

The New Power Therapy: Emotional Transformation Therapy

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Within the last two decades, the mental health field has seen a variety of new power therapies that facilitate deep, rapid changes. These approaches are often techniques that are natural, surprisingly effective and make traditional methods of counseling look primitive by comparison. While their rapid effects are often eye - catching, they are often either narrow in their range of application or short-term in their effects. It is these and other factors that separates Emotional Transformation Therapy (ETT) as the archetype for the new genre of psychotherapy. ETT is a mix of technology and compassionate interpersonal psychotherapy that ushers in a method that is very different from either the use of psychiatric medications or cognitive approaches to psychotherapy.

An ideal form of therapy for psychological conditions would have the following twelve characteristics: 1) It would work quickly. 2) It would work thoroughly, at the source of the problem. 3) It would have the capacity to precisely draw out inner resources for healing that may have been unconscious to the participant. 4) It would empower the participant. 5) It would be cost-effective. 6) It would be natural and non- invasive. 7) It would work in such a way that one could learn from having had the problem in order to be prepared to handle future challenges better. 8) It would resolve issues on a long-term basis without a dependency on the treatment. 9) It would be supportive so that the recipient felt cared for. 10) It would work consistently. 11) It would strongly improve not only the participant s mind but his/her physical body as well. 12) It would often help participants to experience outcomes that not only relieve symptoms but also provoke far more positive experiences than the client may have previously experienced. These features are being exhibited more and more frequently in the new genre of psychotherapy that uses biophysics.

The Emerging Biophysics Paradigm in a Biochemical Era

In the era of the biochemical model of psychological treatment, a new biophysics paradigm is emerging that may elevate treatment to new levels. Biophysics approaches include but are not limited to power therapies like (1) Thought Field Therapy (TFT), which uses the tapping of acupuncture meridians to facilitate rapid psychological changes, (2) Energy medicine techniques like therapeutic touch, cranio sacral manipulation, confluent somatic therapy, etc. that utilize emanations of bioenergy for fast mind and body changes, (3) Sound therapy like toning , (4) Light therapy like bright white light or ETT . Instead of viewing conditions as chemical imbalances , the biophysics paradigm may focus upon human rhythms like brainwaves, ultradian rhythms (90 minute brain hemisphere shifts) and cranio sacral rhythms. These can be seen as out of resonance during disturbances like depression. The biophysics methods appear to provide advantages over biochemical remedies such as less adverse side effects, more rapid outcomes and less costly interventions.

Dawning of Light in Therapy

This new method emerged from a long history of the therapeutic use of light. More recently in 1982, Dr. D.F. Kripke was the first researcher in this era to scientifically show that artificial light could be developed to have the effect of changing mood states in people suffering from what was later to be called seasonal affective disorder (S.A.D.). (Kripke, et. al. 1983) The original conception for its effectiveness was that a white light with a spectral distribution (blend of colors) similar to sunlight could be used to re-set malfunctioning biological clocks in the brain to reduce the impact of the longer winter nights. However, since that time millions of dollars

have been spent for research on the effects of light stimulation on humans, so it is now known that appropriate light stimulation can even alter non-seasonally linked mood states. (Kripke, 1988) This means that anxiety, depression, bipolar conditions and many other conditions have been shown to respond favorably to light stimulation. The current standard of care for the treatment of S.A.D. is the use of a very bright (10,000 lux) white light for half an hour per day combined with antidepressants. (Eastman, et. al., 1998) It has now been established that light stimulation utilizes the mechanism of the serotonin neurotransmitter system as one mechanism to acquire these outcomes. (Brewerton, et al, 1987; O Roark, et al, 1987; Rao, M.L., et al, 1992) One of the problems with this bright white light approach is that a person must use it every day during the problematic time or the symptoms were very likely to quickly recur.

