EFT Tapping ‘Can Reduce Back-To-Work COVID Anxiety’

Practitioners urge workers to use tapping to treat anxiety

As lockdown eases and Britain’s businesses and workplaces re-open, many people are struggling with anxiety about returning to work. These fears were highlighted in a recent survey by Anxiety UK suggesting that 20% of people were anxious about going back to work once lockdown ended. Practitioners of a complementary health technique known as ‘tapping’, or Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), are encouraging workers who feel anxious to consider using tapping to help them cope with the stress of returning to work. EFT uses fingertip tapping on acupuncture points, particularly on the face and upper body, to help restore emotional and mental balance. It draws on the ancient technique of acupuncture, as the tapping sends messages to the brain which, new research shows, can reduce stress.

‘EFT is a simple but powerful tool, combining acupuncture and modern psychology, that we can all use to reduce stress,’ says Jacqui Footman, chair of EFT International, the professional body for the practice of EFT. ‘Our practitioners around the UK have seen so much COVID-19 related anxiety over the past year and helped many people to resolve this anxiety. As the country gets back to work, we want to spread the message that there is a simple but effective tool that can help us all. Our practitioners are out there, ready to help and support anyone who wants to use EFT.’

EFT Trainer and Executive Coach Sejual Shah has treated many clients at her practice in St Albans in Hertfordshire who have come to her with COVID related anxiety. “I have seen all kinds of COVID stresses over the past year,” she says. “Mental health issues have peaked because of COVID. As people get back to their workplaces, we are seeing particular ‘pressure points’ of concern. For example, some people who have driven everywhere by car during lockdown are now really frightened about using public transport again. Others worry about social distancing, and how they will manage at work, such as in lifts or small spaces. Although some people are keen to get back to the office, others are incredibly anxious about this, feeling they are not yet ready.’ With her background as a barrister, working in European competition law, Sejual has a keen understanding of the pressures that business owners are now facing. ‘Those in senior roles are worried about what lies ahead and the financial implications of COVID for their businesses. There is a nervousness about the Indian variant of the disease and a fear that restrictions may be unlocking too fast.’
Ann Diment is another EFT practitioner who has used tapping to help clients coping with COVID induced anxiety. Based in Glastonbury, she is a wellbeing consultant specialising in workplace stress, focussing particularly on small businesses. ‘There is a fear of returning to work, face to face with other people. They feel safer at home,’ she says. ‘There is still a real fear of catching COVID, despite all the vaccinations. The experience of lockdown left many people feeling they had lost control of their lives. The security of knowing they had money coming in was suddenly taken away from them and replaced by a fear of not knowing what was coming next. EFT can really help to reduce these emotions. It is easily accessible, you just use your own hands, there is no jargon and no special equipment is needed. It really is a level playing field. Once a client understands how to use EFT, with guidance and support from a practitioner, they can use EFT regularly themselves.’

COVID anxiety has revealed itself in unexpected ways, says another EFT practitioner, Yolanda Saez Castello, who is based in St Helier in Jersey. She provides online EFT sessions with clients all around the UK. ‘I had one client who was so anxious she would not leave the house at all during the pandemic, even to walk her dog or go to the shop. She had existing lung problems which made her even more worried. Over a period of time we used EFT together, online, to calm these fears. Now she is so much better, and has managed to get back to work, caring for her grandchildren, which in turn has allowed her son and daughter-in-law to go back to work. Interestingly, after using EFT her lung problems have also reduced, and her breathing capacity is much improved. Another of my clients was suffering from panic attacks each time she watched TV and saw the rising number of COVID cases. I have worked with her, using EFT to tap on these extreme feelings, and now she is back at her job in a client facing role, and she is fine, using EFT to help her manage. It is amazing how effective EFT can be in these situations.’

There is a growing body of evidence-based research about the beneficial effects of EFT. Research published this year has confirmed that EFT can be a useful tool in managing stress and anxiety. A study carried out by Bond University in Queensland, Australia, showed EFT could lower the stress hormone cortisol. EFT has also been found to be useful in the treatment of war veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Research by Harvard Medical School has also shown that stimulation of acupuncture points on the body can send calming signals to the part of the brain involved with the fight/flight response and control of emotions and anxiety.

Anyone wanting to learn how to do EFT can see demonstration videos and find further information on the EFTi website. Users can also join online tapping groups, with particular resources available for COVID support. Please visit www.eftinternational.org

Editors’ notes

1. Picture attached: tapping close-up of hands.
3. For more details about the Anxiety UK survey, see www.anxietyuk.org.uk
4. EFT International is a UK-registered Charity, number 1176538.
5. EFT was originally developed in the US by Gary Craig, in the 1990s.
6. The Bond University research is entitled ‘Re-examining the Effect of Emotional Freedom Techniques on Stress Biochemistry: A Randomized Controlled Trial’. It was published on 12th March 2020 by the American Psychological Association and is available at the US National Library of Medicine, the National Center for Biotechnology Information.
8. In 2018, NICE recommended further investigation of the use of EFT for PTSD in adults
9. Ends