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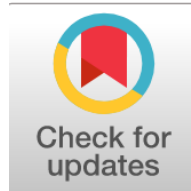
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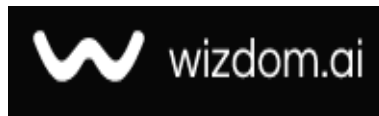
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Emotional Freedom as a Concept and Technique in Psychotherapy

Kebebasan Emosional sebagai Konsep dan Teknik dalam Psikoterapi

Ammar Talal Hamdullah Al-Fhadee, ammar.alfahady@gmail.com, (1)
, Iraq

⁽¹⁾ Corresponding author

Abstract

General Background: Emotional regulation plays a critical role in mental health, influencing psychological resilience and social well-being. **Specific Background:** Many individuals suppress their emotions due to social, academic, or personal pressures, resulting in long-term psychological distress, impaired relationships, and reduced self-awareness. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite the recognition of emotional regulation's importance, limited attention has been given to holistic, accessible methods like Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) in addressing emotional suppression and trauma in non-clinical populations. **Aims:** This study aims to explore the concept of emotional freedom and evaluate the efficacy of EFT as a complementary intervention for emotional regulation and psychological healing. **Results:** Findings from the literature indicate that EFT contributes to stress reduction, improved emotional expression, enhanced self-control, and alleviation of trauma-related symptoms through its integration of acupressure and cognitive focus. **Novelty:** This study synthesizes psychological theory with energy-based interventions, offering a novel perspective on how EFT supports emotional liberation by restoring physiological and emotional balance. **Implications:** The findings suggest that incorporating EFT into therapeutic and self-help contexts could provide a low-cost, non-invasive, and effective tool for enhancing emotional resilience and overall mental well-being, particularly in populations underserved by conventional psychological services.

Highlights:

EFT offers affordable, accessible emotional healing for non-clinical populations.

Combines acupressure and cognition to regulate suppressed emotions.

Fills research gap in holistic emotional regulation methods.

Keywords: Emotional Regulation, Emotional Freedom Technique, Mental Health, Psychological Healing, Holistic Intervention

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Introduction

Life circumstances and the associated social, economic, and academic pressures render an individual unable to express their emotions and feelings. This can lead to psychological pain, internal conflict, and an inability to control their emotional life. Some emotions and feelings can be fatal to an individual; they can destroy themselves, their dreams, their goals, or even destroy their life entirely. Feelings of anger, sadness, and resentment can influence their life choices, devastate their self, disappoint, or frustrate their goals. Freedom is a right for all people and a universal human demand. A person's life can only progress positively if it is practiced correctly. The mind must be trained to think independently and freely. Thinking and exercising freedom within one's mind and soul contributes to liberating oneself from the internal constraints that deprive one of freedom and provides insight and flexibility in self-criticism [1].

Past traumas affect an individual, making them feel powerless and unable to cope. They may feel lonely and disconnected from themselves and others around them, and feel unable to connect with the outside world in a real and convincing way. The individual loses part of their feelings, which means losing part of the self [2].

Sometimes, the individual sees themselves as a victim of others and circumstances, rather than compassionately learning from their feelings. They do their best to avoid this by learning and habituating to controlling processes, materials, people, and behaviors such as anger, blame, withdrawal, or resistance. This prevents them from exercising emotional freedom. Avoiding responsibility for their feelings leads to emotional misery and hurt. Individuals are born with great suffering when they ignore and avoid their feelings and responsibilities, rather than confronting them openly and acceptingly [3].

Emotional freedom is one of the best traits that distinguish humanity. Possessing and using it in a perceptive manner is essential for us to understand others and ourselves. It enables us to practice emotional patterns that are determined according to inherited and acquired determinants. It is necessary to know the tools that increase the ability to liberate ourselves from these negative feelings and generate positive feelings instead, enabling us to achieve the desired results [4].

