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Introducing the

Emotional Freedom Service

of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation, for persons in emotional distress

AN INFORMATION PAPER FOR PROFESSIONALS

by the St Jeanne Antide Foundation
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What is the Emotional Freedom Service?

The Emotional Freedom Service is a free one-to-one service available by appointment at the welcome centre of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation (SJAF) at 51 Tarxien Road, Tarxien (tel. 2180 8981). Appointments are set up by phone through a social worker of the Foundation.

The Foundation has been working for some years with vulnerable persons as individuals, families, groups, and communities.

It was set up by the Malta Province of the Sisters of Charity at Tarxien. The Emotional Freedom Service is aimed mainly for the liberation of persons who are burdened with distressing

St Jeanne Antide Foundation

Supporting vulnerable families and contributing to social integration at community level.

The St. Jeanne Antide Foundation (SJAF) is an autonomous body, with legal personality as a Foundation, publicly registered in Malta as a not-for-profit NGO. It is a family- and community-focused organisation committed to identifying and supporting in a holistic manner very vulnerable and poor families.

It was set up by the Malta Province of the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide in collaboration with lay persons and is administered by a Governing Board with a Chief Executive Officer.

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negative emotions and feelings that they wish to release but do not know how. Persons with severe mental illness are not normally admitted to this service other than under the care of a mental health professional who judges that the mental illness as such is under treatment and under control. Thus if serious mental illness is detected, the case is first referred by SJAF to an in-house mental health professional.

Patient referrals. Professionals are welcome to refer patients to this service, which is totally free of charge. There is no request for fees or donations, and there are no hidden costs or obligations.

Referring professionals are strongly urged to check a proposed patient referral against the main suitability criteria: the service user must be (a) suffering from emotional distress (anger, fear, feeling of low self-worth, frustration, non-forgiveness, etc.); (b) they wish to release this distress and live without it; and (c) they need help in doing so. If a person is also suffering from serious mental illness, please take note of this, as indicated earlier.

Referral contact details. Email referrals: SJAF CEO at macen.sjaf@gmail.com. Phone referrals: 2180 8981, 2180 9011, 2767 2367 (ask for a

social worker). Professionals requiring clarifications may contact the EFT practitioner directly at imaginety@gmail.com, or by SMS or voice call on 7932 6725. Members of the public may wish to refer to the advertisement for the Emotional Freedom Service on a page in the website of the Foundation:

<http://www.antidemalta.com/Services/EmotionalFreedom/EmotionalFreedom.htm>

An in-referral note would be appreciated if possible. An out-referral note will be sent to the referring professional after a few sessions or case closure, if desired. The service is bound by confidentiality, with a need-to-know sharing of confidentiality between therapists.

Duration of therapy. The first session usually takes 2 - 3 hours; subsequent sessions, if required, will be according to need. Most simple cases are resolved in around 3 sessions, a week apart; most complicated cases require 5-6 sessions.

The Emotional Freedom Service is a therapy consisting of several components, listed later below. One of these components is EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) a well-known complementary therapy sometimes classed as a acupuncture technique and as an energy psychology technique. The Emotional Freedom Service at the SJA Foundation is delivered by an AAMET-qualified and certified and publicly registered EFT Practitioner Level 2. EFT is a so-called complementary therapy that may *complement* the impact of medical, psychological, or psychiatric treatment on a suitable patient.

Medical and psychiatric professionals have referred patients to this Service for these reasons of complementarity. This happens in cases where the patient's distress or illness is suspected to be emotional or partly emotional in origin. The physician may have treated the physical part and may wish to refer the patients for the emotional distress or stress. Emotional distress sometimes causes pain and other physical symptoms; in such cases the latter may vanish during or soon after the Emotional Freedom Service therapy.

Because of its holistic nature, the Emotional Freedom Service may also complement the action of a social worker on a service user, and sometimes also complement that of a priest on a troubled person. It works on emotional distress that a person would like to address and eliminate, and often also works on those physical symptoms that are suspected to be mainly psychological or partly psychological (as in fibromyalgia) in origin. Sometimes it also works on physical symptoms that are not of emotional origin, but even in such cases, the patient is advised to see a medical professional if their wish or common sense indicates it.

What is Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)?

