

Reiki and the Helping Professions: Part II

Using Reiki in your Professional Practice

BY KATHIE LIPINSKI, RN, MSN, CH

In an earlier article for *Reiki News Magazine* (“Reiki and the Helping Professions,” Fall 2006), I wrote about the importance of health care workers using Reiki for self-care as a way of avoiding burnout. In this article, I will share ways that practitioners in the healing professions can and do use Reiki to support and enhance their practices.

One of the challenges the helping professional encounters in the everyday workplace is how to explain Reiki. The best way to talk about Reiki is to talk about stress and its effects on the body. Then it is easy to describe Reiki as a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation. Or, one can explain Reiki as a balancing technique: a way to balance the person’s body, mind and spirit. We live in very stressful times and everyone wants to relax as well as have his or her body, mind and life in balance.

We know that the most common (and highly desirable) outcome from receiving Reiki is the relaxation response. The concept of the relaxation response became popular in the 1970s, chiefly through the work of Herbert Benson, a Harvard physician. Dr. Benson found that there was a counterbalancing mechanism to the body’s stress response and he worked to increase awareness of developing ways to elicit this relaxation response.

When a person is exposed to a sudden stress or threat, their body responds in a “fight or flight” response to protect them

from danger. This is also known as an adrenalin rush. Blood flow to the muscles increases, blood pressure and pulse rates increase, and breathing becomes faster...all to enable the person to respond to the perceived danger. Repeated exposure to stress or stress sustained over a long period of time can have a damaging impact on one’s health. It is a well-known fact that 75% of doctor visits are for stress related illnesses or problems.

We know that stress can cause:

- Decreased function of the immune system
- Increased heart rate (pulse) and increased blood pressure
- Tense muscles (which may lead to pinched nerves and decreased oxygen flow to muscles and other parts of the body)
- Shallow breathing
- Increased levels of the stress hormones, which wreak havoc with blood sugar control and weight gain
- Negative coping mechanisms such as excess smoking, drinking, eating or other behaviors.

In contrast, the relaxation response of the body includes:

- Dilation (widening) of blood vessels so that blood flows more easily throughout the body

- Lowering of blood pressure and heart rate (pulse)
- Slow and deep breathing
- Muscle relaxation—oxygen and nutrients can then go where they are needed and nourish the body
- Strengthening of the immune system.

Reiki is an excellent way to promote the relaxation response. I have seen the relaxation response elicited in just a few minutes of Reiki. Wouldn’t you like to do that for your coworkers and clients? It just takes a few minutes. And like the ripple effect, when a person is balanced and relaxed, the feeling spreads to all those around them.

When bringing Reiki to the workplace, it is important to remember to ask for and hold intention for the best outcome possible for the situation and all involved. That means letting go of expectations and trusting the higher intelligence, the wisdom of Reiki and the wisdom of persons affected by the situation. What we believe should happen for a person or a situation may not be in the person’s best interest or the best outcome for the situation.

Here are some ways that you can bring Reiki into your professional practice.

Any helping professional can begin by sending Reiki to their clients and/or their workplace/office before they arrive. Simply hold an image of the client or your office in your mind (or hold your appoint-

ment book in your hands), activate the distant healing symbol (the bridge that connects you to the past, present and future), and allow Reiki to flow. Send other symbols as well, if you are so guided. This way the healing has started before the client(s) even arrive! Alternatively, you can fill your treatment room or office with Reiki beforehand (see article mentioned above).

Note: When I send Reiki, I imagine the distant symbol lying flat like a bridge. I then bring in other symbols as guided and imagine them traveling from my heart, “over the bridge” (the distant symbol) to the other person or situation.

Any professional can Reiki the tools or equipment they use in their practice by holding them in their hands or holding their hands above and allowing Reiki to flow for a few minutes. Activating the Power symbol here acts like a blessing for the equipment and helps to bring about the highest good.