Defining Emotional Freedom as a Concept

Orloff (2009) defines emotional freedom as the personal and spiritual development that helps an individual deal with negative emotions and feelings rather than collapse into them. It helps one grow spiritually and remain focused when one is in a state of emotional and general exhaustion, charged with dementia, anger, and negative energies [5]. Paul (2010) defined it as the result of learning how to take emotional responsibility—that is, responsibility for our feelings—and freedom from feeling as a position of our emotions and control over them. Individuals are emotionally free when they know how to learn from and manage their feelings so that they do not react to them or control them (1). As for (David, 2011), he defined it as the individual's ability to feel any emotion at the same moment and then interact with it. It includes the ability to exclude negative feelings outside the self, gives you a choice to determine how you respond to anything, and helps you control your reactions [6].

Emotional freedom as a concept

Emotional freedom represents a roadmap for those individuals experiencing stress, exhaustion, frustration, and anxiety, as well as for those who are in a good emotional place but want to feel better [5]. Eisenberg (2010) believes that individuals who have difficulty expressing their emotions are more prone to sadness and psychological distress, unable to interact with others and help others when they encounter certain situations, and unable to build other social relationships that demonstrate cooperation among them [7].

Emotional freedom is a therapeutic skill that frees an individual from fears and allows them to overcome adversity without attacking someone, losing their temper, or being derailed by negativity. If an individual is overwhelmed by negativity, they cannot live a happy and liberated life. Most people do not have the tools to transform frustration, depression, anxiety, and fear into positive feelings [8].

Enfield (2018) refers to emotional freedom as the intelligent integration and release of heavy and powerful emotions, emotions that limit or restrict our natural flow in some way. If we are burdened with sadness and inner pain, are constantly anxious and fearful, and are constantly plagued by the power of our own or others' emotions, we are not emotionally free. Emotional freedom is about understanding and processing our feelings with love, integrity, and the power of intuitive heart intelligence [9].

Feelings of misery and frustration toward oneself and one's life do not make us better people. Instead, they generate anger, resentment, and sadness, and may even drive some to their worst behaviors. They can blind us to the truth and render us unable to work toward becoming better people. Even if we believe that others need these emotional inhibitions to make them act, we can decide that we don't need them because we can use our emotional freedom to become more rational, moral, and loving [10].

Emotional freedom refers to our potential and ability to engage in new tasks and take wise risks. Willpower is the force that drives an individual to succeed, achieve, and work to overcome difficulties and rid themselves of negative feelings, internal

restrictions, disturbances, and anger. Expressing anger is often linked to intolerance and is an allergic or reflexive reaction, i.e., a feeling of guilt [11].

Emotional freedom plays a role in liberating oneself from negative feelings and daring to free oneself from restrictions and shackles, in the presence of the power of thought and willpower. The individual must boldly and persistently advance to demolish everything that hinders his progress, wastes his strength, or obstructs psychological growth aimed at self-realization [12]. Jassim and Latifa's (2018) study indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between persuasive intelligence and emotional freedom, i.e., the higher the persuasive intelligence, the greater the emotional freedom [13]. Meanwhile, Kamel's (2018) study, which was conducted on a group of university students, indicated a strong positive relationship between emotional freedom and emotional health [14].

Individuals with disorders suffer from a disturbance or weakness in emotional engagement. They are often sensitive to the feelings of others and unable to understand the emotions conveyed by facial and body movements in social and emotional interactions. This is simply because these movements overwhelm their ability to process and filter emotions. This can lead to reactions characterized by tension, avoidance, and withdrawal, thus hindering the early development of coping mechanisms and emotional engagement [15].