As is clear in a subsequent section, EFT is one of several methods that are integrated together in the therapy that is offered as the Emotional Freedom Service at the St Jeanne Antide Foundation.

What is EFT? EFT is a widely known complementary therapy called Emotional Freedom Techniques, involving the service user tapping on a small set of her or his own acupuncture points on the face, shoulder, and hand - all while remaining actively aware of the distress that is to be addressed. The usual result is that the mental distress is dissolved as distinct from being repressed. Progress is traced by means of a scale of subjective units of distress.

EFT was founded by Stanford trained engineer and personal performance coach Gary Craig (www.emofree.com) in the early 1990's after work by psychologist Dr Roger Callahan in the early 1980's, psychiatrist Dr John Diamond, M.D. in the 1970's, chiropractor Dr George Goodheart after 1962, and others, with a debt to ancient techniques of acupuncture and acupuncture. Over the world there are now thousands of certified practitioners of EFT. There are also several "flavours" developed from Gary Craig's original EFT. A historical account by Dr Patricia Carrington is available online at: <http://masteringeft.com/masteringblog/about-efthistory-of-efth/>

This unusual technique does not depend on a client's (or patient's) belief in its efficacy, or, indeed on their belief in anything else. It is not even a "positive thinking" technique, though affirmations are sometimes used when the subjective distress level has subsided considerably on the SUDS (subjective units of distress) scale. Some of the few scientific studies that have been made on EFT suggest that it is not merely placebo, not merely distraction, and that the tapping is an essential component. It very often works on emotional distress that a person wants to recover from or dissolve away. Explaining why it works is rather difficult, as is the case for acupuncture, to which it appears to be related. Fortunately it is not really necessary to have a clear explanation. For the service user, in most cases the experienced results speak for themselves.

EFT has no special relationship with any specific religion or spiritual path. It is very effective in leading a person in a non-ideological way to dissolve old burdens and automatically achieve freedom, peace, happiness and mental health. Thus it is a very valuable tool for personal development and liberation. For persons who also have some spiritual sensitivity and interest, such liberation will of course effectively help them along their spiritual path as well, likely opening them to unconditional love and universal compassion towards themselves (self-compassion) and of others.

What are some common forms of emotional distress that are presented?

Users of the Emotional Freedom Service are often observed to have anger, fear or hurt, often accumulated over many years (even up to 40 or more years, in the experience of the Foundation). Examples of fear are: a debilitating fear of failure or of being judged, of having one's physical disability made public, or of going out of the house, or of not finishing housework on time; at a certain intensity, such fears make a person quite unable to live a normal life, and they accumulate considerable stress.

Other frequent forms of distress that have been encountered are a feeling of low self-worth or of low capability; angry blaming and lack of forgiveness of self or of another person; long-term upset of various kinds in relation to a past trauma; phobias and fears of day-to-day tasks or objects.

Often, service users first arrive very distressed, crying, etc. This rarely lasts very long, and is replaced by a constructive engagement with oneself.

Components of the Emotional Freedom Service

The following are the methods or techniques usually used in the Emotional Freedom Service of SJAF. The relative emphasis, of course, will depend on the nature and complexity of the identified problems, and on the personality and values of the service user.

[1] Active listening and non-judgemental dialogue, with a loving attitude. This often reassures, and even heals. The person becomes open about the symptoms and about any known origins of the distress. The presenting problem is sometimes not the real reason for the service user's visit, but is taken just as seriously until the person feels able to speak about the deeper or more sensitive issue.

[2] Gentle questioning that enables the client and the therapist discover causal links among the forms of emotional distress and external past and present events. This helps self-understanding and also guides the therapy, guiding the therapist towards either the more fundamental underlying distress or temporarily towards the most salient or urgent-feeling current distress. Often, a simple map or chart is drawn on paper with the help of the service user showing the main forms of emotional distress and the external main events in the past or present that are thought to be relevant. The service user is often invited to help draw lines and arrows to indicate the connections within the chart. Such a chart helps the service user establish "ownership" of the problem identification and problem-solving process. It

also helps the therapist sort out connections and identify key or core issues.

[3] Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) finger-tapping by the service user on a small set of her or his own acupressure or acupuncture points of the face, shoulders and hands. Surprisingly, this almost always dissolves emotional distress, often rapidly, and usually permanently.