The bright white light approach is a method of suppressing or controlling unwanted emotions rather than actually resolving them. An entirely different way to harness the power of light is for the different purpose of bringing forth these unwanted moods and quickly processing them in order to resolve them for long-term relief. It has now been discovered that this can be accomplished by the use of specific wavelengths (colors) of light in conjunction with expressive psychotherapy. Scientific research has supported the idea that color has impact on both psychological and physical responses. (Pressey, 1921; Profusek & Rainey, 1987; Schaie, 1961; Schaie, 1961, Todd, 1973; Wilson, 1966) I observed hundreds of clients viewing various colors of light as their feelings were expressed. From these observations a content analysis of changes in thoughts and emotions yielded predictable patterns of responses. I found that the use of appropriately selected colors that match the recipient's exact state of mind, yielded rapid and dramatic changes in mood states. Previous scientific findings suggest that studies of color and human response seldom yielded the degree power of changes that I observed because the role of the subject's mental state was not accounted for at the time color stimuli were presented to the recipient. This matching response is called the radiant biosynthesis effect. This effect is one of the factors in this new archetype of psychotherapy.

When facilitators are trained to match wavelength of light stimulation into the eyes with specific expressed emotional themes of the client's mental state, consistent transformation of emotional states takes place. For example, if a client was fixated on

sadness due to the loss of a loved one, the color green functions as a catalyst. With appropriate green exposure during the expression of sadness, the emotions briefly elevate. With continued green stimulation, emotions usually rapidly progress through phases until the opposite of sadness, joy, emerges. When this takes place, profound physiological changes typically accompany the change and spiritual experiences are frequent consequences.

How does it Work?

The practice of ETT typically involves the use of a small light instrument that projects beams of low-brightness light into the client's eyes. The client is seated less than a meter away from the light source. The setting is usually a darkened room in which the verbal processing of issues takes place with a facilitator's guidance. Variations of this optimal method may involve the use of specialized eye glasses, colored charts or colored fabrics or even non-specialized light sources in the room. When strobic light is used, the only contraindication is a client with a medical history of a rare type of seizure elicited by flashing lights. While the lack of direct eye contact with the facilitator may be uncomfortable to some clients initially, people actually tend to disclose more freely by not looking directly at their therapist. When the client looks directly at either a generated light source or a reflected light source, he/she is less likely to focus on superficial issues and is more likely to focus within himself/herself. (Pearlman, 2000)

For many people, talk therapy and supportive listening are all that is needed to improve, but far too often it is not enough. ETT is essentially a form of amplified interactive psychotherapy. Research supports the effectiveness of psychotherapy in general (Elkin, 1989; Elkin, 1989; Epstein, 1981). Many clients are not in contact with their emotions and talk therapy, by itself, may simply become an intellectual exercise. Still others appreciate the support that may be experienced through talking but want something that has a greater impact upon their emotions. ETT does not replace talk therapy; it adds to it. The unconditional positive regard for clients that Carl Rogers advocated is still very important in ETT, but simply extends beyond its usual limits when the brain is stimulated by appropriate light. When proper light stimulation takes place as a recipient is supported by listening, a more rapid sequence of awarenesses and progressively changing emotional states occurs.

The Power of Using Brainwave Patterns

In addition to color stimulation, ETT uses rhythmic light to elicit brainwaves optimal for therapeutic objectives. In 1939, Dr. Walter was the first to discover that pulsating light into the eyes causes brainwave patterns to align with the rate of the light's pulse. (Walter & Shipton, 1949; Walter and Shipton, 1949) There are several of studies on the effects of flickering light upon the brain (Brazier & Cosby, 1951; Iwara, 1974; Kuhnt & Creutzfeldt, 1971; Glicksohn, J., 1986; Nogaway, T., & et al., 1976; Sato, K., & Kitajima, K., 1965; Takigawa, M., 1988; Vogel, W., Broverman, D. M., Klaiber, E., & Kun, K. J., 1969). A central premise in EEG biofeedback or neurotherapy is that each psychological condition is characterized by predominant brainwave patterns. By teaching clients to learn healthier brainwave patterns, relief of the condition's symptoms often takes place. ETT utilizes this principle but provides the distinct advantage of eliciting the desired brainwave patterns within seconds, instead of through hours of EEG biofeedback sessions. In addition, since ETT does not require sensitive wiring like biofeedback, the client can verbally process emotions awakened by entering the brainwave state during the moment of a particular experience. There are many entrainment devices that use light stimulation on a self-help basis. (Hutchison, 1991) However, individual differences in brainwave patterns and changing needs for different brainwave patterns during a session are limitations for the self-help potential. It may be a grave mistake to eliminate the role of a facilitator's discernment and support during light stimulation. This capacity to bring forth brainwave patterns optimal for a given task during each moment of a psychotherapy session allows for precision and unusual speed in the counseling process.

