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Informed Consent for Energy Psychology

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As part of my psychotherapy practice, I incorporate methodologies that appear to have promising mental health benefits but have yet to be fully researched by the academic community. This informed consent will provide you with some basic information about one of those methods called Energy Psychology, and how it is an option in our work together. We can discuss any aspect of this consent, and you are under no obligation to agree to these methods. **The prevailing premise of Energy Psychology is that the flow and balance of the body's electromagnetic and more subtle energies are important for physical and emotional health, and there are energy-based methods that help in fostering that well-being.**

There appears to be an interactive effect among the following:

- Emotions
- Thoughts
- Beliefs
- Images
- Biochemistry
- Behaviors
- Electromagnetic & Subtle Energies
- Bodily Sensations

These influence each other and each may promote health and well-being. The relationship you have to others, your community, the environment, and spirituality may also impact your health and well-being. Your therapy may focus on any combination of these in order to most effectively help you obtain your goals.

What is Subtle Energy?

The relevance and interactive effect among all these aspects has been researched from the Western scientific perspective, except for the role of subtle energy. You may have heard of subtle energy through such terms as life force, chi, meridians, chakras, biofields, or auras. These energies are called “subtle” because they are not easily detectable and scientists have not been able to develop instruments to reliably measure them. However, many people for centuries and across cultures have described seeing or feeling subtle energies to varying degrees.

Measurable energies are the fabric of our existence. Electrical, chemical, and nuclear energies are some of the more common forms of measurable energy with which we are familiar. For example, doctors measure electromagnetic fields or energies of the body through EKGs, EEGs, and MRIs. These measurable energies are clearly an important part of our everyday health and well-being.

Physicists have been dramatically changing our understanding of energy. For example, Einstein proposed that all mass is comprised of energy. That is, all “solid” objects, including our bodies, are comprised of molecules in constant motion that can be influenced by outside forces. Despite the advancement of physics, we still don't understand certain ever-present fields of energy, such as gravity. Much remains to be learned about the energetic functioning of our world and universe.

Subtle energy is one of those forms of energy still being explored. It can be considered part of the ever-present energy from which all matter is derived, in the sense of Einstein's $E=mc^2$, i.e., matter is a form of energy. Some scientists believe our physical bodies emerge from a field of subtle energies. In many healing traditions, the "life force" that distinguishes life from death is understood as involving the presences of subtle energies. Energy Psychology suggests that by promoting balance and flow in these fields of subtle energy, the health of the body is enhanced.

Despite not fully understanding the nature of subtle energy, there are numerous methods designed to influence these energy systems such as acupuncture, yoga, acupressure, Reiki, and tai chi, to name just a few. Many Asian cultures have studied these energies and methods for centuries and have successfully applied them to both physical and emotional health (e.g., Deadman et.al., 1998).

Subtle energy is being taken more seriously in this country. Many hospitals in the United States now include methods (e.g., Therapeutic Touch, Reiki and acupuncture) to help with the healing of a variety of conditions. Further investigation is being conducted by the U.S. National Institute of Health through a center of research called The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Their report on Energy Medicine indicated that western science has not validated the 2,000 years of subtle energy practice, but they have cited some promising studies that warrant further investigation. Another example of the increased professional interest in subtle energy is the formation of an organization for psychotherapists, the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (ACEP), whose annual conference brings in hundreds of therapists from around the world. Their web site (www.energypsych.org) has up-to-date research articles on the role of such energies in psychotherapy.

Role of Subtle Energies in Psychotherapy

Energy Psychology is based on the premise that by affecting electromagnetic and more subtle energies there can be a shift in emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. There are a variety of methods that appear to have an impact on subtle energies. The most common method is based on the ancient principles of acupuncture. It is a simple procedure that gently balances the energies without the discomfort of needles. Clients recall a troublesome thought or feeling and are taught which traditional acupuncture points on their body to stimulate through tapping, rubbing, or holding (rather than using needles). The stimulation of such points, sometimes referred to as acupressure, has been observed to reduce psychological symptoms. This is the method we would most commonly use. (See references below for EFT, EDxTM, & TFT).

