

# Reiki for Mental Health Professionals: Part I

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## Introduction

If you work in the field of mental health as a counselor or therapist and have not yet combined your Reiki practice with your mental health practice, I would like to encourage you to consider the possibilities. I am a clinical licensed marriage and family therapist, a clinical licensed professional counselor and a certified sex therapist in private practice as well as a Senior Licensed Reiki Master Teacher with the ICRT. I have been practicing Reiki and counseling since 1993 and have combined them since 2000. In this article, I offer a variety of ways to bring Reiki into your counseling practice and present case studies that demonstrate the positive results of doing so, both for you and your clients.

## Reiki and the mental health professional

A good place to begin this overview of combining Reiki with a mental health practice is with you, the counselor or therapist. As a mental health counselor, you know how important it is to maintain as stress-free a life as possible. Therefore, providing a calm and relaxed environment is very important—for you as well as for your clients. People are drawn to a career as a mental health professional because they are caring, compassionate people who truly want to help others. Some mental health professionals may be empaths: people who feel other people's emotional and physical pains in their own body. Whether or not a counselor is an empath, she can be affected by her client's energy and story, a situation that if left unattended can create unwanted stress. And in fact, over time, many therapists develop compassion fatigue, which can lead to burnout with their profession. The numbers might surprise you. "Across several studies, it appears that 21–67% of mental health workers may be experiencing high levels of burnout."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to currently available programs that offer general coping skills aimed at reducing burnout, other programs introduce techniques found in spiritual practices including meditation and mindfulness.<sup>2</sup> However, very few studies test the results of preventing burnout by increasing other positive human qualities and abilities, such as increasing a sense of meaning and purpose,<sup>3</sup> something that Reiki sessions can do. Reiki can be considered as

not only a coping skill but also a spiritual and meditative or mindfulness practice, which as previously stated, has already shown positive results in addressing the potential burnout condition that many mental health counselors face.

## Powering up and clearing your energy field

In Reiki class, we learn the importance of giving ourselves Reiki every day. William Rand in "A Personal Healing Program" writes, "Set aside 15 to 30 minutes each day to give yourself a Reiki session. This can be a complete session using all the hand positions or you could use Byosen scanning and treat only those areas you are guided to. While giving yourself Reiki, your vibration will go up and as this happens I suggest you allow yourself to contemplate the various activities taking place in your life. As you do this, it is likely that you will find healthy new attitudes developing about issues in your life, as well as receive creative ideas on how to deal with them."<sup>4</sup> An additional benefit for the mental health counselor is that it might generate ideas to help your clients solve their problems.

You can further prepare for your day by sending Reiki to all your activities. Dr. Kate Cole, a psychiatrist at St. Luke's Hospital in Lee's Summit, Missouri, sends Reiki in advance to her intentions for the day and to all her patients and meetings.<sup>5</sup> She reports that before Reiki training she found that being a psychiatrist was emotionally and mentally draining for her, and she had thought about getting out of psychiatry. "There is a night and day difference between not having Reiki in my practice and now using Reiki."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gary Morse, Michelle P. Salyers, Angela L. Rollins, Maria Monroe-DeVita, and Corey Pfahler, "Burnout in Mental Health Services: A Review of the Problem and Its Remediation." Retrieved from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3156844/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3156844/).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> William Rand, "A Personal Healing Program." Retrieved from [www.reiki.org/reikinews/personalhealing.htm](http://www.reiki.org/reikinews/personalhealing.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Sending Reiki to patients will be discussed in detail later in this article.

<sup>6</sup> Kate Cole, personal communication, December 29, 2014.

A mental health professional sees clients who suffer from depression, anxiety, anger management issues, addictions and many other serious mental health issues. When these clients come into your office, they bring with them disturbed energy that is palpable to the sensitive person. You can strengthen your light and energy field with Reiki, making it less likely to take on your client's problems. Draw the Power symbol or the Holy Fire symbol in front of your trunk and on each chakra, starting at the root. Then add in the affirmation, "I strengthen my light with Reiki. Anything less than love and light will transform or leave." Perform this process before seeing your first client of the day and then anytime during the day in which you feel the need to be more connected to your Reiki healing energy. I always call on the Reiki energy to flow through me to be a clear and open channel for only the highest and holiest guidance as I am working with my clients. It helps me to remember it is Spirit through me doing the work, and I don't have to personally come up with all the solutions for clients.

