EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), or Tapping, is an evidence-based practice combining the manual stimulation of acupressure points with present-day cognitive and exposure therapies.¹ The process of tapping specific points is an effective holistic tool to regain control of anxiety, depression, mood disorders, self-limiting beliefs, addictions, and chronic pain.²

Easily performed and self-administered, Tapping is a potent non-pharmaceutical intervention for nurses seeking a whole-person approach to healing psychological and physical imbalances.²

To begin, the participant should reflect on these points:

1. Identify & Name the Source of the undesired symptom(s); ordinarily this is a fear, memory, or unresolved source of stress. If the stressor is an emotional pain, first acknowledge it and focus on allowing its passing, or stress release will not occur.
2. Define the degree of discomfort the source provokes. Score this level of emotion from 1-10 (1= very little, 10 = excruciating). This will allow you to evaluate progress.
3. Verbalize a Set-Up Statement. Connect the source of the symptoms to a self-affirming narrative. The goal is honest self-reflection; do not filter. Avoid generic statements; specific and candid declarations produce optimal outcomes. Example: To say, “Though I have completed all the professional competencies for this assignment, I am overwhelmed and scared that I cannot proficiently attend to these patients” would be a textbook type recitation.

Instead, let the set-up statement come from deep inside “I am uncomfortable and terrified of my limited experience, but I know I have developed and practiced my skills. I know how the ability to care for these patients safely and compassionately.”

4. Focus again on the source (identified in step 1)
5. Using one hand, tap with 4 fingers on the ‘karate chop’ point 5-7 times.
6. Continuing to focus on the Source, repeat the tapping at each consecutive specified meridian point: KC, EB, SE, UE, CN, CP, CB, UA, TH.

Resolution: Tapping soothes the amygdala, halting stress hormone release and the subsequent fight-or-flight response. The heart rate slows, and breath deepens; we are capable of rational thought without overriding emotion.

Nurses experiencing moral distress benefited from Tapping when used as a holistic intervention for emotional related symptoms³ and had a statistically significant reduction in stress and anxiety among nursing students.⁴

The Science: A provoked SNS alerts the brain to mortal danger. Chronic stress, anxiety, and frequent panic attacks result in consistently high levels of adrenaline and cortisol. These depress the immune system, increase heart disease and contribute to comorbidities of hypertension, indigestion, headaches and pain syndromes. Resting heart rate, blood pressure, heart rate coherence and variability, cortisol levels, and salivary immunoglobulin A, have been extensively studied to determine Mechanism of Action.⁵ Tapping utilizes the meridians of the nervous system to intercept pervasive triggers and disable the acute stress response. Destructive thoughts and emotions are bypassed, preventing and / or resolving distress. Meta-analyses of research using Tapping as an intervention for anxiety, depression, and PTSD indicate treatment benefits exceeded that of psychological medications and conventional psychotherapy. Patients showed persistent improvements.⁶ ⁷

Efficacy: After Tapping instruction, patient physiological parameters reflected statistically significant improvement with declines in anxiety, depression, PTSD, pain, and cravings reported using peer reviewed screening tools.⁵ Tapping stabilized genes and stress hormone biomarkers, including cortisol in trauma patients of abuse, vehicle accidents, war, prisoners, natural disasters, and 9/11 survivors.⁷ Over 80% of participants no longer met PTSD criteria after months of regular practice.⁸

References
9. www.AHNA.org


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