**Potsdam Fibromyalgia Support Group**

**Newsletter**

# October, 2015

# “Tapping” for Stress Reduction

**The following article was written by**

**guest contributor: Kris Rozelle**

 Many people describe the human mind as one of the most complex structures in the universe. “It has more neural connections than our universe has stars, and it records billions of bits of data all of the time. No wonder we have trouble controlling it,” (<https://thelifeenrichmentblog.wordpress.com/treatments/>) especially when disrupted by trauma and pain. So when it comes to changing attitudes, beliefs, habits and behaviors, we draw upon tools such as Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), Resource Tapping, and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to deal with pain, anxiety and stress.

 “Many people suffer from either physical or emotional wounds that remain from a previous traumatic experience, and sometimes both. Trauma is defined as *a serious injury or shock to the body, as from violence or an accident, or an event or situation that causes great distress and disruption*. A traumatic experience can hijack the body and break down the connection between mind and body. We may not be able to connect rationally or articulate what we feel.” (<http://emdrtherapy.amyfullerphd.com>) EMDR, EFT and Resource Tapping above are tools to help us reconnect our mind with our bodies to alleviate pain, anxiety and stress.

Picture from:

<http://www.tapawaypain.com/tapping-points-for-pain/>

 EMDR is a therapy that has helped many people let go of painful experiences, memories, or beliefs. Dr. Francine Shapiro developed this technique in 1987, and it has been well researched in the American psychological community. During the technique, the left and right hemispheres of the brain are bilaterally stimulated through eye movements, sound or touch. Bilateral stimulation is about transforming trauma or painful feelings, past or present, by stimulating parts of our brain alternately.(Oren & Solomon, 2012)

 Specific techniques based on EMDR are Resource Tapping and "*Tapping In Tapping Through*" model proposed by Dr. Laurel Parnell. This approach can be used to help re balance the nervous system, provide rapid pain relief both emotional and physical, activate the parasympathetic nervous system, and teach us how to manage pain, anxiety and stress. <http://parnellinstitute.com>.

 Resource Tapping has roots in EMDR but has important differences. EMDR should be conducted by a trained therapist and Resource Tapping can be done at home by anyone. EMDR expert Dr. Laura Parnell suggests crossing your arms in a “butterfly hug” and tapping your shoulders alternately right-left with your hands for about 20 times then pausing and repeating the sequence a few times until changes in mood are noticeable. It’s a tool activating your own inner strength through bilateral stimulation to abate stress, pain, anxiety and improve your well-being. When using Resource Tapping you are imagining or remembering good experiences like a sunny beach or a safe place for example. Hold your resource real or imagined in your mind, adding bilateral stimulation through left-right tapping on your (thighs or crossing arms in a butterfly hug) with these thoughts or memories. When using this technique it’s important to imagine good things with sensory detail to get a feeling in your body and emotions. Details can include how it feels in your body, what you see, hear, smell, taste. <http://parnellinstitute.com>.

 Gary Craig founded EFT in the 1990’s. It is rooted in both acupuncture promoting stress reduction and pain relief without the needles. Tapping blends a mixture acupressure and psychology and is based on tapping acupressure meridian energy points and reciting affirmations while problems and pain dissipate. Though we are unaware, energy flows through our body. A way to look at it is, we do not see the energy flowing through a TV set or radio either but we know its effects. The sound and picture are visible or audible and you know that energy exists. In the same way EFT provides you with the effects that energy within the body exists. By simply tapping near the end points of your energy meridians with your fingertips like acupressure, or accupoints, you utilize this tool for emotional health. <http://www.therapy-directory.org.uk/articles/eft.html>

 Tapping is a tool for people interested in using it as a coping technique to manage stress, anxiety or pain. <http://www.tapawaypain.com/tapping-points-for-pain/>. Nearly anyone can learn EFT and it’s easy to use. EFT and tapping have been effective with both emotional and physical pain and according to research by Dr. David Feinstein, EFT has proved itself to be effective in thousands of cases with emotional issues such as, stress, phobias, and fears, anxiety, depression and trauma (including PTSD). Physical pain is so often the byproduct of emotional unbalance, and EFT has been shown to produce significant results with physical conditions such as, chronic and acute pain, migraines and breathing problems.

