

Is Bio Energy Therapy a Viable Resource within the Counselling Setting?

by *Laureen Taylor*



Introduction

This article proposes that the practice of bio energy therapy can add value to a client's process within a counsellor's practice. Additionally, counsellors and psychotherapists are well placed to incorporate bio energy therapy within their practice as they work with clients, and are accountable and professionally trained in standards and code of ethics (IACP Info Sheet No 7). Counselling is a talking therapy that allows clients focus on challenging issues

affecting the quality of their life (Fernandez, 2013). However, bio energy therapy has the potential to add another dimension in that it taps into universal energies and accelerates the process of healing and integration on all levels for people (Hunt, 1996). Every counselling and bio energy session is particular to the individual client in their uniqueness; no two sessions are alike. Counselling and bio energy therapy are separate therapies however, the author contends they can be

used successfully in conjunction with one another. Furthermore, bio energy therapy is a holistic non-invasive therapy which works to create emotional, mental and physical harmony (Hunt, 2008).

Background

Historical records document energy healing over 3,500 years ago. "Pyrenees' cave paintings from 15,000 years ago and ancient Egypt rock carvings from 2,700 BC show laying on of hands helping the sick" (Dossey and Keegan, 2015 p.190). Ebers papyrus writings from 1,552 BC describe hands on healing, while Eastern healers have studied the human energy system for thousands of years and have mapped out its structure in great detail (Bryan, 1930). Bio energy therapy does not contravene any personal religious beliefs, because it is not based on any religion but on the existence of energies within and outside the body which have been proven to exist (Lipton, 2005; Anando, 2014).

Energy Perspective

From an energy perspective, all life forms, including human beings, are made up of layers of vibrating energy, each with their own specific vibration (Brennan, 1998). What quantum physics has shown is that everything is composed of energy, including ourselves (Griffin and Bent, 2015). At the quantum

level, everything that exists in the universe is vibrating at different rates. These vibrations are carried through the field in small packages, quanta, which appear to us as particles (Joint Quantum Institute, 2013).

Patterson (1998) contends that we are all part of the natural harmonious energy of the universe. Within this universal energy field is a human energy field that is intimately involved with human life, often called the aura (Peterson, 1998). Wikipedia (2016) states that Kirlian photography is a photographic technique that involves shooting a high voltage charge through an object that is connected to a photographic plate. The resulting image typically includes a coloured aura around the object. Kirlian photography is often cited as evidence for the existence of energy fields unique to living things (Patterson, 1988). Patterson (1988) contends that the seven layers within an aura, each with its own colour, have been recorded using Kirlian photography. One of the reasons for the change in outlook on bio energy therapy is that sensitive instruments have been developed that can detect the minute energy fields around the human body (Benor, 2004).

The physical body consists of energy that vibrates very slowly, which is why it appears to our physical eyes to be solid. Our energy systems surround us, are inside of us, and penetrate us completely.

These include

- Our aura which surrounds us and penetrates our physical body

- Our chakra system that allows the universal energy to flow through us
- The meridian system, a system of energy channels within us through which all energy moves throughout our body.

Brennan (1998)

What is bio energy?

When we speak about energy that is vibrating within and around the human body we call it Bio Energy (Nikolic, 2006). This flow of energy within the human body is generally continuous and smooth. When an imbalance takes place the flow of energy is agitated, often leading to a blockage. This can allow disease, ill-health and emotional blockages to manifest. Bio energy therapists are trained in techniques which are designed to effect change in the energetic body, which can create change in the physical body (Nikolic, 2006). Therapists are trained to become sensitive to feeling these blockages and through using a series of hand movements they work to release the blocked energy (Nikolic, 2006). That technique improves impaired energy flow thus allowing the body and emotions to balance naturally. We are unaware of what issues we are carrying at an unconscious level. However, bio energy therapy works on the surface first, but goes deeper over time, like peeling layers of an onion (Hunt, 2008). Bio energy therapy helps us maintain our energetic health and physical, emotional, and mental balance (Nudel and Nudel, 2000).

Energy flows through our bodies in much the same way as water flows through a hose. Physical and

emotional trauma, some of which we don't even realise we carry, can disrupt the flow of energy the same way a break, bend, or clog in a hose can interrupt the flow of water. Energy flow can be disrupted in many ways; it can be blocked, out of balance, split, undercharged, stagnant, torn or held (Hunt, 2008). When this happens disease can result which may manifest in the physical body in many forms.

