“Tapping can boost mental health of the elderly during Covid-19 pandemic”

Relief from coronavirus stress – literally at your fingertips – thanks to EFT

Mental Health Awareness Week 18th – 24th May 2020

A self-help technique known as ‘tapping’ could help elderly people struggling with anxiety caused by Coronavirus. There is growing concern about the mental health and wellbeing of older people, who may be continuing to self-isolate despite the easing of lockdown conditions. The charity Emotional Freedom Techniques International, which is based in the UK, is keen to promote the benefits of tapping, or EFT, to help older residents manage COVID-19 anxiety. Their concerns come as The Mental Health Foundation is hosting Mental Health Awareness Week, from 18th – 24th May, urging people to show extra kindness and support to their friends and neighbours during the current crisis.

EFT uses fingertip tapping on acupuncture points, particularly on the face and upper body. This can help restore emotional and physical balance. It draws on the ancient technique of acupuncture and combines this with modern psychology, working on the mind and body connection.

Eighty-eight-year-old Joyce Munden, from Bedford, has been using tapping to help reduce her feelings of anxiety. She lives alone and has been self-isolating since the start of the lockdown. She has suffered in the past from respiratory issues and does not feel confident that she can leave her flat, despite the easing of lockdown rules.

“It is a difficult time, and I have been feeling worried. My biggest concern is not knowing when this will end, and when things will return to normal. Whether it will be weeks or months. I am worried to go out, because I was recently in hospital with respiratory problems, so I am more at risk from the virus. So, I am staying indoors. I miss human contact, my friends, and hugs from my family. But I have found one of the things that is helping is doing EFT with my daughter Kate over the phone. We spend about half an hour tapping together, several times a week, and this makes me feel calmer and more positive.”

Kate Munden, who lives in Kent, is an EFT Mentor and Executive Board member of EFTi. She has taught her mother how to use EFT and thinks it is helping to manage her stress. “Tapping is something anyone can learn, and it can be easily done at home. It is ‘emotional first aid at your fingertips’.”
“My mother has had no face to face contact with anyone for two and a half months now. My sister and I have only been able to talk to her through the window. She does want to leave the house yet and she is finding that loneliness is a big problem, as she previously had a busy social life. She is among the generation that are not comfortable using mobile phones and social media, so she only has the telephone as a means of keeping in touch with friends and family.

“She is certainly missing the benefits of physical contact. This is sometimes called ‘skin hunger’ or ‘touch deprivation’. There is a lot of research now showing the connection between touch and wellness. Touch can boost serotonin levels, (the ‘happy hormone’), and improve your mood.”

Concerns about loneliness due to Coronavirus were highlighted by recent research on the effects of the pandemic led by The Mental Health Foundation. Their UK-wide ongoing study - Coronavirus: Mental Health and the Pandemic - showed a significant rise in people worried about loneliness since the start of the lockdown. Initial data indicated that in March one in ten adults (10%) were concerned about loneliness. By early April that figure had risen to one in four adults (24%). The research is ongoing, with the aim of helping to inform policies to tackle any rise in mental health problems due to the pandemic.

Further research, also published earlier this year, has confirmed that EFT can be a useful tool in the management of stress and anxiety. The study carried out by Bond University in Queensland, Australia, showed that using EFT could lower the stress hormone cortisol. Levels of cortisol were compared in three groups of patients, one having EFT, the second having PE (‘psychoeducation’ such as supportive interviews) and the third having no treatment. The results showed those having EFT had a 43% decrease in cortisol levels compared to 19% for the PE group. The third group showed a 2% rise.

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. Please visit www.eftinternational.org

Editors’ notes

3. More details about Mental Health Awareness Week are available at: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week
4. ‘Coronavirus: Mental Health and the Pandemic’, is a UK-wide study led by The Mental Health Foundation, in partnership with University of Cambridge, Swansea University, University of Strathclyde and Queen’s University, Belfast. The aim of the study is to track the UK’s mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak.
5. EFT International is a UK-registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), charity number 1176538. EFTi was formerly known as AAMET (the Association for the Advancement of Meridian Energy Techniques).
6. EFT was originally developed in the US by Gary Craig, in the 1990s.
7. 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. Press release by www.ndmedia.co.uk
9. Ends