The evidence for these effects is not only our experience but a quite vast set of anecdotal evidence from the many practitioners of this therapy, as well as a slowly-increasing number of papers published in scientific journals. Some of the growing body of research results are referred to in a sample bibliography at the end of this paper.

EFT is pleasant, painless, calming, and is known not to be harmful. Special procedures are also available beyond this basic method, for example for discovering core issues, facing traumatic memories, or even for dealing with cases where the service user is afraid to go into the details of a past painful episode. The basic method of EFT and the EMDR (see [4] below) can be practised autonomously by the service user at home, providing the security of knowing that one has a "handle" or tool to deal with the past, or any future, emotional entrapments.

The EFT method does not work by suppression of memories or feelings, but the painful memories and situations do lose their painful emotional charge. Long-term suppression, ignoring, or management-by-avoidance of emotional pain is often the *cause* of the person's distress. Almost always the EFT method is accompanied by spontaneous relaxation, a sense of unburdening and great relief, a peace deeper than that usually known, an emotional stability, a much reduced level of irritability and emotional hurt at the foibles of others, and a taking of oneself less seriously, often with newly-tolerant and humour-filled and more clear-headed perception of self and others.

[4] A simple one-minute exercise involving humming, number-counting and eye-movements. The latter is a simple variant of EMDR (An

abbreviation for 'Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing'), developed by psychologist Frances Shapiro. She developed standardized procedures to maximize therapeutic outcomes - reduction in the disturbance of negative thoughts and memories - conducted research and published randomized controlled study with trauma victims. The full-scale EMDR is now recommended as an effective treatment for trauma in numerous international practice guidelines, including those of the American Psychiatric Association. Its simpler form is used in various therapies including EFT.

[5] Encouraging the understanding of the main needs of the ordinary self as security, love/respect, and control.

[6] Encouraging mindfulness, attentive awareness of thoughts, and especially of the stories fabricated by the ordinary self as it tries to meet its perceived unmet needs. These stories are often recurrent thoughts with their associated negative emotions. Service users learn to become aware of their own stories as seen from outside, so to speak, and as only part of themselves or even as part of the luggage they take with them on their life-journey. This encourages a revision of their habitual total identification with the moods, stories, self-pictures, and urges of the ordinary self.

[7] Challenging the service user to understand the ego-related causes of negative emotions and of self-sabotaging stories about oneself and other judgemental stories about others who may be hurting us. This helps develop non-judgmental approaches to relationships and permits enhanced self-understanding and the taking of oneself less seriously, often with some humour about one's own foibles and those of others.

[8] Pointing towards the existence of a more genuine or fundamental but ineffable level of self, of great value and beauty. For service users having a sense of spirituality, even the spiritual beauty and value of the genuine self is emphasised. This counters low self-image (where applicable) and puts the stories generated by the ordinary self in a new and much more manageable perspective.

[9] Teaching of up to 5 methods of habitually managing negative emotions in a healthy manner, as they arise. The danger of habitually suppressing or ignoring deep long-term anger or fear especially is emphasised; these methods provide an alternative to the often-observed shortcomings in what might be called mental and emotional hygiene. These 5 methods are all based on awareness of the negative emotions (and related items such as the mental self-justifying commentary) so that one can become habituated to quickly recognise an impending recurrence of a negative emotion from a perspective that is not caught up and carried away by it. EFT is one of these 5 methods.

[10] Teaching and practice of up to 2 very effective methods of deep relaxation. These help to reduce habitual stress. One of them is based on mental scanning of parts of the body with awareness, while the other involves visualisation of a friendly pure white light being taken into one's body with each inflow of breath.

[11] Simple custom homework exercises aimed at establishing healthy emotional management, solving emotional problems as they come, learning to use the tools experienced during the sessions, autonomous work on some of the minor types of distress, and optimising the effects of the past and future client contact sessions.

Emotional Freedom Practitioner, details

The Emotional Freedom Service of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation is delivered by Tony Macelli PhD. He is trained and certified as a Practitioner of EFT, Level 2, by AAMET, the world's largest international professional body in this area. This not-for-profit organisation is the lead body for energy therapy regulation and standards in the UK. It is the only EFT training organisation to map its content against learning outcomes relevant to National Occupational Standards of the United Kingdom. A leaflet on AAMET may be downloaded here:

<https://www.aamet.org/free-resources/aamet-leaflet.html>

He is registered internationally as an EFT therapist. The register is at this site: <http://www.eftregister.com>

He is a member of the Governing Board of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation.

