

Understanding Therapeutic Touch

Therapeutic Touch® is a modern application of ancient forms of healing which uses the laying-on of hands. In Therapeutic Touch, the practitioner uses his/her hands in the client's energy field to bring that field to balance and harmony. The client remains fully clothed, in a sitting or lying down position.

Therapeutic Touch was developed in the early 1970's by Dolores Krieger, at the time a professor of nursing at New York University, and Dora Kunz, an intuitive with clairvoyant abilities. When Dolores Krieger and Dora Kunz met, the scientist and the intuitive joined forces to develop a method of healing that has since been taught to tens of thousands of people. Many are nurses or other health professionals, many like myself, are lay people.

How does Therapeutic Touch work?

One of the underlying working assumptions of Therapeutic Touch is that human beings are open energy fields. We may think of our own energy fields surrounding our bodies, or go even further along the lines of Quantum Physics and the Theory of Relativity, and consider ourselves consisting of pure energy, as matter is considered to be energy. This is just a question of degree or interpretation. In either case, any physical illness can be viewed as an imbalance in this energy field - as some form of disorder.

Another working assumption of Therapeutic Touch is that our bodies and their energy fields, just like the universe in which we live, have an innate tendency towards order. This may sound like a commonplace statement,

but it is something very fundamental of which we are usually unconscious. Imagine for a moment what would happen if the planets did not stay quite in their orbits, or if your heart didn't maintain its rhythmical beat so that it had a pulse of 200 for a couple of hours and then rested for a day in between, or that apples didn't ripen in the fall but haphazardly over the course of 12 months. This is disorder, and while we may laugh at the examples, when disorder happens in our bodies or in our lives we usually don't find it funny.

The intent of the Therapeutic Touch practitioner will therefore be to restore this order in the energy field. Intention is an important factor in the Therapeutic Touch process.

An additional working assumption of Therapeutic Touch is that we are bilaterally symmetrical, not just physically, but in our energy field as well. If the energy of the right shoulder feels different than the left, this indicates disorder, energetically speaking. Whether it originates from a physical strain of the shoulder, bursitis, a back problem, nervous tension or something else, is in a practical sense irrelevant, as we make no diagnosis. If the energy field can be restored to order, the underlying physical condition is likely to improve as well.

What does a treatment look like?

I centre myself to be calm and present and to put aside any personal concerns. Then, I use my hands to assess the energy field, a few inches away from the body. Once I have a sense of the field and any possible imbalances, I "clear" the field. Dolores Krieger coined the term "unruffling"; it is sort

of like straightening a wrinkled or uneven blanket. This helps to clear blockages, get stagnant energy moving and often elicits a deep sense of relaxation within a few minutes.

This deep relaxation is one of the most reliable and immediate effects of Therapeutic Touch. Some people are so relaxed that they doze off. If they are not asleep I will ask them to rest for a minimum of 10-15 minutes.

When can Therapeutic Touch be helpful?

Relaxation and pain relief are two of the most reliable and immediate effects of Therapeutic Touch. Therefore, any condition that is made worse by stress or pain can be improved by Therapeutic Touch. Other common effects are accelerated healing, improved immunity, reduced anxiety, increased hemoglobin levels, improved circulation, increased well-being, and improved sleep.

Some nursing homes are lucky enough to have staff or volunteers who practise Therapeutic Touch. In hospice and palliative care Therapeutic Touch can be a blessing in the last stages of life. Therapeutic Touch does seem to make the passing process easier, not hastening it, but allowing the dying person to go peacefully. Entry into this life can also be helped greatly. Therapeutic Touch can be used during childbirth, both for the mother and the child and also for the father. There is hardly an instance in human life that cannot benefit from Therapeutic Touch.

Without compassion, whatever else one may do, it is not Therapeutic Touch.

Dolores Krieger.
Therapeutic Touch as
Transpersonal Healing, page 85