Hurwitz (2001) contends that energy based therapeutic techniques move energy through and around the human body. Every individual is surrounded by an energy field and their energy field is dynamic, it moves and flows (Hurwitz, 2001). Furthermore, the energy field can be perceived and the ability to perceive energy is a learnable skill. Disorder or an imbalance of one's energy field is associated with disease. Hurwitz (2001) also contends that orderly re-patterning of one's energy field restores balance, creating an improved environment in which healing can occur. One's energy field exists within a universal energy field and that the client and the practitioner are not separate but are interconnected and integral with the universal energy field (Hurwitz, 2001).

Touch Therapy

Bio energy therapy is non-invasive, with minimal physical contact and can be administered without touch (Benor, 2004). Clients remain fully clothed with the exception of their shoes. Guidelines exist with regard to physical touch between client and therapist, ensuring client safety (Ethical Framework, 2002). Guidelines to do with

touch, however, are not clear-cut matters of right and wrong. Some therapists do not touch clients while some would advocate it has a place within the therapeutic relationship. For many clients “touch can be a powerful tool for increasing awareness; overcoming resistance and rigid defences; and mastering the developmental phases of attachment, dependence and trust” (Smith et al. 1998).

What are people likely to feel during a bio energy session?

Usually clients will feel warmth, maybe a tingling sensation, and for some they can feel cold. The majority of clients will feel completely relaxed and will go into what some people described as a peaceful state. Bio energy therapy goes to wherever it's needed. Everyone is different so the experience is not the same for everyone (Griffin and Bent, 2015).

Boundaries, Standards & Ethics

A boundary is an edge or limit that defines a person as separate from others and is the framework within which the therapist/client relationship occurs (Katherine, 2000). “Codes are written in fairly general and abstract terms in order to condense the experience and thinking behind them and to make them as widely applicable to a variety of circumstances as possible” (Bond, 1993 p.44).

According to the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) the purpose of the Code of Ethics (2005) is to encourage optimum levels of practice, to establish and maintain ethical standards, and to inform and protect those who seek and use

the services of practitioners. Counsellors and psychotherapists apply appropriate boundaries within the counselling relationship in order to provide safety for the clients and counsellors. Counsellors and psychotherapists are best placed to incorporate bio energy therapy within a counselling setting as they continually monitor the boundaries in their relationships with clients and can act as role models, providing important value for those who have inappropriate boundaries.

Self-Care

Wellness is one of the critical factors in being a healthy counsellor and bio energy therapist. The helping professional, who is aware that compassion fatigue and burnout are givens in the therapeutic work, is well placed to recognize and respond effectively when they experience the impact of these stressors (Sanders, 2011). Ultimately, self-care for all helping professionals is crucial so that they can continue to meet the needs of their respective clients with maximum effectiveness.

Self-care is an ethical requirement for both the counsellor and bio energy therapist. Self-care is covered in the code of ethics clause 4.1 of the IACP code of ethics and practice information sheet 7 (2005). The ethics code advocates engaging in self-care activities in order to avoid burnout which could result in impaired judgment and to avoid harming others.

A valuable resource for the author's self-care regime is to engage in regular bio energy sessions. From the author's

personal experience, counsellors and clients who have undertaken bio energy sessions typically report a better quality of sleep, a clear mind and improved focus, increased self-confidence, a reduction of stress and anxiety, acceleration of healing and relief or elimination of emotional and physical pain. Also reported was a greater clarity of their own issues in a non-threatening way, a strong sense of peace, well-being and improved health.

Sanders (2011) contends counsellors need to be aware of the emotional demands of the work and when they are feeling overwhelmed it may lead to burnout. Anecdotal evidence suggests that counsellors who have experienced bio energy sessions reported working well with their clients and were better able to meet the demands of the work. Nudel and Nudel (2000) contend that having bio energy therapy sessions are just as important to our self-care as eating healthy, exercising and getting enough rest.

