

Discussion on Emotional Freedom Techniques with Meridian Acupoints in the Mental Health Counseling of Left-Behind Children

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the common psychological problems of left-behind children, and introduces the psychological counseling and emotional release function and operation steps of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) with meridian acupoints for children. Through the application of typical cases, it shows that this therapy has a good effect on certain psychological abnormalities, such as anxiety, depression, fear, weariness of learning and psychological trauma, and can quickly relieve bad emotions within tens or even minutes, which is worthy of further promotion.

1. Introduction

According to “Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening Care and Protection of Left-behind Children in Rural Areas”, left-behind children [1] refer to rural registered minors under the age of 16 whose parents are migrant workers or one of them is migrant worker and the other has no guardianship ability, and cannot live with their parents normally. According to the authoritative survey of relevant departments [2], the number of “left-behind children” in China's rural areas exceeds 61 million, which is a huge number, equivalent to the total population of Britain. Among them, 57.2% of left-behind children whose parents that one of them is migrant worker, and 42.8% of them whose parents are migrant workers. 79.7% were raised by grandparents or grandparents, 13% of left-behind children were entrusted to relatives and friends, and 7.3% of children were uncertain or unsupervised. Because “left-behind children” lack parents' love, it is easy to have the problems of “three excesses” and “three deficiencies” in their guardianship [3]: alternate guardianship is overindulged, foster guardianship is preferred, unsupervised is neglected and loveless; Lack of care in life, lack of discipline in behavior and lack of guidance in study. Due to children's playful nature and poor sense of self-discipline, some left-behind children have some shortcomings in the process of personality formation, especially their psychological problems [4].

2. Analysis of Left-Behind Children's Psychological Problems

The mental health problems of left-behind children have been attracting much attention. Under the condition of long-term single-parent guardianship or intergenerational guardianship, or even other guardianship or unsupervised guardianship, left-behind children can't get normal family education and warmth like ordinary children, and parents can't know and grasp their children's thoughts and psychological changes in time. They have some problems in character, study and life, mainly as follows:

(1)Introverted and weak: Parents leave home to work in their children's childhood, so children seriously lack parental care, which leads to many left-behind children being in a state of self-isolation for a long time. The lack of communication of “custodian guardian” makes them watch TV for a long time, imitate people in the bureau, talk to themselves or talk to dogs and kittens, and feel weak and helpless when encountering some troubles. Long-term self-isolation, not only

leads to some left-behind children being introverted and aloof; Moreover, their oral communication skills are weakened, and they are sensitive and anxious to interpersonal communication and cringe.

(2) Loneliness and helplessness: When parents go out to work, children will feel empty at home, lonely and bored in their hearts, which will lead to psychological problems such as inner restlessness and depression.

(3) Inferiority psychological barrier: Most children have the psychology of comparing with others, and have a strong sense of “self-superiority”. Without their parents around, they seem to have lost their strong support and protection. Therefore, compared with some children with parents around, they are prone to inferiority psychological barrier, and some even lose confidence, give up on themselves, and don't want to make progress. In the lower grades of primary schools, more than 75% of left-behind children are timid and afraid to answer teachers' questions in class; In senior grades, because they lost confidence in learning, they gradually began to indulge in online games [5].

(4) The psychology of resenting parents: among the left-behind children, some children don't understand their parents, think that their families are poor and their parents have no ability to go out to work, which leads to the psychology of resenting their parents; Some left-behind children alienate their parents after their parents come back, causing emotional estrangement with their parents, making the parent-child relationship indifferent, and even some children will resent their parents' ruthlessness.

(5) Rebellion and blind resistance: Some left-behind children always feel that others will bully themselves because of their lack of security and parental protection. They will seriously care about even a small matter, and they are always full of vigilance or even hostility when communicating with others. They have a strong rebellious attitude towards the discipline of temporary guardians or teachers. According to the survey [6], 54% of left-behind children have conflicts with their temporary guardians, and 15% often have conflicts. 53% of left-behind children said they felt helpless when they encountered difficulties in their studies, and 39% of left-behind children said they had been bullied by classmates.

3. Advantages of Eft in Mental Health Counseling

EFT is a psychotherapy technique that combines acupoint stimulation with neurolinguistic programming technique [7]. According to the characteristics of different symptoms, we should set the corresponding treatment goals and tap the relevant acupuncture points in turn, so as to achieve the treatment purpose, and release negative emotions, psychological trauma or lingering psychological shadow quickly and effectively. Its application in mental health counseling has the following advantages:

(1) Take effect quickly: After one treatment, emotional disorders such as anxiety, nervousness and fear can be obviously relieved within ten minutes to tens of minutes. No matter modern psychotherapy or TCM psychotherapy, it usually takes several times, dozens of times or even several years to treat, and it may not achieve satisfactory results. Therefore, EFT has prominent advantages in the effective time.

(2) Simple operation: Both modern psychotherapy and TCM psychotherapy generally have strong flexibility, and often choose different psychotherapy methods because of different doctors or patients. Relatively speaking, the operation process is relatively complicated. However, EFT has a standard, unified and standardized operation process. Although patients with different psychological problems have different treatment objectives, the application of EFT is the same process and method, which is easier to popularize and apply.