Emotional Freedom Technique as a Therapeutic Technique

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a relatively new applied science. It was introduced to the world in 1997 by its American founder Gary Craig an engineer and graduate of Stanford University in California. Craig was a trainee of Dr. Roger Callahan the founder of Thought Field Therapy (TFT). However, he found it to be extremely complex and ramified, making its use extremely difficult and requiring a skilled practitioner to implement it correctly. EFT has made complex Chinese therapies easy to learn and apply, and anyone can benefit from it in minutes, without consulting a specialist or spending exorbitant amounts on therapy sessions. EFT is a simple process, and using your fingertips will yield amazing and rapid results, allowing you to, God willing, free yourself from your long-standing suffering with negative emotions [16]. Emotional freedom is a technique that frees an individual from fear and allows him to overcome adversity without attacking someone, losing his temper, or being derailed by negativity. If an individual is drowned in the burden of negativity, he cannot live a happy and liberated life. Most people do not have the tools to transform frustration, depression, anxiety, and fear into positive feelings [17].

What does EFT help with?

1. Reducing stress and promoting relaxation.
2. Relieving negative or uncomfortable emotions, such as anxiety, sadness, anger, guilt, and frustration.
3. Relieving certain types of discomfort or physical pain.
4. Addressing the effects of emotional trauma, whether the individual remembers it or not.
5. Intervening in addiction treatment.
6. Reducing stress from social relationships.
7. Improving or alleviating symptoms of diagnosed medical conditions.
8. Reducing phobias and other fears, whether irrational or rational.
9. Relieving symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.
10. Promoting better sleep and sleep habits.
11. Increasing self-esteem, clearer thinking, positive emotions, and a greater sense of inner peace.
12. Improving performance (artistic, professional, athletic, and sexual).
13. Maximizing creativity, visualization, and goal setting.
14. Increasing energy and productivity.
15. Empowering children, parents, and families.
16. Benefiting the lives of animals.
17. Promoting spiritual growth, self-empowerment, and self-confidence [18].

Emotionally focused therapy (EFT) is a useful complement to psychotherapy, and mental health professionals, nurses, educators, and others who conduct psychotherapy sessions are encouraged to use it. Psychotherapy involves cognitive debriefing sessions that enable survivors to share and express their experiences without fear or hesitation, with the support of fellow survivors, and to process traumatic events in a healthy way (Mitchell & Everly, 1996). Therefore, EFT can be particularly effective after initial crisis counseling sessions, as it can be used as a tool to relieve stress and the psychological pressure caused by post-traumatic stress disorder.. EFT, however, cannot replace psychotherapy for the treatment of severe trauma. Therefore, when persons are suffering from PTSD or are in crisis, the mental health worker will still need to develop rapport with the client, take a brief history, assess suicidal risk, and rule out dissociative processes. These persons should be carefully evaluated to determine whether a referral to a professional psychotherapist is appropriate [19].

Humans have energy bodies; that is, the energy flow that gives the body its vital energy is provided by meridians/channels that surround the body like an electrical grid. Regularly blocking the energy flow through these channels can result in blockages/obstructions as a result of negative emotions such as stress, fear, anger, and anxiety. These disrupt the physical

body by affecting the entire energy flow. This causes the constant release of the hormones cortisol, norepinephrine, and adrenaline in the body by stimulating the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal triad in the stress response that occurs when an emotional stimulus is brought to mind. This repeated stimulation creates a threat warning, particularly by affecting the amygdala and causing it to become overactive. Using EFT, the amygdala is prevented from being disturbed by applying light pressure (pressure to specific meridian points on the body) while this disturbing stimulus in our minds is active. This ensures a continuous flow of energy by sending signals to disrupt the arousal pathways in the brain. Maintaining and balancing the flow of energy in the body is believed to ensure that physical, emotional, and mental health are on an equal footing. The reason for the recent interest in EFT is that it is supported by evidence-based applications, 19 it is safe and easy to apply to oneself and others, and there are few side effects. Therefore, it can be applied to all ages and groups, such as pregnant women, the elderly, and children. Studies using EFT have shown that anxiety in first-time mothers about childbirth has decreased, (139) anxiety levels in patients with fibromyalgia have decreased, (140) and there has been a significant reduction in exam anxiety in nursing students. In Klund's (2016) meta-analysis, which included 14 randomized controlled studies on emotional therapy, statistically significant reductions in anxiety, fear, and depression scores were reported with self-administered emotional therapy [20].

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