Bio Energy Therapy Complements Counselling

Bio energy therapy and counselling are two distinct modalities and can be used in conjunction with one another. A session of bio energy can successfully be administered for twenty minutes (Griffin, and Bent, 2015) and could therefore form part of a counselling session. The author contends that counselling and bio energy therapy is a very personal, private and confidential process for each individual client. Maintaining a professional attitude throughout the process enables the counsellor

and bio energy therapist to assist the client, to the best of their ability.

There is a realization in the current challenging times that our emotions can affect our health (Hunt, 2008). Humans experience an array of emotions, anything from happiness to sadness to extreme joy and depression. Emotional well-being and mental health concerns are major health issues in their own right and can contribute to a host of physical ailments including sleep disturbances and lack of energy (Barry, 2012). Through the releasing of negative emotions and negative thoughts we can allow ourselves to heal. Clients who have experienced bio energy sessions reported their physical and emotional pains were eliminated or reduced (Griffin and Bent, 2015).

Within a counselling and psychotherapy session, a client's negative thoughts and belief patterns can emerge (Sanders, 2011). This new awareness may leave some clients with feelings of depression, sadness, grief or anger. Bio energy therapy assists clients in releasing expressed or unexpressed emotions and blockages that are uncovered using bio energy techniques resulting in a positive sense of relief for clients which in turn allows them to realise and fulfil their true potential (Griffin and Bent, 2015).

Guilt, worry and fear are common emotions for all (Sanders, 2011). Sanders (2011) contends that these emotions can be challenged to enable us to be more present, authentic and ultimately more content. By facing the things we

fear in life we become stronger. Knowing what is holding us back and why, may be important. However, this information is useless if we do not act upon it. Counsellors encourage clients to rely on their own resources and inner power (Sanders, 2011). In a bio energy sessions this source of inner power and strength is tapped allowing new awareness and understanding for the client (Nikolic, 2006). This new knowledge can help clients to take responsibility and actively implement positive changes in their life.

Self-Awareness

The Oxford English dictionary describes self-awareness as conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives and desires (Allen, 1990). Self-awareness for counsellors and bio energy therapists is valued because it involves continued learning and personal development. When we have bio energy sessions we move beyond the usual drama and fears in life and gain a new understanding of ourselves (Benor, 2004).

Bio energy aids people in gaining insightful self-awareness which supports them in making major adjustments in their life (Benor, 2004). People who have experienced bio energy session speak about what they can only describe as having a light bulb moment (Benor, 2004). For example, they describe this as having gained some insightful self-awareness which made perfect sense to them as to how and why they were sabotaging themselves by continually behaving and repeating the same patterns over

and over again (Benor, 2004).


One client stated they worried for years about what other people thought of them and how they worked hard on all their relationships, always worried and turning things over in their mind whether people really liked them. While having a bio energy session they had an insightful self-awareness, that is, they had to like themselves first (Benor, 2004).

Conclusion

The author is a counsellor and bio energy therapist and proposes that incorporating bio energy therapy as part of a counselling session can be an effective and invaluable intervention for both client and counsellor. The author and founder of bio energy therapy training Ireland regularly receives positive feedback from clients telling of how well they feel and are better able to meet the demands of life.

Counselling and psychotherapy help increase a deeper understanding for clients on personal, painful and difficult issues. Careful listening is the largest part of what all counsellors do (Sanders, 2011). They ensure clients have clarified the issues in their own terms and help them define what they wish to do next. Some counsellors are more active, working with client's goals towards resolution of their issues. While others use less interventions and work at the client's pace. Bio energy therapy is a therapy which comprises specific knowledge, skills and techniques. Bio energy therapy helps individuals move beyond their emotional issues, accelerates healing and relief or elimination of pain (Nudel and Nudel, 2000).

Bio energy therapy is now being studied systematically under rigorous research conditions (Hunt, 1996). Gradually this therapy will be integrated into other practices. Research on bio energy therapy can lead to much more complete understanding of clients' issues and healing. The author proposes that using bio energy therapy in conjunction with counselling can contribute to effective changes for clients within the counselling process. This article aims to raise awareness around the effective use of bio energy therapy with clients. It also hopes to open up a discussion for its inclusion within the counselling and psychotherapy framework.

In summary, counsellors, psychotherapists and bio energy therapists work to the same agenda that is to support their clients in working through their processes in order to improve the quality of their life. 

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