
- ▶ Accredited Training Courses
- ▶ CPD is required
- ▶ Recognised by:
 - National Council of Psychotherapists
 - Counselling & Psychotherapy Directory
 - Complementary Therapists Association
 - Federation of Holistic Therapies
 - All major insurance companies



A narrative systematic review of the effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

– Boath, Stewart & Carryer 2012

- ▶ EFT effective in treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Fibromyalgia, Phobias, test anxiety and athletic performance
- ▶ EFT superior to diaphragmatic breathing (DB), Progressive Muscular Relaxation (PMR), inspirational lecture and Support Group
- ▶ Only Eye Movement, Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) was superior to EFT (but 1 RCT found EFT as effective for PTSD)
- ▶ EFT may be an efficient and effective intervention for a range of psychological disorders



Acupoint stimulation in treating psychological disorders: Evidence of efficacy

– Feinstein 2012

- ▶ Critically evaluated 18 randomised controlled trials
- ▶ Concluded that therapies involving the tapping of acupuncture points demonstrated strong effect sizes ...
- ▶ ... and positive statistical results in relatively few treatment sessions



Sandwell

- ▶ EFT Service launched as part of Sandwell's Confidence and Wellbeing Team
- ▶ 13 month period
- ▶ Referrals from GPs / health professionals / self
- ▶ Referrals accepted for any condition, providing that clients were aged over 18, and not "vulnerable adults"
- ▶ Ethical approval secured from Sandwell PCT and Staffordshire University



Sandwell Service Evaluation

- ▶ 39 clients gave consent, and 31 (79.5%) completed therapy
- ▶ 30 (76.9%) female
- ▶ Mean age 45.37 (range 18-76)
- ▶ 31 (79.5%) White British
- ▶ Mean number of sessions attended was 5.05 (median 4.0; range 2-17)
- ▶ Measures used – CORE10 / WEMWBS / Rosenberg Self-Esteem / HADS
- ▶ Clients completing therapy also invited for 3-month follow-up



Summary of conditions treated

| Conditions addressed during therapy | Frequency |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Anxiety | 29 |
| Depression | 18 |
| Insomnia | 13 |
| Self Esteem | 9 |
| Anger | 7 |
| PTSD | 4 |
| Obsessive Compulsive Disorder | 3 |
| Panic | 3 |
| Phobia | 3 |
| Sexual Abuse | 3 |
| Bereavement/ Sadness | 2 |
| Eating Disorders | 2 |

Results – Pre/Post

| Measurement Scale | Mean score Pre-EFT | Mean score Post-EFT | SD (Difference) | P value (* Significant) | N= |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----|
| CORE-10 | 20.16 | 8.71 | 6.81 | <0.001 * | 38 |
| WEMWBS | 38.27 | 53.62 | 10.88 | <0.001 * | 37 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem | 14.16 | 21.81 | 6.88 | <0.001 * | 31 |
| HADS Anxiety | 13.22 | 7.30 | 3.57 | <0.001 * | 23 |
| HADS Depression | 9.26 | 4.87 | 5.25 | 0.001 * | 23 |
| HADS Total | 22.30 | 12.13 | 8.17 | <0.001 * | 23 |