 Why should your emotions resolve themselves from your eye movements, tapping on various body parts, or reciting affirmations? These techniques seem rather illogical. For example, there have been many explanations as to why acupuncture works, though none are fully logical, the simple truth is that researchers do not know how it works, we only know that it does work. Similarly, we have some idea of how the eye movements and tapping work. They seem to activate more of our brain in specific areas to resolve the problems, but here again, the point is that they do work. Our brains come up with practical solutions to problems both consciously and unconsciously. Try one of these techniques out for yourself.

In addition to the websites referenced above, this information was also based on:

* Oren E, Solomon R.EMDR therapy: An overview of its development and mechanisms of action*. Revue européenne de psychologie appliquée.* 2012;62:197-203.
* Feinstein D. The Science and research behind tapping. Presented at the 6th Annual Tapping World Summit. This is a good explanation of Tapping in non-scientific terms. Available at: <http://tappingsolutionfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Feinstein-The-Science_-Why-Tapping-Works_TWS2014_Workbook.pdf>

**Addendum by Leslie Russek, PT, DPT, PhD, OCS:**

 I am not knowledgeable about this topic, but have looked at a bit of the scientific literature and am providing this is a short addendum to review the scientific basis for EMDR. It is always wise to talk with your physician or counselor before trying any new therapeutic approach.

* EMDR is as effective and long-lasting as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for PTSD, phobias, generalized anxiety disorder, self-esteem, body dysmorphic disorder, chronic pain, migraines and phantom limb pain.
* EMDR may be better tolerated than many CBT approaches, as CBT often requires exposure to the stressor, while EMDR does not.
* The physiological mechanism for EMDR is still not understood. Research suggests it works by increasing parasympathetic activity (para-sympathetic is the “rest and digest” system, and the sympathetic is the “fight or flight” system).
* Another theory proposes that EMDR decreases the emotional content associated with memories.
* EMDR is most effective for people whose physical and emotional complaints stem from adverse life experiences (e.g., trauma).
* A systematic review (Terasz, 2014) suggests EMDR may be safe and promising in treating chronic pain, but there is not yet enough research to be sure.
* There is much less research on EFT and tapping, but it suggests that EFT may help stress-related conditions such as headaches.

**Resources used:**

* Oren E, Solomon R.EMDR therapy: An overview of its development and mechanisms of action*. Revue européenne de psychologie appliquée.* 2012;62:197-203.
* Shapiro F. The role of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy in medicine: addressing the psychological and physical symptoms stemming from adverse life experiences. *Perm J.* 2014;18(1)71-7.
* Tesarz J, et al, Effects of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) treatment in chronic pain patients: a systematic review. *Pain Med*. 2014;15(2):247-63.

# October 5th Fibromyalgia Support Group Meeting:

The Potsdam Fibromyalgia Support Group will meet on **Monday, October 5th at 7 pm**. The topic will be “**Tapping Into Your Inner Calm: Techniques to change your negative emotions and pain.**”  Kris Rozelle will describe EMDR, EFT and Resource Tapping, explain how these techniques can be used to release negative emotions and stress, and guide us through a basic practice session using Tapping to relax.

This newsletter is a joint effort of Clarkson University and Canton-Potsdam Hospital. If you would prefer to receive these newsletters electronically, please send your email address to lnrussek@clarkson.edu. You can access current and previous Potsdam Fibromyalgia Support Group Newsletters on our web site: [www.people.clarkson.edu/~lnrussek/FMSG](http://www.clarkson.edu/~lnrussek/FMSG).