Energy medicine
The Concept of Attunement

- The process of using Reiki as a healing modality, or of using Reiki on another person, begins with attunement.

- **Attunement:**
  - the ceremony of initiation to the force of energy
  - the precursor to an individual becoming a practitioner.
The Concept of Attunement

• The student receives this energy, or attunement, from a master, opening up the chakras and channels to allow the energy to flow through the body.

• Energy is released through the hands, and once “attuned,” a student can then use the energy on another person.

• The energy never leaves you once your channels are opened.
Reiki Degrees

• Reiki practitioners can progress through three levels of training, or degrees.
• The first degree, and most basic:
  - Contains the initial attunements
  - Opens up the energy channels for transmission of energy to another person.
First-Degree

• The energy supposedly will go where it is needed, so there need not be any specific placement of the hands.
• The Reiki practitioner could rest his or her hands on the patient’s hands
  – The energy flow would make its way from the practitioner, through the patient’s hands, and continue through the patient’s body until it reaches the area of need.
  – All hand placements for healing physical ailments are trained at level one.
Second-Degree

• A second-degree Reiki practitioner integrates symbolism into the healing process.

• At this level, the practitioner has been further trained in the placement of hands for the purpose of healing the nonphysical realm, in deep emotional and mental healing, and in sending energy over distance.
Third-Degree

- The third degree, or Reiki master, is studied when one is ready to lead a life of healing.
- The Reiki master training is much more personalized, with mastery of the Reiki symbols the focus.
- The Reiki master is expected to then train new practitioners, passing along skills and attunements.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

• Therapeutic touch, in practice, is much like Reiki.
  – An individual unfamiliar with either practice would not be able to distinguish them, with the notable exception that therapeutic touch does not involve touch (in most instances).

• Reiki, in most cases, involves actual placement of the hands on the recipient.

• Other distinctions between the two are found primarily in philosophy, history, and training.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

• The actual art of laying on hands and healing through touch is almost as old as mankind.
• It is described in virtually every history or spiritual practice available.
• Therapeutic touch’s specific form, description, and function of healing was designed and introduced in the 1970s by a New York University nursing professor, Deloris Krieger.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

• Krieger took the ancient philosophies and designed a form of healing to be used by nurses in practice, although her vision was that anyone and everyone could be a healer.

• Therapeutic touch is performed in four stages.
  – The first of these stages, *centering*, is a form of meditation that allows the therapeutic touch practitioner to focus on their own energy field in preparation for transmission to the patient.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

• McCormack describes the necessity of the process, stating the importance of the healer working without judging the patient, and that doing so requires a clear mind.

• Once the practitioner is centered, an assessment of the energy surrounding the patient is performed.

• This stage is a clear distinction from Reiki practice.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

• Assessment involves the passing of the healer’s hands 2 to 6 inches away from the patient’s body in an attempt to detect disruptions in energy flow or in the patient’s energy field.

• The practitioner will move their hands in a sweeping motion, palms facing the patient, attempting to sense a distinction in energy in moving from one place to the next.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

• In the third stage, *unruffling*, the objective is to “smooth out” the patient’s energy field.
  – Hands are moved in long sweeping strokes, much like one would use to smooth out a bed sheet while making a bed.

• This effort is designed to unravel the energy field; allows for energy to flow in a positive, undisturbed fashion, and allows the patient to then heal more efficiently.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

• The final stage is the *treatment phase*, sometimes referred to as modulation.

• In this final phase the practitioner uses stationary hand positions to direct energy to a specific location.

• This is said to transfer energy from the practitioner to the patient, correcting any further imbalance in the patient’s energy field.
What Is Therapeutic Touch?

- Recipients of therapeutic touch report a variety of outcomes, some positive, some not.
- In her 2004 article in *Nursing Standard*, Annie Hallett reported on seven cancer patients and their experience with therapeutic touch.
  - Reactions varied with some patients mentioning relaxation, peace, focus, or understanding.
  - Others reported that the “clarity” they found actually brought back negative memories, or regrets, or what one patient described as his “demons.”
What Research Exists Related to Reiki and Therapeutic Touch?