In essence, ETT draws from the best of EEG biofeedback and the best of expressive interpersonal therapy for an unusually efficient synthesis. For example, if a person has difficulty accessing helpful insights, emotions or relevant memories related to the objective, brainwave patterns from eight to eleven cycles per second are well known to bring about increased inner awareness. (Toman, 1994) The control of the strobe rate of light stimulation allows the trained facilitator to help make awareness and processing of the client's issues easier and faster. In addition to simply accessing desired brainwave states, light stimulation itself actually stimulates the brain in ways that activate the entire mind-body system.

Reaching the Depths of the Unconscious Mind

The process of hypnosis is well documented to accomplish everything from control of physical pain to powerful changes in psychological conditions. (Hammond, 1990) Since ETT utilizes specific states of mind, it possesses many of the same powerful capacities of hypnosis. However, standard types of hypnosis are limited because many people are not hypnotizable. In addition, the hypnotic use of suggestion has become a questionable practice because of the possibility of creating false memories when memory retrieval is a part of the healing process. A

third factor that limits hypnosis is that it is an interpersonal art form that is greatly dependent on the prowess of the hypnotherapist. While individual differences in the skill of the facilitator are always a part of therapy, eliciting appropriate brainwave states by simply turning a knob controlling the strobe rate is significantly more consistent and precise for eliciting optimal states of mind than the use of verbal suggestion. Since the client's eyes are open during ETT, facilitators do not actually control the client's will during the process. Instead, ETT focuses upon drawing forth the client's own resources for the resolution of mutually identified objectives.

One of the most intriguing benefits of hypnosis, body-orientated therapies and the use of applied kinesiology is the ability to bring forth previously unconscious material. Hypnosis is well known to retrieve unconscious memories into awareness. (Hammond, 1990: p 509-517) Body orientated methods like cranio sacral manipulation often achieves this same awareness but without the influence of suggestion. (Upledger, 1991) However, most body-oriented approaches require physical touch by the facilitator which is not acceptable in most situations of psychotherapy. More recently, applied kinesiology or muscle testing is a popular method of bypassing the conscious mind to access unconscious information through the wisdom of the body. ETT also has a similar strength in gaining conscious awareness of previously unconscious information. In addition to insights made conscious to the recipient through light stimulation, an interpretive system of visual feedback during light stimulation yields frequent revelations of implicit memory. Just as projective testing like the Rorschach Ink Blot Test reveals information not known to the conscious mind through viewing an ambiguous visual target; rhythmic light stimulation elicits minute to minute projections that reveal the activities of the unconscious mind. When properly understood, this visual feedback is highly accurate and therefore advantageous in quickly revealing the source of psychological problems. Without suggestion or physical touch the visual feedback system of ETT is harnessed to spontaneously bring forth authentic unconscious information for immediate diagnostic usage.

Other treatment methods do not regard unconscious sources as having any value in managing symptoms. There are various forms of psychological techniques that use the physical tapping of acupuncture meridians. Among these are Thought Field Therapy (TFT) and its derivative Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). These methods often stop the experience of unwanted emotions but usually require further self-help management. These methods are basically quick but they do not attempt to promote insight or understanding. During ETT, insights become abundant and new learning typical. Rather than conceiving of unwanted emotions as disturbances in one's energy field, emotions can be a potentially rich resource that can be used for greater human potentiation. The value in unwanted emotions that is discovered through ETT sessions is simply avoided in meridian tapping techniques. For example, as painful as grief from the loss of a loved one can be, those who have done grief effectively can attest to deeply moving experiences and spiritual insight. With ETT, depth work does not have to be forfeited on behalf of short term relief.

Biochemistry and Psychotherapy

Since biochemical contributions to mental health conditions like depression are selected for topics of research far more often than psychodynamic contributors, there are far more scientific findings about biochemical contributors. This scientific research is then used in pharmaceutical advertising to substantiate the value of biochemical remedies in the form of pills. While it is not disputed that biochemistry plays a role in psychological conditions, the importance of the biochemical contribution in the context of other contributors is in question. Research in brain development suggests that interpersonal interaction literally shapes brain functioning and in turn allows biochemical changes to take place as a consequence instead of as a cause. (Siegel, 1999).