In our Reiki Level I class we learn *Kenyoku*,<sup>7</sup> the dry bathing process to clear our energy field after each session. Likewise, it is very helpful to clear your energy field after each counseling session once your client has left the room, as some of your client's disturbed energy often stays in your counseling room. If you don't remember the procedure, simply set your intention to release any energy that isn't yours and use your hand to brush down your body with several strokes. Dr. Kat Bowie, a psychologist in private practice, imagines Reiki symbols over the doorway of her home and intends that her energy field is cleared of her day's and her client's issues prior to entering her home.<sup>8</sup>

### Creating and maintaining a peaceful environment in the office

Dr. Beth Stapor, a psychologist and Senior Licensed Reiki Master Teacher with the ICRT, writes, "Reiki helps me by providing a counseling office that welcomes the client with positive energy."<sup>9</sup> There are various ways to help ensure that your office will be filled with that kind of energy. Dr. Cole, charges up her office with the Power symbol and the Mental/Emotional symbol before and after each client and has Reiki-charged stones around her office.<sup>10</sup> You can cleanse and charge the energy in your office at the same time with Reiki and your intention. Draw or visualize the Power symbol and or the Mental/Emotional symbol on the four walls, ceiling, and floor and over the chairs where you and your clients sit. To make this process even stronger, draw the symbols with activated tuning forks, by burning incense or sage or by chanting the name of the symbol if you are alone. You can use any of the other Reiki sym-

bols, especially the very powerful Holy Fire symbol because it will purify all the energy in your office. I have also placed pieces of paper with the Reiki symbols drawn on them between the cushions of the chairs and placed Reiki-charged crystals under the chairs. I power up my room each morning before I begin my day. Then if I have a difficult session, I take a minute to cleanse and charge the room again with this process before I welcome in the next client. Many clients have remarked how relaxing my office is and one even fell asleep.

Dr. Stapor says that her Reiki training makes her more attuned to her client's problem areas. She writes, "I am observant of the client's body language, which can give clues to chakras that are out of balance. There might be, for example, the client who has his or her arms crossed in front of the stomach that might indicate the need to protect him or herself from life or the client who coughs or clears the throat a lot, perhaps indicating that there is something in life that is choking him or her or there is something being left unsaid. Often questions spontaneously come to me to ask the client that facilitate access to information needed for healing. I find that I am more nurturing, less judgmental and more empowering of my clients than I was as a non-Reiki-trained counselor."<sup>11</sup>

### Sending Reiki to attract new clients and maintain a balanced case load

Following Dr. Stapor's realizations about the growth she has experienced in her relationship to her mental health clients by adding Reiki to her life leads to the thought of how to be able to attract more people to your practice now that Reiki has "entered the office." If you are in private practice and would like to increase your client load, you can activate distant Reiki to attract new clients. Simply intend that the right and perfect clients are coming to you whom you can best help. Then listen to your Divine Guidance for action steps to take. Additionally send Reiki into your practice schedule and ask your Higher Power to provide you with the right and perfect clients and case load. I have used this practice for several years, and my case load is consistently full. Formerly I would have too few or too many clients and both situations could be stressful.

<sup>7</sup> William Lee Rand, *Reiki The Healing Touch* (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Kat Bowie, personal communication, January 5, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Beth Stapor, "The Reiki Counselor." Retrieved from [www.reiki.org/reikinews/reikicounselor2000.html](http://www.reiki.org/reikinews/reikicounselor2000.html).

<sup>10</sup> Cole, personal communication.

<sup>11</sup> Stapor.