• As expected, therapy and medicine based on a mystical presence of energy surrounding the human body is likely to be criticized.
• Significant debate exists over whether there actually exists a field of energy surrounding the body.
• The manipulation of that energy, then, would seem even more debatable.
What Research Exists Related to Reiki and Therapeutic Touch?

- Although proponents of energy therapies say there is proof of the human energy field, demonstrated for instance with Kirlian photography, others believe such techniques are not measuring a “manipulatable” field of energy.
Research

• Nonetheless, significant published research exists.

• Ann Marie McClintock (Reiki) and Guy McCormack (therapeutic touch), in *Complementary Therapies and Wellness* (2003), discuss the myriad of research outcomes related to the use of energy therapies.
Research

• Both note:
  – that few rigorous studies (by Western medical standards) have been conducted related to practice.
  – that the evidence presented demonstrating positive effect ranges from purely anecdotal to research with rigor.

• Although criticized for a weak scientific approach, the vast majority of research shows some positive influence of the practice on: illness, healing, sense of well-being, stress levels, and/or pain reduction, warranting further research.
Research

• In summary, the research related to energy therapies indicates:
  – a significant reduction in the pain levels of cancer patients
  – a reduction in state anxiety
  – a reduction in blood pressure
  – an increase in immune system hormones and chronic disease improvements practices.
• However, there are also articles containing significant criticism of both.
Supporting Research

- A study with one of the largest samples of recipients of therapeutic touch was published in 2003 in the journal *Holistic Nursing Practice*.
  - As part of a quality improvement process at a New York hospital, over 600 recipients of therapeutic touch were surveyed and monitored.
  - The results indicated patient satisfaction with the process and improvements in pain reduction, calmness, and overall well-being.
Supporting Research

• A 2003 Kumar and Kurup study reviewed the impact of Reiki and meditation practices on individuals with seizure disorders proving untreatable by other means.

• The 15 people in the study participated in Reiki sessions over a 3-month period.
Supporting Research

• In the end, participants showed significant positive changes to the imbalances in magnesium, tryptophan, tyrosine, dopamine, and norepinephrine, all of which were related to an increase in seizure frequency.

• All participants experienced a reduction in seizure frequency of at least 50 percent, with most experiencing a decrease of 75 percent (as an example, a drop from 12 seizures per month to 2).
Non-Supporting Research

• One of the more compelling pieces pointing to therapeutic touch as fraudulent is a 1998 article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, featuring a study conducted by a sixth-grade student in Colorado.

• The study asked 21 practitioners of therapeutic touch to show they could detect a human energy field.
• Practitioners sat at a table with their hands on the table, palms up.
• The researcher placed one of her own hands 3 to 4 inches above one of the practitioners’ hands.
• The practitioner, with vision of the hands blocked, was to indicate which hand was covered.
• The practitioners were only able to correctly identify to researcher’s hand placement 42 percent of the time, less than what would be expected by random guessing.
Non-Supporting Research

• Reiki tenets also have been challenged in the literature.
• It is believed the Reiki practitioner is independent of the energy transmission process, and functions merely as a “go-between” in the healing process.
• One 2006 study found the practitioner’s own energy field did have an impact on the healing and growth of *E. coli cultures in a laboratory setting*.
Non-Supporting Research

• A 2002 study placed doubt on the legitimacy of a Reiki practitioner to accurately identify energy fields, or to have a significant effect on the health process for, in this case, stroke victims.
  – A Reiki master trained several hospital employees in Reiki, with only half going through full initiation, the process giving them the ability to be a healer.
  – Results did not indicate a difference in treatment responses between fully initiated and fake Reiki healers, nor a difference in the new healers’ ability to determine whether they had been fully initiated.
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  - Nor was there a difference in the new healers’ ability to determine whether they had been fully initiated.
What Is Bioelectromagnetic Therapy?

