

Energy Psychology in Rehabilitation: Origins, Clinical Applications, and Theory

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Abstract

Three forces have dominated psychology and psychological treatment at different times since the early 1900s. The first force was Freudian psychoanalysis and its offshoots that focus on unconscious psychodynamics and developmental fixations, with principal therapeutic techniques including free association, dream analysis, interpretation, and abreaction. Second came behaviorism, spearheaded by Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner, which emphasized environmental stimuli and conditioning—its techniques including respondent and operant conditioning, exposure, desensitization, schedules of reinforcement, modeling, and more. The third force involved humanistic and transpersonal approaches that attend to values and choice, including client-centered therapy, gestalt therapy, phenomenology, and cognitive therapy, some of the principal leaders being Rogers, Maslow, Perls, Rollo May, Binswanger, and Ellis. Recently the new paradigm of energy psychology has emerged, which may be considered psychology's fourth force. The earliest pioneers included Goodheart, Diamond, and Callahan. This theoretical and practice approach offers the field some unique findings, as it views psychological problems as body–mind interactions and bioenergy fields, providing treatments that directly and efficiently address these substrates. Some of energy psychology's techniques include stimulating acupoints and chakras, specific body postures, affirmations, imagery, manual muscle testing, and an emphasis on intention. This review covers energy psychology's historical development and experimental evidence base. Case illustrations and treatment protocols are discussed for the treatment of psychological trauma and physical pain, two of the most important and ubiquitous aspects common to rehabilitation conditions. Additionally, the research on energy psychology is highlighted, and the distinction between global treatments and causal energy diagnostic-treatment approaches to treatment is addressed.

Keywords: Acupuncture, research, quantum mechanics, Thought Field Therapy (TFT), Advanced Energy Psychology (AEP), rehabilitation, pain