Two scientific studies that used the SPECT Scan technology compared the effects of antidepressants and psychological counseling with depressed patients. (Brody, et al, 2001; Brody, et al 2001) The findings revealed that brain blood flow changes were very similar with both methods. Changes in brain chemistry are not dependent on consuming chemicals. Brain chemistry can change through the process of new learning that occurs in psychotherapy. In a massive US government study that reviewed all 334 studies on depression from 1980 to 1998, Murlow found that psychotherapy did slightly better than psychiatric medications or counseling plus medications. (Murlow, et al, 1999) Therefore, by accelerating the impact of psychotherapy through light stimulation, elevating effectiveness for an already effective approach has the potential to achieve efficacy levels unknown before this era.

The ETT method differs substantially in philosophy from the medication management of psychological symptoms. First, most psychotropic medications are designed to control symptoms by suppressing emotions, whereas ETT is designed to relieve symptoms by eliciting and transforming emotional states. This elicitation of emotions serves to encourage familiarity and skill in handling one's own feelings as well as resulting in a sense of empowerment from having faced and overcome adversity. These skills result in an ability to cope when emotions arise in the future which results in preventing the tendency for relapse. Psychiatric medications usually tend to foster a dependency on their continued use; whereas, most psychotherapy does not. ETT in particular fosters a long-term change without continued dependence on it that often occurs in the same amount of time that it takes for most psychiatric medications to reach their peak of effectiveness.

Eye Movement, Eye Position and Light

In addition, to the use of color to access moods and rhythmic emission of light to entrain brainwaves, ETT uses a powerful array of eye movements and peripheral eye stimulation techniques in conjunction with light stimulation. There are scientific studies on the impact of eye movement upon the psyche; (De Jongh, A., & ten Broeke, E., 1998; De Jongh, A., ten Broeke, E., & Renssen, M. R., 1999; Faw, T. T., & Nunnally, J. C., 1967; Gross, Y., Franko, R. & Lewin, I., 1978; Rothbaum, B. O., 1977; Scheck, M. M., Schaeffer, J. A., & Gillette, C. S., 1998; Wilson, S. A., Becker, L. A., & Tinker, R. H., 1995). Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a technique that is documented to be successful in facilitating the relief of unresolved trauma. While ETT is not the same as EMDR, it does use principles of eye movement that appear to stem from a similar mechanism for psychological change. For example, EMDR primarily uses three basic angles for eye movement, whereas ETT utilizes an infinite array of angles. ETT simply harnesses a variety of speeds of eye movements and particularly different wavelengths of light stimulation in conjunction with eye movement processes. Therefore, with more resources available, the possibility exists for more precision in application. For example, specific types of eye movement techniques in ETT can be chosen for retrieving memory, facilitating precise changes in bodily experiences, rapidly transforming emotional states, cognitive reframing, etc. While the specific type of light stimulation accounts for much of the changes, when coupled with carefully chosen angles and speeds of eye movement, profound shifts of emotional states become commonplace.

While multidimensional eye movement is a part of ETT, peripheral eye stimulation is even more central to the process of deep, rapid improvements. This differs from eye movement techniques in that the client's eyes are still during this technique but specific angles of viewing the visual target are utilized. Eye position concepts have been used in neurolinguistic programming as visual accessing cues. (Bandler & Grinder, 1979: p25) In research, numerous scientific studies support a variation of this concept in what is referred to as lateralized visual brain stimulation. (Hugdahl, K., Franzon, M., Anderson, B. & Waldebo, G., 1983; Schiffer, F.,

1977; Schiffer, F., Anderson, CM. & Teicher, MH., 1997; Schiffer, F., Anderson, CM., Renshaw, PF., Mass, LC. & Teicher, MH., 1998; Wittling W. & Roschmann R., 1993; Zaidel, E., 1975). Harvard psychiatrist, Frederick Schiffer describes that the left portion of both eyes access the brain's right hemisphere and the right portion of both eyes access the left hemisphere. Therefore, it is hypothesized that this mechanism explains the profound changes that can be acquired through lateral visual stimulation. While this explanation has validity, it is extremely incomplete. ETT utilizes eye positions that can be found in 24 different angles through the 360° range of peripheral eye positions, not just right and left positions. Through this mechanism, it has been observed that specific types of important previously unconscious information can be readily accessed. In addition, major changes in previously fixated emotional states may often be facilitated to take place within minutes. This article is not the forum to fully describe the complex peripheral eye stimulation system. Suffice it to say that it is an extraordinary means of facilitating change. When quantitative EEG measurements have taken place before and after these procedures, powerful brain integration changes have been observed. This appears to result in rapid symmetry of brain hemisphere coherence.