His other qualifications, not related directly to EFT, include B.Sc. Gen Malta in Math and Physics, B.Sc Hons, Univ. of London in Physics; M.A. Community Development, Univ. of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada;

Ph.D. Systems in Human Settlement, Malta. Extensive experience was obtained in training, institution development work, international consulting, and grass-roots development work in developing countries.

Feedback from Service Users

The following comments from service users of the Emotional Freedom Service were published in the Annual Report of the St Jeanne Antide Foundation for 2012, available from the Foundation website: www.antidemalta.com

"[The Emotional Freedom Service] has truly helped me in that I feel more powerful when it comes to controlling my feelings; it was a life-saver in terms of the daily problems ... [that] I was facing....And you are truly an inspiration. God bless you."

"Il-hin, l-attenzjoni u l-kura b'imħabba w interess genwin li nġhatajt."

"Nahseb qed isir xogħol straordinarju."

"Meta nara d-differenza bejn kif kont u issa - 'hielsa'."

"li tgħallimt kif nista' nghan ruhi u nikkontrolla aktar."

"Li stajt nitkellem bl-akbar kunfidenza, hassejtni komda u l-persuna li hadmet mieghi kienet eċċellenti."

- "Hadd m'għinni daqs kemm għintuni intom. Intom biss għintuna u mexxejtuna."

- "Some of our... colleagues have already [used the Emotional Freedom Service]. Their feedback

has been very positive and other colleagues have shown an interest in exploring [this] further."

The following are some additional items of feedback from 2013: the names shown are *pseudonyms*, not their real names:

I would like to thank you for your time and for the amazing service you performed - My ... [long-standing] facial pain ... vanished completely around noon. ... I found the treatment very effective — "*Ophelia*"

I didn't think again about the fact that I might be judged. I mean I went out today and I forgot all about it.. I didn't perceive the people around me in that way — "*Lorna*"

"I have not been angry any more! I have stopped being angry all the time. I myself cannot believe it. My many-day headache stopped when I was in the session, and it did not come back." — "*Cassius*"

"I am feeling so well that I cannot feel any fear any more!" — "*Arabella*"

"Wow! How you have changed me! I really needed that. Even in my relating to myself I feel good. I can't believe it! My great habitual great upset every time I see [the object of her distress] just melted away! I feel a great sense of relief." — "*Carolina*"

I now feel less tired! I was getting exhausted because of my fear (stops crying). Now I can think clearly; my mind is more clear. ... That burden is gone from my shoulders! I am now again the person I used to be years ago, before all this problem started - spontaneous, happy, relaxed. I am seeing the beautiful in life, not just the ugly ... My fear is reducing in tandem with the reduction in my sense of guilt. ... I think I have been too bound up in my own problem to be able to see the problems of [the other persons around me] — "*Iris*"

I had a very good week after our session. My emotions are not becoming negative. Minor problems are not accumulating inside and making pressure build up. I am no longer relating negatively with my family members, not exaggerating, whining, or complaining. Things

are very good now. Sometimes from the bad, good comes out. I don't understand it. ... My child asks me to do the tapping on him when he is anxious. ... I feel really good. Even my constipation cleared. ... I am calm and relaxed. I found, when [facing a family challenge] that not only my emotion of anger has been changed, but also my entire attitude, so that the healthy reaction has become ingrained in me now. ... My husband told me 'How well you seem! You are really good!' My sister told me 'How joyful you are!' I am serene even in the face of difficulties. I am relaxed every moment." — "*Marcia*"

(Radiant smile) I have been really, really well all week. I did not feel the usual loneliness or panic. ... Now I am realising that if I keep wanting people to pity me, that would mean that I am not in a good situation. And I don't want to be like that! And I don't want to tell [or keep telling] myself that I am like that!" — "*Dominique*"

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Sample Research Bibliography on EFT

Here is the abstract of an analytical literature review paper by David Feinstein. The paper is available freely online in full at the URL indicated.