Another method targets the energy centers of your body called chakras, which are considered to hold emotional memories. To affect these energies, I might move my hand near your body while you lie on a table or sit in a chair. The theory behind chakra clearing is that the electromagnetic charge of my hand is interacting with and balancing the electromagnetic fields of your body. Most people experience a pleasant feeling, while others may recall the old distress we are targeting.

There are numerous other methods all designed to balance the flow of energies. For a review of these energy systems and the methods used to enhance them, see Donna Eden's book, *Energy Medicine* (1998), Gerber's book, *Vibrational Medicine* (2001), and the web site for the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (www.energypsych.org).

Assessing Your Subtle Energies

There is a method to assess where your Subtle energies are out of balance. It is a simple procedure where I apply light pressure to an outstretched arm. The degree of firmness you experience indicates whether there is a disruption in the energies. This method has a variety of names such as Energy Testing, Muscle Testing, and Applied Kinesiology. It has been used extensively by osteopathic and chiropractic physicians as well as physical therapists. Psychotherapists started using this assessment tool about 15 years ago. I have received professional training in the use of these techniques which I will be happy to discuss with you upon request.

Psychotherapeutic Touch

There are times when it is beneficial for me to hold certain points on your body. The theory behind such methods is that touching or holding these points can assist me and you in identifying and shifting imbalances in your energies. If there are such times, you would remain fully clothed, with perhaps the exception of your shoes. I would always explain ahead of time where I would touch, and you can let me know if you are comfortable with it or not. I will always honor any requests not to touch. Ninety percent of the time, the touch will last only a few seconds, although there may be occasions where it is best for me to hold several points on your body for a longer period, usually about 3-5 minutes.

Physical contact within psychotherapy has sometimes been frowned upon because touch can be easily misinterpreted and feel too intimate, uncomfortable, or sexual in nature. Touching in a sexual manner is unethical within psychotherapy, illegal, and will never be a part of your treatment. In order to maintain the boundaries that are necessary for a successful therapeutic relationship, we will also be unable to have a friendship or any other type of “dual” relationship outside the office.

Touch can also be a potential problem in a therapeutic relationship if you have had a history of paranoia, been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, sexually or physically abused, if you have suffered from other types of trauma, or may dissociate or detach from your sense of self. Please let me know if you fall into any of these categories prior to our starting our work together. We can discuss any emotional risks associated with touch that may be of concern to you. Furthermore, if you have any misgivings, doubts or any negative reactions to any physical contact, it is very important that you let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss your concerns. If you are uncomfortable talking to me, I encourage you to talk through such concerns with another professional. If you wish, I can make a referral for you.

Although physical contact in psychotherapy has not been scientifically established as beneficial, Hunter and Struve (1998) have proposed that touch can be an important part of psychotherapy, and there may be negative effects from the lack of it. Energy Psychotherapists have found that some procedures require touch to assess and balance the energies. The controversy around the use of physical contact in psychotherapy highlights the need for you to be properly informed of the risks and benefits of touch used in therapeutic ways.

Informed Consent

In summary, you understand there are promising reports from psychotherapists about the effectiveness of Energy Psychology, but that it is considered an experimental procedure with limited published research. Therefore, it has not been proven effective from a Western scientific standpoint. You understand that as a licensed psychologist I will be using the methods from conventional psychotherapy in our work, and you also have the option of using those methods exclusively. If you feel we are not a good match, you are free to discontinue therapy at any time, and I am very willing to provide you with names of other therapists.

You also understand that Energy Psychology methods may involve some psychotherapeutic touch. You will be informed prior to such touch and can always decline if you are uncomfortable for any reason whatsoever.

As with all forms of psychotherapy, it is possible to experience some emotional distress and physical sensations related to prior life experiences. The clinical reports from Energy Psychology show no additional side-effects when used appropriately. As with any form of psychotherapy, emotions may continue to arise after a therapy session, and you are encouraged to discuss such emotions with me.

Energy Psychology consent formulations and ethical guidelines proposed by David Feinstein, Ph.D., and the Association for Comprehensive Psychology have been incorporated into this statement.

References

Below are a few selected sources for additional information. For a more complete list, visit the Association for Comprehensive Psychology's web site (www.energypsych.org).

Deadman, P., Baker, K., & Al-Khafaji, M. (1998). *A Manual of Acupuncture*. Hove, East Sussex, England: Journal of Chinese Medicine.

