

**Project Abstract: Comprehensive Literature Review of Emotional Freedom Techniques for PTSD and Associated Symptoms by Sandra Brooks, MN, PMHCNS-BC
Vanderbilt University School of Nursing Scholarly Project – DNP Program 2011**

Background: PTSD, an all too common response to combat exposure, is challenging our mental health resources as the US remains engaged in two wars over multiple years. There are inadequate numbers of providers and facilities to offer our affected veterans standard treatments, which are time consuming, costly, often ineffective, and frequently involve pharmaceuticals with serious potential side effects. EFT, an easily learned and taught technique which is then self-administered, has the potential, if proven effective, to address this problem.

Purpose: The purpose of this comprehensive literature review was to determine whether or not the Emotional Freedom Techniques, an “energy psychology” therapy using self-tapping on selected acupuncture points combined with a cognitive intervention, has adequate evidence of efficacy and safety to support its use in the treatment of those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and related syndromes.

Methodology: Major medical, psychological, and alternative/complementary databases as well as EFT and Energy psychology websites were searched using selected key words to find pertinent English language studies using human subjects over 17 years of age where EFT was used as a modality to treat PTSD or its associated symptoms of anxiety and/or depression. Selected studies were organized according to hierarchy of evidence, summarized in table format, then analyzed and discussed.

Results: Only eight studies met the eligibility criteria and only three were randomized controlled trials. The combined number of subjects studied was only 694 and only three of the studies specifically used subjects suffering from PTSD. In spite of these and other limitations of the selected studies, EFT appeared in each study to help improve PTSD and/or related symptoms and the improvement in symptoms was sustained over time.

Implications for practice: Though evidence supporting EFT for the treatment of PTSD is hardly conclusive, there is enough supportive data to warrant ongoing research and perhaps using EFT as an adjunct to other standard treatments. APNs can play an active role conducting this research, teaching the technique to other professionals, and directly helping PTSD sufferers.