• Veritable (measurable) energy therapies use a predetermined wavelength and/or frequency to emit energy on a patient as a healing force.

• Although light and sound therapies are included in this subcategory of energy therapies, magnet or magnetic therapies are the most commonly seen and most controversial of the group.
What Is Bioelectromagnetic Therapy?

• The use of magnets for healing has occurred for centuries.
• The relationship between human energy and magnets became more popularized in the late 1700s when Franz Mesmer “demonstrated” his ability to use magnets to alter the human energy field.
Magnets, Polarity, and Healing

• If one accepts the concept that we each possess a human energy field, or biofield, as has been discussed throughout the chapter, then what is acknowledged is the existence of universal polarity.

  – Consider a time in your childhood when you played with magnets. Magnets, you were told, had a north pole and a south pole.

  – One end of the magnet attracted and one end repelled, and most kids figured out how to make one magnet spin by turning another magnet above it.
Magnets, Polarity, and Healing

• The strength of the magnetic pull is called the Gauss rating.

• The energy found in and around the human body, chi, is said to move because of the tension between polarities.
  – Anderson explains the tension between opposing polarity “pulls” energy through the body, and keeps it in constant motion.
Magnets, Polarity, and Healing

- If illness is a disruption or blockage in the flow of energy, then the manipulation of polarity can return flow to normal.
- This is the basis of magnet therapy.
Research Related to Bioelectromagnetic Therapies

• Ratterman, Secrest, Norwood, and Ch’ien report the literature claims related to magnetic therapy’s impact on fibromyalgia, and chronic and soft tissue pain.
  – The group points out that research supporting the claims is sparse, and what exists is predominantly anecdotal.

• Of the seven pieces of research summarized in the article, six show a positive improvement on pain and/or fatigue, but all show deficiencies in study design.
Research Related to Bioelectromagnetic Therapies

• Like the other energy therapies, some magnet therapy research also shows little to no benefit from the method.
• A stereotypical article of this nature is a 2002 study on the use of real magnets on individuals with carpal tunnel syndrome compared to sham magnets with no polarity.
  – Both groups showed improvement, but to a degree the authors attribute to no more than chance, or placebo effect.
  – This is a common finding throughout the literature. The authors also mention the general lack of rigor and scientific merit in energy therapy research.
How Should I Choose an Energy Therapy?

• A quick search of the internet will identify thousands of people identifying themselves as therapists using energy-based techniques, and no less than 350,000 hits for a search on “healing magnet dealers.”

• Like all alternative therapy practices, follow the basic guidelines from the NCCAM to protect yourself.
How Should I Choose an Energy Therapy?

• Keep your primary health care provider informed.
• Seek their recommendation for a practitioner in the type of healing you seek.
• List CAM practitioners and gather information about each before making your first visit.
• Read the research for use of a practice for your ailment.
Choosing A Practitioner: Questions to Ask

• What are your credentials?
• How long have you been in practice?
• Where did you receive you training?
• What licenses or certifications do you have?
• What is your success rate?
• Can I talk to other clients of yours?
• Ask how much the treatment will cost.
• How many sessions of treatment would I need?
Choosing a Practitioner

- Check to see whether your insurance will cover the cost.
- Make a list of questions for the first visit, and come prepared to answer questions about your personal health history.
Choosing a Practitioner

• Decide after the first visit if the practitioner is right for you.
  • Did you feel comfortable with the practitioner?
  • Could the practitioner answer your questions?
  • Did he or she respond to you in a way that satisfied you?
  • Does the treatment plan seem reasonable and acceptable to you?
Conclusion

• Energy therapies are often considered some of the most controversial of alternative medical practices.

• The emphasis on the mental and spiritual aspects of healing leaves room for much debate over the actual physiological influences and what might be attributed to mere suggestion.

• Those who claim to have benefitted from these practices, as well as the growing number of practitioners in the realm of energy therapies, will continue to tout the advantages of taking part in mind-body-spirit modalities.