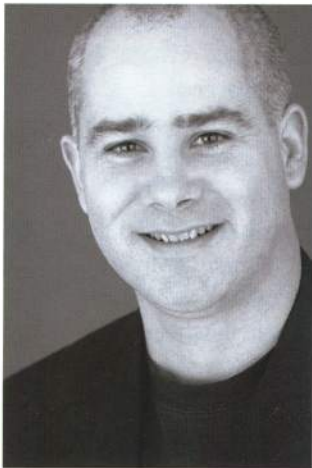


Emotional release for carers

Energy therapist **Rod Sherwin** highlights how carers can cope with the mental and emotional stress of their role using Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). For more, visit tap4health.com.au.

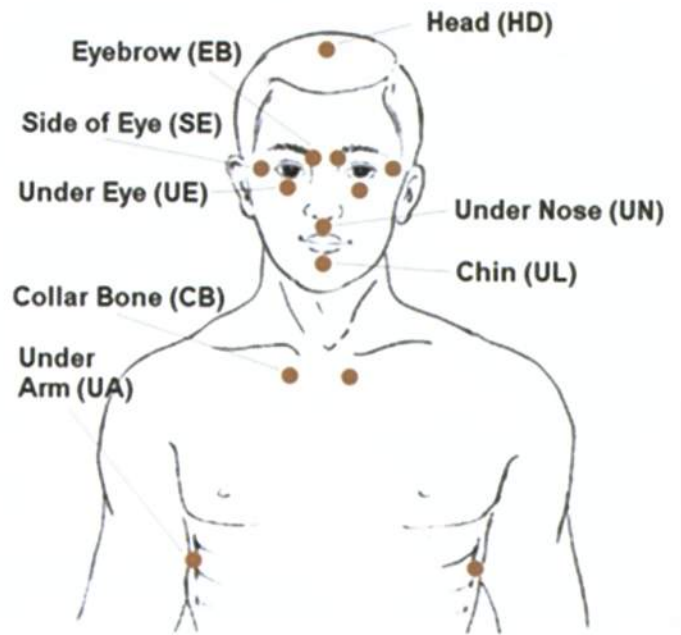


As a carer of someone with a mental illness such as Alzheimer's or dementia, the person you once knew can be verbally and physically abusive and aggressive towards you and it's hard not to take it personally.

On any given day, you could go through emotions such as anger, frustration, guilt, sadness and hurt and feel overwhelmed as you care for them.

I'd like to offer a simple yet powerful tool for helping with this stress called the Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). EFT helps release and clear all sorts of emotional issues. It works by focusing on an emotion and tapping with the fingertips through a series of acupressure points on the face, upper body and fingers, hence, its nickname of "tapping".

This following EFT tapping script will help you cope with the mental and emotional stress of being a carer. Before you start, assess how you feel on a scale from 0-10, where 10 is a very high level of emotional intensity and 0 is feeling fine. Write down this number.



Apply the tapping sequence, varying the words as needed to personalise it to how you feel, repeat the tapping sequence five or six times, and then reassess your emotional intensity on a scale from 0-10. Repeatedly applying the EFT tapping will reduce the emotional intensity leaving you calmer, relaxed and more in control.

Using this EFT Tapping Points Guide, say the words out loud while gentle tapping with the fingers on the specified points.

Tapping on the Karate Chop Point:

"Even though I feel angry that this disease has transformed the person I love into someone who some days doesn't recognise me,

doesn't trust me, accuses me of things that aren't true, and threatens me, I choose to acknowledge how I feel."

"Even though I feel hurt, overwhelmed and guilty because I shouldn't take what they do personally, I know it's a result of the disease, but it still gets to me, I choose to recognise the feelings I'm experiencing."

"Even though some days I think of them as a burden, and then feel guilty about thinking that, I want to deeply and completely accept myself and how I feel."

Now continue on through the remaining tapping points, describing how you feel as you go.

Top of the head: *"This anger and resentment that*

I feel giving so much to this person, yet the disease makes it difficult for them to give anything back to me."

Inside of the eyebrows: *"Feeling hurt by the animosity and abuse even though I know it's not personal."*

Side of the eyes: *"So hard not to take it personally when it's coming from someone that so close to me."*

Under the eyes: *"The anger and resentment that I do my best and give up so much to take care of them and yet all they give me back is abuse, accusations and distrust."*

Top lip: *"Feeling overwhelmed and stressed out, unable to get on top of my stress."*

Bottom lip: *"The hurt and anger that this disease has transformed the person I love"*

Collarbone points (just under the inside edge of the collarbones): *"Sadness that they don't know how much they hurt me; they just can't comprehend it."*

Under the arms: *"Feeling guilty because sometime I want to give up. I want my own life back."*

Inside of the wrists: *"All this remaining anger, disappointment, hurt, overwhelm, guilt and disappointment."*

While it might seem strange to focus so much on the negative, the words you



use while tapping help you tune in to what you are truly feeling and acknowledge and appreciate the feelings rather than trying to force them to change. And as you continue to tap, these will naturally shift to something more positive.

EFT presents another tool to help you continue to help those you care about while taking care of yourself. Remember to continue the rounds of tapping until the intensity has reduced significantly or completely cleared. 

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