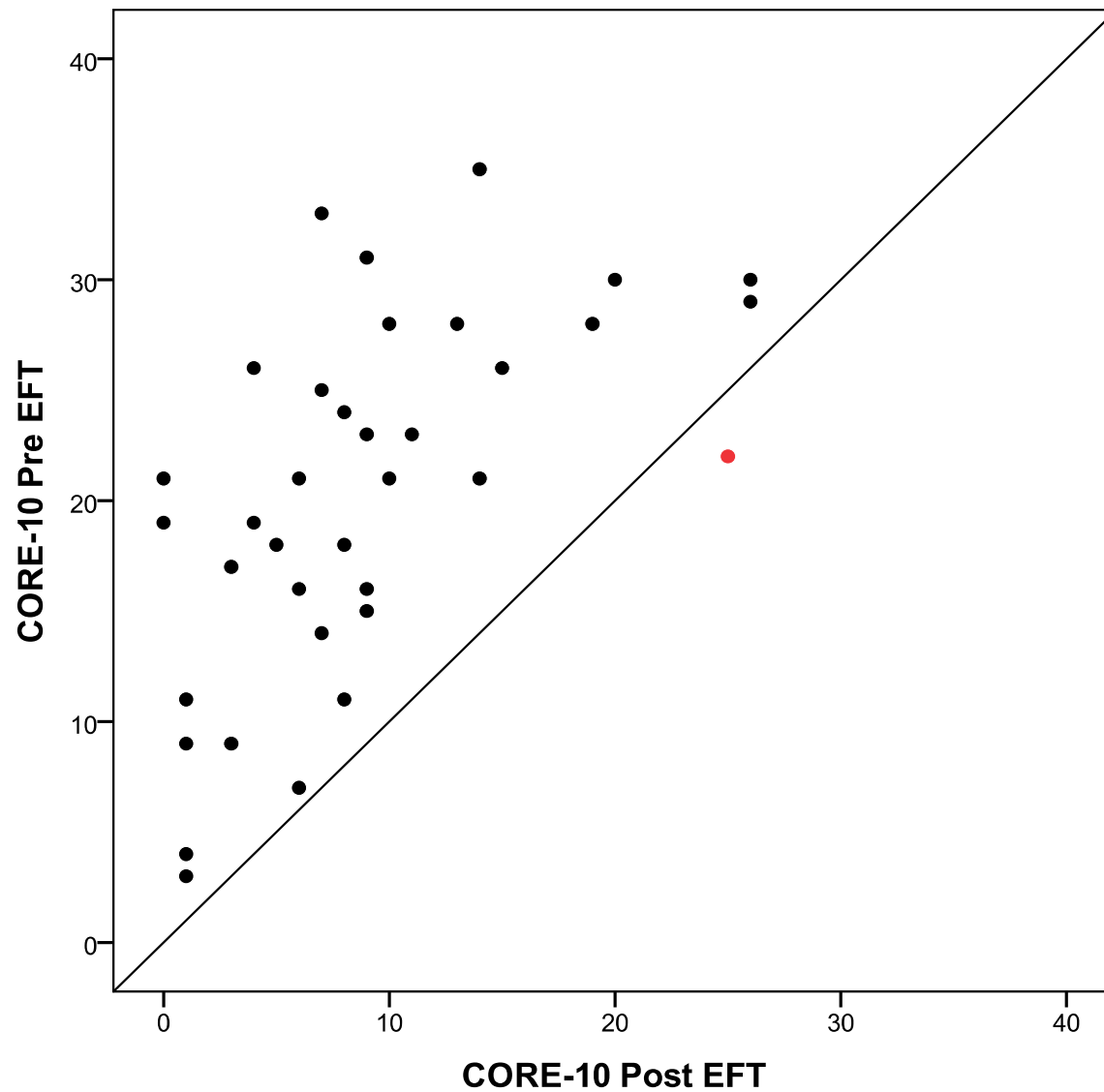


Results – 3 Month Follow-Up

| Measurement Scale | Mean score Pre-EFT | Mean score Follow-up | SD (Difference) | P value (* Significant) | N= |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----|
| CORE-10 | 18.71 | 7.14 | 6.37 | 0.003 * | 7 |
| WEMWBS | 40.00 | 53.29 | 11.27 | 0.021 * | 7 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem | 14.29 | 22.43 | 6.45 | 0.016 * | 7 |
| HADS Anxiety | 14.25 | 5.50 | 4.03 | 0.068 | 4 |
| HADS Depression | 8.50 | 2.75 | 2.50 | 0.019 * | 4 |
| HADS Total | 22.75 | 8.25 | 5.32 | 0.068 | 4 |



Scatter Plot for CORE-10 scores at start and end of therapy



Discussion

- ▶ Despite limitations, EFT reduced range of physical and psychological issues
- ▶ EFT can be quickly and effectively self-administered
- ▶ Can easily be transferred to other aspects of people's lives, for example work stress and financial pressures, so could be used to enhance general health and wellbeing
- ▶ Average, 5.05 sessions were required (median = 4) - cost-effectiveness
- ▶ Larger studies (preferably clinical trials) are required
- ▶ Future studies should include a protocol for minimising dropouts and loss to follow-up
- ▶ Evaluations should also consider including qualitative assessments to provide a range of rich data to highlight participants' views and opinions of EFT