A health care professional in an administrative or management position can bring Reiki in when performing stressful tasks such as staffing, payroll, or counseling an employee. Reiki creates a more receptive state and clearer thinking, acts as a calming force, and helps to assure the best outcome in the situation. This can be done by simply using the Mental/Emotional and distant symbols over the paperwork, the schedules, etc. Prior to a session with an employee, place one hand on your heart and one hand over your throat, bring in the Mental/Emotional symbol, and allow Reiki to flow. This will assist you in speaking from your heart. If you are to speak with someone in a position of authority, place one hand on the solar plexus (power center) and the other over your throat and ask Reiki to help you come from your place of power.

When administrative work becomes overwhelming, the person can simply put their hands on their heart and solar

plexus, bring in the Mental/Emotional symbol, and allow Reiki to flow. This will promote calming and clarity.

Some managers (and staff) give themselves Reiki before and during a staff meeting and find that the meeting goes more smoothly. The use of the Mental/Emotional symbol during the meeting can promote openness, calmness and understanding. You can “beam” Reiki with your hands or your eyes to the person speaking, or a person “on the hot seat,” to help them speak clearly, stay calm and be open to the issues being discussed.

One of the most important gifts that we as helping professionals can give our clients is our presence. Presence is the gift of self through availability and attention to a person’s needs. It is much like mindfulness, in which we slow down and bring our full attention to the activity we are doing at the moment. We offer our client our attention, our whole being, and our presence. Research has shown how important a healing “presence” can be. With Reiki, this presence becomes more helpful and more healing. Just allow the Reiki to flow as you focus on what you are doing. Be fully present in the moment.

Nurses

With the license to touch, all nurses can bring Reiki to all aspects of their work. Reiki fills the nurse’s hands and aura with life force energy. Reiki helps nurses to remember why they became nurses in the first place: to reduce the suffering of others. Just a few minutes of Reiki touch can relax a person and calm their spirit. Reiki touch comforts and decreases pain. It also minimizes or makes tolerable many of the side effects that are a result of various courses of treatment or procedures.

Some nurses use Reiki to help them more easily locate a vein or artery when they have to draw blood or insert an intravenous line (IV). They simply allow Reiki to flow and then place the Power symbol (with their eyes or their hand) over the

vein. Others give their patients Reiki while they are taking blood pressure or pulse. Home care nurses use Reiki during visits when doing physical and psychological assessments, changing dressings, paperwork, doing health care teaching, or encouraging or working with a family member. They let Reiki flow through them and send Reiki with their eyes to allow them to “see” or feel the energy of the person more clearly. The Mental/Emotional symbol can be used when a person is anxious or confused. Giving themselves Reiki can also help the nurse who is feeling overwhelmed with paperwork to be calmer, to remember all information that is needed and to be clear and concise in their reporting.

Recovery Room nurses often use the Power symbol over an incision site or painful areas. Emergency room nurses bring Reiki to the ER. Some fill the waiting room and treatment rooms with Reiki. The Mental/Emotional symbol does this as well as the Karuna symbol for peace. They also make sure to clear the space after each patient. Holding the intent of peace and calm in a busy ER can have tremendous calming and healing for all.

Nurses that work in ambulatory care (same day surgery), endoscopy units, diagnostic labs and recovery rooms put the symbols in the room before they begin the day. This calms everyone down and promotes a relaxed and peaceful feeling.

Nurses that work in psychiatric settings have shared how Reiki touch often calms clients (and staff as well) and allows clearer understanding during counseling. When they cannot touch, they beam or radiate Reiki to their clients.

When giving medications, a nurse can draw (or visualize) the Reiki symbols over the cart, the tray, or the individual medication and say, “Let this medication be raised to its highest vibration so that those who receive it will be comforted and healed.” This applies to radiation therapy and chemotherapeutic medication as well.

For more information on Reiki and nursing, go to www.reiki.org to access my articles “Reiki and Nursing” and “More on Reiki and Nursing.”

Physicians

Physicians, like nurses, can bring Reiki to the workplace every day. They can fill their office spaces and waiting rooms with Reiki to help calm the anxiety of their patients, Reiki their equipment, send Reiki with their eyes, and bring in the symbols as they are so guided. Physicians have told me that they allow Reiki to flow as they touch their patients. A simple touch fueled by Reiki can calm the most anxious patient. They also often send Reiki with their eyes during examinations.

