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A practical guide for therapists of Healing within complementary therapy

“Total attention, with good intention”

By Sue Knight, chief executive of the Confederation of Healing Organisations (CHO):

Living as a Healing practitioner can be a lonely experience. We are a long way off from broad client understanding and acceptance of the world's oldest form of treatment.

The reason is clear. For many recipients of healing, the process by which it works is not widely understood. Not only that, but little of the scientific evidence that does show that healing can work reaches the mainstream and is 'heard'. The apparent lack of scientific evidence in a modern sense is a barrier to attracting a wider reach of clients for practitioners.

Healing, within complementary therapy, works holistically on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels. Typical practices range from Reiki, reflexology, acupuncture, massage, energy therapy to non-contact healing, among many others. All use the same principle of healing intent. That is, the intentional influence of one person on another without physical intervention, essentially by channelling energy, to promote healing and wellbeing. Healing by intention, is considered by many, with the current fashion for clinical trials, to be unmeasurable and inexplicable. That healing intent can be proven (scientifically) is our first step towards a greater acceptance and understanding of why it works.

Latest research into healing now gives practitioners the platform from which to say that healing offers a scientifically proven benefit, no longer clouded by the myth of the Placebo Effect. From this we now have an opportunity to begin to better understand the dynamics of healing



Practitioners wanting to offer their clients a deeper understanding can use the following points as a guide:

1. The trial

The University of Northampton recently published a peer-reviewed study of research results of non-contact healing, which examined critically whether there was evidence of an effect of healing intention. In order to reduce potential biases from placebo and expectation effects, the University examined trials carried out on cell and tissue cultures, small animals and plants, as well as on humans. For example, examining trials on whether healing intent or energy channelling accelerated the germination of seeds, and the enzymatic

activity within cell cultures. It was vitally important to test healing on both humans and non-humans, which brought about the following:

2. Dispelling the Placebo Effect

Critics of healing often cite “the placebo effect” for its potential success. Our view tackles just this point, and then goes on to challenge whether a placebo effect even matters or not. Most patients we have come across want a healing result or relief, and sometimes care less about the process. What the research uncovered, however, placed the science at the forefront of the answer. The human trials showed that healing generated statistically significant positive outcomes. Humans aside: cells in a petri dish, animals and plants all showed a positive response to healing and indeed a highly statistically significant effect was seen. It’s impossible for cells, plants and animals to experience any kind of placebo effect, therefore this proved without doubt that healing can make a difference.



3. Why it’s down to Healing Intent

While results of the research are groundbreaking for healing there is still much we do not know or understand. Metaphysical reactions do not carry the same easily understood reactions as conventional medicine. But what we do know now, in a scientifically demonstrable sense, is that healing intent is what made the difference. This healing intent was used with all the research subjects forming part of the research. This is not new to holistic practitioners, but allows us to understand and impart on a greater level what contributes to positive results that can occur.

4. Using the research for your outreach

While not all recipients will need a detailed explanation of how healing works, or scientific evidence, practitioners can explain it is about restoring a balance to life, and to relationships with others, about expressing feelings, about change and the need for it. Healing can help bring a sense of proportion and perspective and a greater feeling of ‘groundedness’, irrespective of whether clients are ill or not. On the other hand, it can be especially helpful in crisis situations and with terminal illness. It can stand alone as a therapy, has no harmful side effects and works well with any other therapy. It is a process, above all, to self-empower clients to heal themselves.

While we cannot claim healing cures, it is important to understand science does support the process by which healing works. So many factors contribute, whether it’s the match between the client and healer, the state in which both parties have arrived for the session, to the severity of the health issue. The point is, there is now a scientific basis for the effects of healing intent. Maybe from this we can generate a greater acceptance for the place of healing within the therapeutic spectrum.

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About Sue Knight, Healing Practitioner:

Somerset-based Sue Knight has been a Healing Practitioner for more than twenty years. Recently she worked as a spiritual wellbeing practitioner within NHS mental health units (Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust) and has worked on a committee level within healing organisations since 2000. She specialised in training healers; delivering workshops; and giving talks and demonstrations. Having been appointed chief executive of the Confederation of Healing Organisations in 2012, she has represented healing at regulatory and governmental levels. Sue’s ethos is to enable her clients’ self-healing mechanisms, which address mind, body and spirit.

About the CHO:

The Confederation of Healing Organisations (CHO) is the leading charity advancing the practice of Healing: promoting its benefits as a recognised complementary therapy by providing education, research and information to a wider audience of Healing and healthcare practitioners, and society as a whole.

The Confederation of Healing Organisations – Reg. Charity No. 1119533

About the meta-analysis research:

Scientific evidence for the effects of non-contact healing

<http://www.the-cho.org.uk/education-and-research/cho-and-research/two-meta-analyses-of-non-contact-healing-studies/>

Further information visit www.the-cho.org.uk