(3) Conform to Chinese culture: most of the relevant theories and operating techniques of modern psychology are produced in the West. Therefore, the value orientation, theoretical construction and specific operation of psychology will be deeply influenced by western social culture. Therefore, when the concepts, theories and techniques of western psychology are applied to the treatment of different cultural backgrounds and different nationalities, they will often be exclusive or even contradictory. For example, there are great differences between Chinese and

Western cultures in dealing with and analyzing the relationship between individuals and groups, sexual trauma, and understanding of love, family, emotion and marriage. In the process of psychotherapy, this topic is often the focus of discussion and treatment. EFT applies the traditional meridian theory of TCM, adopts acupoint tapping technology, is rooted in Chinese traditional medical culture, and has obvious characteristics of TCM, which is more in line with Chinese people's thinking mode and emotional characteristics.

4. Use Eft to Promote the Mental Health of Left-Behind Children

According to the theory of EFT, combined with the actual treatment situation, the author summarizes the treatment process of EFT as follows: First, understand the medical history, clarify the problems, conduct relevant psychological tests and make psychological diagnosis. The EFT process consists of six steps:

(1) Assess emotional intensity: Subjective Units of Distress(SUD) marked by a scale of 0 to 10 is used to assess its intensity: 0 means there is no negative emotion at all; 1 means that negative emotions make people feel basically good without acute pain; 2 means those make people a little depressed, but not obvious; 3 means those make people slightly depressed; 4 means those make people a little upset; 5 means those make people moderately uncomfortable; 6 means those make people feel bad; 7 means those make people go crazy; 8 means those make people feel scared; 9 means those make people feel desperate; 10 means that the intensity of those is unbearable (Figure 1). The purpose of the assessment is to compare the emotional changes after each round of beating.

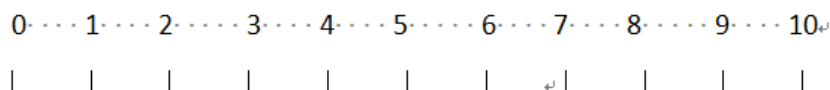


Fig.1 Subjective Units of Distress(Sud)

(2) Preparatory sentence prompt: a formatted text read to your subconscious mind. Its format is: Although I have (the name of the problem), I still deeply and completely accept myself.

This affirmative sentence can have different changes, but it must contain two parts at the same time: the exposure of the problem and the self-accepted statement. For example: Even though I feel uncomfortable when I can't sleep, I still deeply and completely accept myself. When you tap on acupoints, this short sentence can keep your mind aware of the problem of operation, and focus your energy system on the problem you are dealing with, instead of running around to other thoughts or feelings.

(3) Relieve mental energy disorder: It refers to the mechanism that counteracts the release force caused by the psychological stereotype of “self-harm” or “self-punishment” implicit in the individual's subconscious. The specific method is to repeat the prompt three times when tapping Houxi (SI3) (Figure 2).

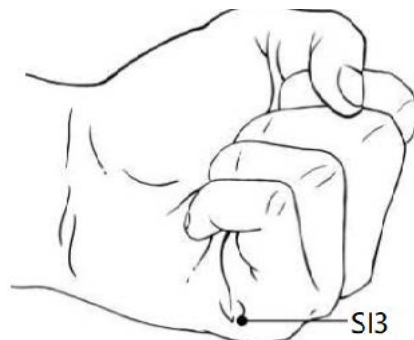


Fig.2 Si3

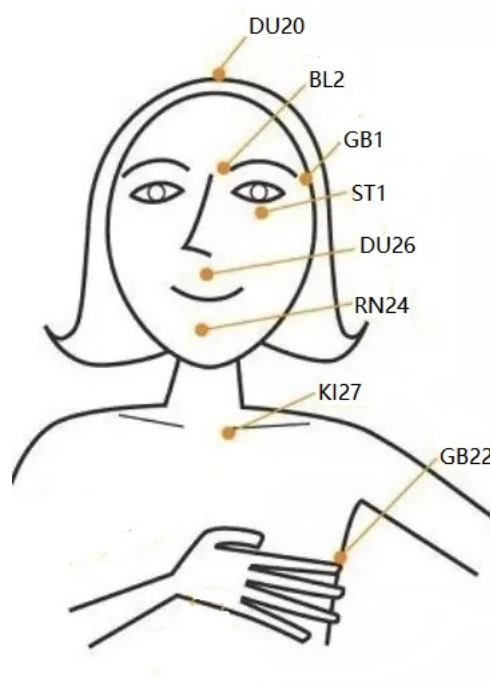


Fig.3 Tapping Sequence Acupoints

(4)Tapping sequence (Figure 3): Tap approximately seven times on each acupoint energy point in the following order, and tap steadily with your first and second fingers (index finger and middle finger), but don't use too much force, while tapping, say tips for the problem, and the sequence is: ① cuanzhu (BL2); ② Tongziliao(GB1); ③ Chengqi(ST1); ④ Shuigou(DU26); ⑤ Chengjiang(RN24); ⑥ shufu(KI27); ⑦ Yuanye(GB22); ⑧ Baihui(DU20).