Physicians have shared with me that having Reiki enhances their assessment skills; they are better able to pick up imbalances in a person by paying attention to what they sense or feel. They believe that Reiki augments their sense of touch and increases their palpation skills.

I have trained several anesthesiologists in Reiki who tell me that they first fill themselves up with Reiki and then radiate it out to the room for all to receive before and during the procedure or operation. They Reiki all the equipment and bring in the symbols when a patient needs them, often sending the Mental/Emotional symbol throughout the procedure to keep everyone calm and alert.

One obstetric physician I knew would invite the energy in as he delivered the baby. What a gift for that baby to be brought into the world in Reiki hands!

Jeri Miles, M.D., in her book, *Tapstry of Healing: Where Reiki and Medicine Intertwine*,¹ describes her experiences in working with pregnant women. She offered Reiki to all of her labor and surgery patients. She found that the number of her patients requiring C-Sections (Caesarian) declined. Women who had required a C-Section for their first baby

were able to deliver their next baby vaginally. (Traditionally, once a woman has a C-section, all following deliveries are also by C-section.) She also found that her patients in labor were much more relaxed and comfortable and needed less medication. All this from a simple hands-on technique!

Massage therapists and body workers

Clients that come for massage are already looking for relaxation. It is very easy for a massage therapist or body worker to incorporate Reiki into treatments. The blessing of being both a Massage therapist and a Reiki practitioner is that when you cannot massage, you can always do Reiki. There are no contraindications in Reiki.

As a former massage therapist and body worker, I would always begin a session by sitting at the head of the table, putting my hands on the client's head, and bringing in all my Reiki symbols so that they would be present during the session. I included the Power symbol to help increase and focus the energy, the Mental/Emotional symbol to balance the mind and emotions, and the Distant Healing symbol so that Reiki could address any past or future issues.

When a person comes to a professional for treatment, they are in essence carrying their past, their present and their future with them. Their past has contributed to who they are today, their present is being here for the session, and the future includes their hopes and wishes, goals and concerns. Therefore, the distant healing symbol is just as important as the other symbols in any session. I would then add my Master and Karuna Reiki® symbols as well. This way, the session can address many issues and levels of healing.

Having Reiki hands allowed me to really feel the muscles, their energy and their tightness or trigger points. I would use the Power Symbol while I was holding

a point, or leave one hand over an especially tight muscle while I would use the other hand to massage. At times, I would stop the massage, allow Reiki to flow, and then continue. I also offered my clients a combined session. I would start the session with Reiki, then massage the front of the body, have them turn over, massage the back, and then end the session with 10-15 minutes of Reiki.

For those who do acupuncture or acupressure, Reiki hands easily “find” the imbalances and allow the practitioner to know how much and how long to hold or stay at a certain point to balance it. Those that do acupuncture often tell me that they Reiki the needles first by placing their hands over them. Sometimes they place the power symbol at the tip of the needle (without touching it) or send it to the point of the needle with their eyes.

Cranio-Sacral therapy also works well with Reiki. Many of the hand positions or holds in CST are the same as the traditional Reiki hand positions so one can do both at the same time. One can start the session with a Stillpoint hold on the occiput, (the bone at the back of the head; the area where attunements are sealed in) while bringing in the Reiki symbols. Reiki enhances palpation skills so that the practitioner can easily feel the cranio-sacral rhythm and work accordingly.

There are many other forms of bodywork in which the Reiki touch can heighten the experience for the person and increase the awareness of the practitioner, guiding them in their practices. The Reiki practitioner trained in various bodywork modalities can bring in any of those skills during a session. Reiki allows one to “feel” subtle energies in the body so that they know where to go and what to do to facilitate the release. For those who work with cellular memory, or mental/emotional bodywork, using the above methods as well as focusing on the use of the Mental/Emotional symbol can really enhance the healing process.

