

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

NHS doctor “using EFT tapping to help cope with Covid-19 stress”

Self-help technique EFT can help reduce Coronavirus stress

An NHS doctor working with psychiatric patients has been using an alternative health technique known as ‘EFT tapping’ to help her cope with extra stress caused by COVID-19.

Dr Kirstin Buchanan, who is based at Liberton Hospital in Edinburgh, says the pandemic has significantly increased the pressures of her job. She, and her team, work with elderly psychiatric patients, many of whom are receiving end-of-life care and have complex and acute conditions.

“I work in a downstream healthcare setting, not on the classic front line, yet COVID-19 has still had a huge impact on us,” says Dr Buchanan. “The virus has significantly changed the way we work, and caused many new stresses for us, our patients and their families. My team are needing a lot more support with mental health as a result of the changes.”

Dr Buchanan is using tapping, or Emotional Freedom Techniques, to keep her feelings of anxiety under control and help her face the extra demands at work. EFT is a simple technique, using fingertip tapping on acupressure points, particularly on the face and upper body. This can help restore emotional and physical balance. It draws on the ancient practice of acupuncture and combines this with modern psychology, strengthening the mind and body connection.

Dr Buchanan has joined online tapping sessions with EFT Practitioner and coach, Tricia Murray. “Tapping with Tricia has allowed me the space to identify my worries and fears about the virus and the changes in my work situation, and to learn to accept it. This has definitely reduced my overall levels of stress. At the start of the pandemic I was worried about the unknown. Now the ‘unknown’ is here, all around us, every day. Like many of my colleagues I have had the additional stress of my children being at home while the schools have been closed. I worry about my husband trying to work from home while also doing childcare. Tapping has helped me feel calmer and enabled me to get on with it. I would not hesitate in recommending tapping to anyone whether you feel overwhelmed by current events or you believe you are coping ok.”

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The Coronavirus has brought many changes to the way Dr Buchanan works with her patients.

“Visiting is restricted, so difficult conversations around end-of-life care must now be held by telephone, where you can’t be guided by non-verbal cues or offer physical comfort. The doors to patient rooms are now kept shut to minimise risk of airborne transmission, isolating the patients even further. The nursing staff are wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and it is hard to give a reassuring warm smile from behind a mask. For our patients who are hard of hearing, this is even more difficult. And when we need to strictly isolate some of our patients with psychiatric diagnoses, this can cause significant distress. So yes, the virus has made our work more difficult.”

EFT Practitioner Tricia Murray is passionate about tapping and how it can help in times of stress. “EFT is such a powerful way to regulate the nervous system, eliciting a feeling of calm,” she says. “It provides insight into why we feel the way that we do and compassion by allowing ourselves the opportunity to validate the feelings we are experiencing. Integrating tapping into your day, even 5 or 10 minutes, can result in a profound improvement to your overall mental wellbeing and reduce stress and anxiety. It’s easy to learn and there’s so many resources out there. It’s great for the fear of the unknown or managing uncertainty such as in Kirstin’s case.”

Earlier this year research was published reinforcing suggestions that EFT can be a useful tool in the management of 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

1. Pictures attached: EFT tapping technique (hands close-up).
2. More information from www.eftinternational.org. Or contact EFTi Executive Board member Kate Munden 07710 261921.
3. 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).

4. EFT was originally developed in the US by Gary Craig, in the 1990s.
5. 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. The findings confirmed the results of previous EFT clinical trials carried out in 2012 by Dawson Church PhD, Garret Young and Audrey J Brooks.
6. EFT has also been found to be useful in the treatment of war veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In 2018 the UK government health body NICE recommended further investigation of the use of EFT in the treatment of PTSD in adults.
7. Press release by www.ndmedia.co.uk
8. Ends