Enlightening Body and Spirit

In addition to the psychological benefits of ETT, there are some unique physiological benefits. This occurs in several ways. First of all, there is a strong correlation between psychological conditions, such as depression and medical problems. Medical problems often improve as a consequence of changes in psychological experiences. Secondly, when light enters the eyes, it appears that elements of the brain serve to consistently transduce these impulses to specific vicinities of the body depending on the wavelength of light used. For example, blue green tends to activate the trapezius and shoulders. This activation can be harnessed to strongly alter symptoms in a specific vicinity. The fact that the hypothalamus, the brainstem and the limbic system are directly impacted by light stimulation into the eyes provides numerous opportunities for potential influence. Third, the consistent ability for variations of light stimulation to activate the sympathetic nervous system or the parasympathetic nervous system by choice, offers opportunities to improve physiological experiences.

One of the most intriguing effects of ETT is the tendency for it to provoke spiritual experiences. There is a long history of the association of light with spirituality. Every major religion on earth uses the term light to refer to the divine. While many people would differentiate spiritual light from physical light and others would suggest that the term light is only meant to be a metaphor for the divine, observations during ETT suggest it may be more. During ETT sessions when relief of unwanted emotional states occurs, the result is often not just neutrality, but instead a positive experience. These profound experiences are often described in spiritual terms by the clients themselves. ETT appears to have a greater propensity for spiritual experiences than other forms of psychotherapy.

Is ETT a Panacea?

No. A small percentage of people find ETT over stimulating and an even smaller number of people perceive little effects of light stimulation. Sometimes people just need warm human support and at other times, skills training is necessary. Other people prefer pharmaceutical methods. There are circumstances in which symptom management is the preferred objective. Couple or family systems interactive work without light stimulation is most appropriate at times. While ETT is an optimal form of treatment by itself for the vast majority of people and conditions, it can also be used in conjunction with other methods.

What Can ETT Be Used For?

ETT has a particular strength in swift relief of unwanted emotional states. The vast majority of psychological conditions described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV have symptoms of fixated, distorted or flat emotional symptoms. (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) These emotional states appear to be central to the formation and maintenance of these conditions. Therefore, with the power to strongly and consistently change this emotional aspect of conditions, the power to heal is elevated. Typical outcomes of ETT include changing major recurrent depression in a few weeks, changing post traumatic stress disorder at a depth that may have been unknown before, relieving anxiety disorders like phobias, panic attacks and generalized anxiety so completely that relapse is almost unknown. Virtually anything that has been accomplished by EEG biofeedback is likely to be possible with ETT . Other conditions helped by ETT include but are not limited to attention deficit disorder, closed head injuries, physical pain, etc.

Conclusion

ETT accelerates interpersonal talk therapy to new levels of outcomes. Since ETT is based on a combination of several elements conducted either simultaneously or in sequence, scientific inquiry would typically reduce the method into its components and measure the effects of each element. Almost all of these parts have already been scientifically verified. Therefore, while the method may appear novel to many people, its foundation is grounded in evidence. ETT appears to make art out of a science, humanity out of technology, and biochemical changes out of biophysics. This synthesis of naturalistic techniques invites further scientific study. While a further understanding about why this method works is of high interest, both scientists and psychotherapists might best serve humanity by focusing on outcome studies.

ETT is a new archetype of psychotherapy that facilitates changes so quickly and deeply that when it is demonstrated, cognitive dissonance often rattles the observer. This takes place because for those professionals schooled in the biochemical era, biophysics interventions simply look confusing. Even though the twelve features of ideal psychotherapy are often characteristic of ETT , its effectiveness is questioned because it is not yet widely known through the miracle of media marketing. Still others cannot conceive of a form of therapy that can be both brief and long-term in its effect. Whenever a shift in paradigm takes place, there is a transition period in which some people resist the change. However, through all of this controversy, some people will see the light. Our vested interests in current treatments must yield to possibilities of better healing. There will be new levels of interventions in the distant future but the present era has now taken a leap forward with ETT .