Physical therapists

The Reiki energy can help PTs in the assessment of the client. Just by looking at the client with Reiki eyes, the therapist can pick up areas that are out of balance or discern where the most important area to work is or what the priority for healing should be. PTs can bring in Reiki throughout the day every time they touch a client. They can leave their hands on a particular location while inviting the energy in. They can also Reiki the equipment or props. They can allow Reiki to flow as they walk with the client or support the work that the client does. PTs have told me that they find that Reiki helps to relax the person as well as the muscle(s) that they are working with, allowing a better experience.

Athletic trainers

Athletic trainers who are trained in Reiki tell me that whenever a person is injured, they immediately offer Reiki as well as traditional ice packs or compresses. Like PTs, they find that Reiki relaxes the muscle (or injury), allowing better blood flow and a decrease in the stress response.

Those athletes who have Reiki often bring it in before every event. They fill themselves up with life force energy and let it radiate it out into their energy field. They feel that it strengthens them and makes them more aware of the energy of the event, allowing them to “tune in” and pace themselves accordingly. They are also more aware of and sensitive to their bodies, which can decrease potential injuries.

Drug and alcohol counselors

Reiki is a wonderful tool for those working in detox and recovery programs. Like the 12-step programs, the Reiki Ideals are tools for living. Sharing those with clients can enhance their working the Step programs.

Rev. Lynette Burkett, in “Reiki for Recovering Alcoholic and Addict,” (see the Articles section at www.reiki.org)

writes: “...clients claimed that the first time they ever felt unconditionally loved was during a Reiki session.....and [as a result]...experienced peace in their lives for the first time.”

The Windana Community Center (in Melbourne/Pakenham, Australia) residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation program reported that the use of Reiki assisted in the difficult first few weeks of alcohol withdrawal. Some clients received Reiki as part of the program and some were trained to do Reiki for themselves. Reiki brought about a profound relaxation response within a few minutes and also helped clients reduce anxiety, tension and aggression. One of the most interesting findings of their work was that the participants described “images” and “visions” that were felt to facilitate the counseling process. It helped to increase their “insight” and they were better able to process and understand the addictions and their causes. They also felt that after learning Reiki, they were better able to cope with the ups and downs of their lives.²


Counselors

Every counselor first needs to know any state regulations applying to the issue of touch and what a counselor is allowed to do by law within the scope of his or her practice.

When touch is not allowed, one can send Reiki with their eyes, bringing in appropriate symbols to facilitate the process as guided. Where touch is allowed, the counselor can give Reiki for 15-20 minutes at the start of the session or throughout the session. Some counselors I know see their clients specifically for a Reiki session in addition to regular counseling sessions. During Reiki sessions, they may focus on a specific issue the client wants to discuss or explore. Their counseling background then allows them to assist the client in processing what they experience or feel during or after the session.

Richard Curtin, Psy.D. and Judith Prebluda, M.A., in their article, “Leading with Reiki, Following with words,” (see the Articles section at www.reiki.org) describe how they look at the “presenting problem” as an energetic event occurring on...all levels of the human energy field; physical, emotional, mental, interpersonal and spiritual.” They use Reiki in their practice to assess and treat the issues and blockages in a person’s energy field. As they give Reiki, they invite the client to explore the psychological meaning relative to the imbalance.

Note: It is very important to remember that a Reiki practitioner cannot provide counseling for a client unless licensed to do so. Reiki practitioners do NOT diagnose medical or psychological conditions.

These are a few of the ways that those in helping professions can bring Reiki to their work. Reiki always works for the highest good. Those who practice Reiki come to understand its higher wisdom and simply allow the process to unfold. Reiki restores caring and compassion to health care, where, at times, it becomes lost in the exigencies of the moment. Simply ask Reiki to guide you in your work and be creative in your use of Reiki. 

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¹ Mills, M.D., Jeri. *Tapestry of Healing: Where Reiki and Medicine Intertwine.* Arizona, White Sage Press, 2001.

² Milton, G. and Chapman, E. “Benefits of Reiki treatment in Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation programs.” Paper presented at the Royal College of Nursing of Australia Pathways to Healing Conference: Enhancing Life through complementary therapies, National Conference in Canberra, Sept. 24 & 25, 1995.

—Kathie can be reached by email at Kathiekaruna95@aol.com