Reiki and Cancer related fatigue - Reflective Statement

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‘A pilot study looking into the effects of reiki on cancer-related fatigue showed that treatment significantly reduced tiredness, pain and anxiety scores in 16 subjects. The study was a counter-balanced crossover trial of two conditions, one involving reiki and the other rest. In the reiki condition, subjects received a reiki treatment on five consecutive days, followed by a week of no treatments, then two additional reiki treatments followed by two weeks of no treatments. The rest condition involved resting for one hour per day for five consecutive days, followed by a week with no scheduled resting, and then a week of no treatments. Subjects completed questionnaires regarding quality of life and cancer-related fatigue before and after all reiki treatments and resting sessions. In the reiki condition, subjects experienced significant improvements in quality of life compared to those in the rest condition. The daily assessments also indicated that levels of tiredness, pain and anxiety significantly decreased across the five consecutive reiki treatments, which was not observed across the five resting sessions. The authors conclude that future research should involve more highly controlled designs and a larger sample’.


As a Therapist, have you had experience of treating a client who is suffering from cancer-related fatigue?

My grandmother was diagnosed with lung cancer in March 2007 and by June of that year she was spending more and more time in and out of hospital trying to deal with the pain, anxiety and tiredness. I had previously given Reiki treatments to her focussing on her wrists as she was suffering with arthritis and she received some really positive results. I asked my father to ask the doctor if it would be ok for me to give Reiki treatments to her to help ease her pain as I wanted to ensure that he was happy for me to go ahead. It was piece of mind that I had her doctor’s consent.
How did you go about treating your client?

I printed out a document that helped to explain what Reiki was and how it worked and my father took this with him the next time they visited the doctor. The MacMillan nurses were present and were already aware of Reiki and they suggested that it would be beneficial for my grandmother to receive a Reiki treatment once a week starting as soon as possible.

For the next five weeks or so I visited my grandmother in hospital and firstly found out if she had any pain and if so where it was. Whilst she was sitting comfortably in her chair I gave her 'hands on' Reiki treatments focussing on the areas where she felt pain the most.

On a number of occasions my grandmother was having difficulty sleeping on an evening so before I went to sleep I would send some distance Reiki too.

How did your client feel after their treatments?

Throughout the treatments my grandmother said she found it extremely soothing and she could actually feel the pain drifting away. She also fell asleep on a number of occasions which I always take as a good sign as the client is completely relaxed. As her granddaughter I also felt that I was doing my little bit to help comfort her in such a difficult time.

How do you think Reiki could improve the quality of life of someone who has had or is dealing with the condition covered in the article?

Because my grandmother had terminal cancer, by simply giving her Reiki treatments this helped to soothe the pain and anxiety that she was dealing with and it also helped her to sleep more easily. I have also treated clients who have had a previous history of breast cancer and they told me that whilst they were in hospital, therapists provided them with Reiki treatments. After she had been given the all clear she wanted to carry on receiving Reiki treatments as she found the benefits of feeling relaxed etc. were so great.

Who else can benefit from Reiki?

For anyone who has had a relative or friend who has gone through any of the above, this can also be an extremely distressing time and I would recommend that they also receive Reiki to help them relax during such a difficult time.

Reiki can be used for helping clients with physical symptoms such as arthritic and muscular etc. or for anyone suffering with mental issues such as stress, tiredness etc.

A client does not necessarily have to have any symptoms in order for them to receive Reiki. Reiki can leave you simply feeling completely relaxed and chilled and is a wonderful experience both to give and to receive.