## Adding Reiki to your client sessions: Overview

As knowledgeable Reiki practitioners, many of the mental health counselors reading this may already be doing all the Reiki-related practices mentioned above to further your own health as well as the healthy energy of your office environment. Now let's turn to what may be a brand new concept: adding Reiki to your client sessions. Even without actually making physical contact with a client (hands-off Reiki) and certainly when the Reiki is hands on, mental health practitioners must consider discussion points about ethics, standard of practice, and specific situations before beginning to integrate Reiki with mental health appointments. All these points will be addressed in Part II of "Reiki for Mental Health Professionals," which will appear in the Summer 2015 edition of *Reiki News Magazine*. The remainder of Part I of this article will offer observations and suggestions about sending Reiki (hands-off Reiki) to clients while in a counseling session. I suggest that those of you who are interested in pursuing this wonderful partnership of Reiki with all the skills you have amassed as a mental health professional will wait to establish this until you have a chance to read Part II, which will cover topics such as ethical and legal matters to consider regarding touch, development of new skills, informed consent, filing insurance for the session and multiple relationships.

## Sending Reiki during sessions


Perhaps the first thing to consider when you decide to send Reiki to a client during a session is the ethical consideration of whether or not to ask your client if you can send Reiki to him or her during the counseling session. This is an issue that comes up every time anyone considers offering distant Reiki. However, in this situation of an additional and perhaps primary client/counselor or therapist relationship, deciding whether or not to ask needs to be considered. The best practice would be to describe Reiki to your client, include a description of Reiki in your informed consent, give your client the option of whether or not to receive Reiki, and then document the Reiki portion of the appointment in your notes. Dr. Bowie discusses Reiki during the first session and asks the client for permission to send Reiki during sessions. She said she has never had anyone refuse. Her clients seek her out because of her Reiki training. She caters to a niche market of clients who are holistically oriented.<sup>12</sup> From speaking with several therapists who are Reiki trained, I found some discuss hands-off Reiki with their clients, and some don't and send Reiki anyway, rationalizing that they wouldn't ask permission to pray for a client. Most have not yet included Reiki in their informed consent.

Once you decide to offer your clients the benefits of hands-off Reiki, the ways in which you blend this into a counseling session can be varied. During counseling sessions, you can send Reiki

with your eyes through the method of Gyoshi Ho<sup>13</sup> or discretely beam Reiki with your hands. Providing Reiki during counseling sessions has calmed couples in conflict, soothed clients who were stressed and provided healing of all kinds of issues, often more quickly than any traditional counseling technique.

Dr. Cole sends Reiki to each patient and asks to connect to her own guides and the patient's higher self. Then she sends distant Reiki to heal the issue about which the patient is speaking. "Reiki allows me to tap into the higher universe and the patient's higher self so I can communicate more openly with all our guides so that the communication is based more in love rather than fear. Communicating with my patient's higher self is more fulfilling than to work at the ego level. Reiki provides a sense of relaxation, trust, light and love so it is easier to get to the heart of the matter much more quickly. Reiki softens the hard things I sometimes need to communicate."<sup>14</sup> Dr. Cole also provides an additional Reiki service to her clients. She has a Reiki grid in her office specifically to send Reiki to patients and has noticed a difference in her patient's progress since doing so.<sup>15</sup>

I saw a client we will call Jim over 10 sessions to address being sexually abused as a child by his grandfather, to reduce his depression and to address the lack of sexuality in his marriage. None of my counseling techniques were providing much progress. Finally I tried having him go back to the situation in his mind and take his adult self back to provide comfort and guidance while I sent Reiki to heal the situation. Then I suggested he create a different and more positive scenario. With his eyes closed imagining the situation, he described that the situation still happened but that he was able to tell his mother and be heard and understood. Additionally, she no longer made him go back to his grandfather's house. I sent Reiki while he described this very moving scenario. After two sessions of this work, Jim came in and told me he felt freed of the past and of his depression. He was also able to speak up to his wife about their sexual relationship. At that point he felt ready to terminate therapy.

I have many more stories of how using Reiki as an approach toward healing in my counseling sessions has worked more quickly than any of my traditional approaches, and I will share more of these stories in Part II of this article in the summer issue of the *Reiki News Magazine*. 

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<sup>12</sup> Bowie.

<sup>13</sup> Rand, *Reiki The Healing Touch*.

<sup>14</sup> Cole, personal communication.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.