Use of Emotional Freedom Technique as a Complementary Pain Management Practice

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Background/Problem

- Chronic pain and the opioid crisis
- Personalized pain management goals and treatment plans currently being explored
- Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) offers an easy to master self-care technique that patients can utilize in situations where they are anxious or in pain.

Pain

- Primary pain response is the brain’s response to the original injury and the secondary pain response involves the mind’s interpretation of the primary pain response.
- Hyperalgesia represents a lowering of the nociceptor threshold that may persist long after the initial cause of pain has disappeared.
- Secondary pain responses are frequently accompanied by increased anxiety and stress levels as the person experiences not only physical but also psychic distress.

Theoretical Basis of EFT

- Acceptance Theory
- Energy Medicine Using Acupressure Points

Student would be “accepting or acknowledging what the body feels while tapping on the acupressure points.

Interventions

- EFT works to reverse the pain cycle by restoring the body’s energy balance.
- EFT is a combination of Acceptance Theory and Energy Medicine.
  - The patient states 3 times whatever emotion or emotions they are feeling at the beginning tapping point. This is again stated while gently tapping over various acupressure points.
  - EFT is believed to relieve anxiety because the person is acknowledging what the body already feels and knows.

EFT Illustrated Points

- TOP OF THE HEAD
- EYEBROW
- UNDER EYE
- UNDER NOSE
- CHIN
- KARATE CHOP
- COLLARBONE
- SIDE OF THE EYE
- UNDER ARM

Use of EFT with Undergraduate Nursing Students

- Definitions of pain suggest that pain is a complex experience that involves multiple dimensions. This suggests that there are multiple ways to manage pain.
- In each episode of pain, different and varied interventions need to be explored.

Conclusions and Future Use of EFT

- EFT is a non-pharmacological approach, not requiring a provider order, is easily learned, not obtrusive when using, and requires no special equipment.
- EFT training could be included with opioid treatment for acute pain as well as chronic pain.
- Future uses of EFT include conducting training sessions prior outpatient surgery to reduce stress and pain responses post procedure.