(5)After the first tapping, reassess the score of emotional intensity, from 0 to 10. If the score is still high,please say: Even if I still have some (remaining questions), I still deeply and completely accept myself .

(6)Go back to step (4) again and keep tapping until your emotional intensity score is as close to 0 as possible.

(7)After acupoints tapping, the disordered body energy system is gradually corrected, and then the adjustment of body and mind is completed. However, sometimes it is necessary to do more than a few times to completely solve the problem. When the intensity of the emotional disorder to be treated is reduced, the prompt used must also be appropriately adjusted with it. This is to make the relationship between subjective cognition and actual emotional disorder in patients' subconscious mind more accurate, so that the subconscious mind can eliminate bad emotions more pertinently. The way of adjustment is to gradually reduce the intensity of emotional disorder. We can change the part of the prompt “There is a very serious problem with ...” to “There is still...” or “There is still a little... ..”, for example:

Although I am very afraid of exams, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Although I am still afraid of exams, I deeply and completely accept myself.

Although I am still a little afraid of exams, I deeply and completely accept myself.

5. Typical Case

Typical cases of applying EFT in research group:

Lan, an 11-year-old girl, in the fifth grade of primary school, was born in the countryside. When she was 7 years old, her parents divorced, and her father went away from home after the divorce and never contacted his family.Her mother went out to work and earn money for her education and living. In order to allow her to receive a better education, Lan's mother put her in foster care with her uncle who lives in the city. Since then, Lan not only lack fatherly love, but also maternal love is a luxury. Before the fourth grade, Lan was a lively, cheerful, clever and sensible child, who often

shared happy things with her aunt and told her heart. However, with the growth of age, the instability of family environment makes Lan lack a sense of security and belonging, which leads to a strong sense of loneliness. After school, she always likes to stay in her room by herself, and gradually enters a state of self-isolation. She becomes introverted, unwilling to actively communicate with others, and sometimes her temper is particularly grumpy, especially when she think of her mother who is working outside, sometimes she misses her mother eagerly and secretly cries, and she always feels unhappy without her mother, thus becoming depressed. Longing for maternal love has become the biggest psychological problem of blue students.

The research team learned about Lan's mental health problems, made friends with her, had a heart-to-heart talk, and after a period of contact, on the basis of gaining Lan's trust, conducted psychological tests and made psychological diagnosis.

Mental examination: Good contact, clear consciousness, no sensory disturbance, smooth expression, normal thinking, depression and melancholy expression.

Psychological test: The SDS standard score is 65, indicating moderate depression.

Diagnosis: Depression.

On this basis, EFT is used to help Lan do mental health counseling, and the specific steps are as follows:

(1) Assess Lan's melancholy mood, and her SUD score is 7 (Figure 1).

(2) Confirm Lan's preparatory sentence reminder: Although I am very melancholy and miss my mother especially, I still accept myself deeply and completely.

(3) Relieve the mental energy disorder of Lan (as shown in Figure 2): Repeat the prompt three times when tapping Houxi (SI3).

(4) Tap the acupoints according to the tapping sequence(as shown in Figure 3) in step (4) , about seven times per point, and repeat the prompt.

(5) Reassess the SUD score. If the score is still not 0, go back to step (4) and keep tapping until the emotional intensity score of Lan is as close to 0 as possible.

After the above treatment, Lan immediately felt relaxed, obviously relieved from depression, and was happy. The treatment lasted about 20 minutes.

Follow-up: On August 3, 2021, the writer paid a return visit to Lan. She was very excited and said, "I have been doing EFT during this period, especially when I missed my mother, I no longer have bad emotions. I feel that I am very relaxed. I start to like to communicate with my classmates."

6. Discussion

EFT is a brand-new psychotherapy that integrates various effective psychotherapy theories and skills. Its core therapeutic feature is to improve mood by tapping acupoints (energy points) on meridians, which is based on the meridian theory of traditional Chinese medicine. According to the meridian theory of traditional Chinese medicine, emotional diseases are closely related to the meridians such as the twelve meridians and Eight Extraordinary. After a lot of clinical practice, the EFT summarizes the effect of tapping specific acupoints on psychological activities. For example, tapping Cuanzhu (BL 2) can relieve anxiety, tapping Chengqi (ST 1) can relieve sadness, tapping Shuigou(DU 26)can relieve irritability, tapping Tongzeliiao (GB 1) can relieve tension, tapping Chengjiang(RN 24)can relieve inferiority, tapping Yuanye (GB 22) can alleviate suspicion, tapping Shufu (KI 27) can alleviate negative dependence and so on [8-9]. In addition, the prompt words in the treatment are helpful for the help-seekers to establish correct beliefs and help to eliminate the patients' bad emotional intensity. The writer applies EFT in teaching, and realizes that this therapy has a good effect on certain psychological abnormalities, such as anxiety, depression, fear, weariness of learning and psychological trauma, and can quickly relieve bad emotions within dozens or even minutes, which is worthy of further promotion.

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