Eden, D. & Feinstein, D. (1998) *Energy Medicine*. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam.

Feinstein, D., Eden, D. & Craig, G (2005) *The Promise of Energy Psychology*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Gerber, R. (2001) *Vibrational Medicine*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Company

Gallo, F. P. (2004). *Energy psychology: Explorations at the interface of energy, cognition, behavior, and health*. (2nd ed.). New York: CRC Press.

Hover-Kramer, D. & Murphy, M. (2005). *Creating Right Relationships: A Practical Guide to Ethics in Energy Therapies*. (<http://www.midgemurphy.com/Book/Book.html>)

Hunter, M & Struve, J (1998). *The Ethical Use of Touch in Psychotherapy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krebs, C. (1998) *A Revolutionary Way of Thinking*, Melbourne, Australia: Hill of Content

Wells, S., Polglase, K., Andrews, H.B., Carrington, P. and Baker, A. H. (2003). Evaluation of a meridian-based intervention, emotional freedom techniques (EFT), for reducing specific phobias of small animals. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 59, 943-966.

Overview of Energy Psychology Research

The current state of scientific evidence is summarized at www.EnergyPsychologyResearch.com.

Current understanding of the neurological mechanisms involved in energy psychology procedures is summarized at www.energypsych.org/article-ruden.php.

Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology has many articles: www.energypsych.org

Organizations

Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology: www.energypsych.org

Innersource: www.innersource.net

The International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine: www.issseem.org

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine: www.nccam.nih.gov

Developers of Energy Psychology Methods

Roger Callahan, Ph.D., Thought Field Therapy (TFT): <http://www.tftrx.com>

Ed Carlson, DDS, Core Health & the Deeply, Thoroughly, Quickly process (DTQ): EnergyEssentials.org

Asha Clinton, Ph.D., SEEMORG Matrix: <http://www.seemorgmatrix.org/>

Gary Craig, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT): www.emofree.com

John Diepold, Ph.D., Evolving Thought Field Therapy (EvTFT): www.tftworldwide.com

James Durlacher, DC, Acu-POWER Emotional Therapy: www.freedomfromfearforever.com

Ron Ebert, Ph.D. & Robert Schwarz, Psy.D., Attractor Field Techniques (AFT): www.the-tree-of-life.com

Donna Eden, Energy Medicine: www.innersource.net

Andrew Hahn, Psy.D., Guided Self Healing (GSH): www.guidedselfhealing.org

Fred Gallo, PhD., Energy Diagnostic and Treatment Methods (EDxTM): www.energypsych.com

Brian Grodner, Ph.D., Optimal Tapping: www.drgridnerrapidchange.com

Tapas Fleming, LAc, Tapas Acupressure Technique (TAT): www.tatlif.com

Michael Mayer, Ph.D., Bodymind Healing Qigong: www.bodymindhealing.com

Greg Nicosia, Ph.D., Thought Energy Synchronization Therapies (TEST): www.thoughtenergy.com

Larry Nims, Ph.D., Be Set Free Fast (BSFF): www.besetfreefast.com

Sandra Radomski, ND, LCSW, Allergy Antidotes: www.allergyantidotes.com

Steve Reed, LPC, LMSW, LMFT, The REMAP Process (REMAP): www.psychotherapy-center.com

Zivorad Slavinski, Primordial Energy Activation Transcendence (PEAT): www.spiritual-technology.com

Judith Swack, Ph.D., Healing from the Body Level Up (HBLU): www.judithswack.com

John Thie, DC Touch for Health (TFH): www.touch4health.com



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I have read through the Informed Consent for Energy Psychology and have had all my questions answered regarding the use of touch in Energy Psychology as well as Energy Psychology in general. I agree to proceed with applying Energy Psychology methods toward reaching my goals. This consent may be revoked verbally at any time. Please follow-up any verbal request to revoke consent in writing, so we are both very clear. We can discuss any aspect of this consent before signing.

Client's Signature

Date

I, Lara Symonds, attest that I have gone over this Informed Consent with the client named above and have answered any and all questions that arose regarding Energy Psychology and the use of touch in therapy.

Lara Symonds, MA, LMFT, DCEP

Date