Acupoint Stimulation in treating Psychological Disorders

David Feinstein, PhD, Ashland, Oregon

Feinstein, D. (2012). Acupoint stimulation in treating psychological disorders: Evidence of efficacy. *Review of General Psychology*, 16(4), 364-380.

Abstract © 2012, American Psychological Association. The paper is available online at http://innersource.net/ep/images/stories/downloads/Acupoint_Stimulation_Research_Review.pdf

ABSTRACT: Energy psychology is a clinical and self-help modality that combines verbal and physical procedures for effecting therapeutic change. While utilizing established clinical methods such as exposure and cognitive restructuring, the approach also incorporates concepts and techniques from non-Western healing systems. Its most frequently utilized protocols combine the stimulation of acupuncture points (by tapping on, holding, or massaging them) with the mental activation of a targeted psychological issue.

Energy psychology has been controversial, in part due to its reliance on explanatory mechanisms that are outside of conventional clinical frameworks and in part because of claims by its early proponents—without adequate research support—of extraordinary speed and power in attaining positive clinical outcomes. This paper revisits some of the field's early claims, as well as current practices, and assesses them in the context of existing evidence.

A literature search identified 51 peer-reviewed papers that report or investigate clinical outcomes following the tapping of

acupuncture points to address psychological issues. The 18 randomized controlled trials in this sample were critically evaluated for design quality, leading to the conclusion that they consistently demonstrated strong effect sizes and other positive statistical results that far exceed chance after relatively few treatment sessions. Criteria for evidence-based treatments proposed by Division 12 of the American Psychological Association were also applied and found to be met for a number of conditions, including PTSD and depression. Neurological mechanisms that may be involved in these surprisingly strong findings are also considered.

Clinical EFT as an evidence-based practice

Church, D. (2013). Clinical EFT as an evidence-based practice for the treatment of psychological and physiological conditions. *Psychology*, 4 (6).

The article is available online at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/eft-academic-articles/Clinical-EFT-as-an-Evidence-Based-Practice-for-the-Treatment-of-Psychological-and-Physiological-Conditions.pdf> The URL of the journal itself is at: <http://www.scirp.org/journal/PSYCH/>

Abstract Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) has moved in the past two decades from a fringe therapy to widespread professional acceptance. This paper defines Clinical EFT, the method validated in many research studies, and shows it to be an “evidence-based” practice. It describes standards by which therapies may be evaluated such as those of the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 12 Task Force, and reviews the studies showing that Clinical EFT meets these criteria. Several research domains are discussed, summarizing studies of: (a) psychological conditions such as anxiety, depression, phobias and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD); (b) physiological problems such as pain and autoimmune conditions; (c) professional and sports performance, and (d)

the physiological mechanisms of action of Clinical EFT. The paper lists the conclusions that may be drawn from this body of evidence, which includes 23 randomized controlled trials and 17 within-subjects studies. The three essential ingredients of Clinical EFT are described: exposure, cognitive shift, and acupressure. The latter is shown to be an essential ingredient in EFTs efficacy, and not merely a placebo. New evidence from emerging fields such as epigenetics, neural plasticity, psychoneuroimmunology and evolutionary biology confirms the central link between emotion and physiology, and points to somatic stimulation as the element common to emerging psychotherapeutic methods. The paper outlines the next steps in EFT research, such as smartphone-based data gathering, large scale group therapy, and the use of biomarkers. It concludes that Clinical EFT is a stable and mature method with an extensive evidence base. These characteristics have led to growing acceptance in primary care settings as a safe, rapid, reliable, and effective treatment for both psychological and medical diagnoses.

The following is the URL of a website containing a number of classified EFT research paper references.

http://www.eftuniverse.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=21

This site contains papers about the effectiveness of EFT, classified as follows: APA Standards for Empirically Validated Treatments; The State of EFT Research; Laying Research Groundwork; Clinical Reports; Mechanisms Papers; Review Articles; Outcome Studies on: Anxiety, Athletic Performance, Depression, Pain & Physical Symptoms, Phobias, PTSD, Weight Loss & Cravings.

The following are some further research references.

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American Psychological Association journal article citing 18 fully randomized controlled studies, done according to APA evidence-based standards, showing statistically significant results from Tapping.

Single Session EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) for Stress-Related Symptoms after Motor Vehicle Accidents, read article at http://www.eftuniverse.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3580&Itemid=2046

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