



Improving the Value of your Reiki Practice

Part 1: Reiki Sessions

BY KAREN HARRISON, LCPC, LCMFT, AASECT

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL with your Reiki practice in both your sessions and your classes? Are there challenges you have encountered for which you would like solutions? This two-part article offers suggestions that will improve the quality of your Reiki practice, whether you are just starting out or have been practicing for a while. Part 1 addresses the particulars of Reiki sessions and Part 2 covers many of the ways to create or improve your Reiki classes. In this two-part article, I am sharing tools that I have used in my 24 years as a Licensed Professional Counselor and Marriage and Family Therapist that have helped me create a good working relationship with my Reiki clients and students during my 17 years of practicing and teaching Reiki professionally. One of my students specifically asked for this information and thus the article was born. In this issue, Part I covers Reiki sessions, with information on how to help clients feel heard and listened to, how to structure a session and how to handle emotional and mental health issues.

Scheduling

When someone calls for information on a Reiki session, it is a time to establish a connection with the potential client that will encourage the client to come for a session. This can best be accomplished by listening to the client rather than telling him about your services. A good question to start off with is “What would you like to address in your Reiki session?” Most people have an idea of why they are calling for a session. If your prospective client doesn’t know, tell him that Reiki can help with spiritual, emotional, mental and physical issues. After he speaks, you can say that Reiki may be able to help with his issue or that you have helped other people with similar issues, if that is the case. It is always good to add that we can never promise specific results and that Reiki works best for stress reduction, relaxation and pain reduction. You can ask if she has any questions and that is when you can share specifically what the person would like to know about your services. At the end of the call, ask for 24 hours’ notice if the person needs to reschedule. This call should usually take 10 to 15 minutes.

Confirm your appointment with your client one to five days in advance. People forget and things come up, so because of this, it

can be very helpful to send a text or email or to make a phone call to remind your client. This way, if there is a need to change the appointment time, it can be done more gracefully rather than ending up having a last minute cancellation or possibly a no-show.

Beginning the Session

A worthy goal of a Reiki session is to offer care and comfort to your client while setting your ego aside and allowing the Reiki energy to do the work. When your client arrives, have her fill out the Reiki Client Information Form found in the back of *Reiki, The Healing Touch* by William Lee Rand or a similar form. Offer her some water and invite her to sit and tell you more about why she has come for the Reiki session. Allowing her to talk a little first will help the two of you to connect and make her feel comfortable before asking her to get on the table where she will feel more vulnerable. I find about 10 minutes of talk time to be right for my sessions.

Prepare your client for what she will experience. If you haven’t already given the client a brief overview of Reiki and how it feels during the session including *Byosen* scanning and the typical hand positions, now is the time to do so. Explain about taking off her shoes to lie on the table and whether she can continue talking about her issues or whether you encourage her to be quiet for the session. Reiki practitioners do it both ways. In general, it is fine if the client wants to talk about her issues, but this is not a time to talk about things that are unrelated to the purpose of the session as that can detract from the healing work at hand. However, sometimes subjects that seem unrelated can be right at the heart of the session. One of my young mothers finds that she enjoys having some time to vent about her challenges of being a stay-at-home mom and be listened to by an adult. It is also helpful to have some time in the silence where the client can deeply relax.

Give the client your full attention. Make sure your cell phone is set to airplane mode or on vibrate and do not check it unless you have an emergency situation going on.

Validating the Client

Karyn Hall, a psychologist who specializes in Dialectical Behavior Training (DBT), a method that helps people who are

emotionally vulnerable learn to manage their emotions in a constructive way, offers this explanation of validation: “Validation is the recognition and acceptance of another person’s thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors as understandable.”¹ To me, validating the client means to help the client feel accepted and understood without judgment. Saying things like, “That sounds really hard” or “I am sorry that happened to you” lets the client know you heard and have compassion for his situation. If the story is more complicated, you can summarize it back to the client and at the end ask if you understood correctly. Having someone hear your story, accept it without judgment and acknowledge the pain it has caused is very therapeutic.

You might feel tempted at this point to talk about a similar situation you have experienced. Doing so has some challenges. First, don’t share about struggles you are currently experiencing that are not resolved. You will have emotional energy about the issue that could impact what the client needs to heal. Second, this is a time to focus on your client and his concerns, not yourself. Third, if you do share, keep it brief and return the focus to the client.

Taking this thought further, it is of utmost importance not to talk about any problems that you are having that are unrelated to your client’s. It can alter the quality of the Reiki energy you are able to transmit and can transfer some of your problem energy to the client, especially if your client is an empath. I have experienced this myself several times with Reiki, chiropractic and massage when the practitioner started talking about an emotionally charged issue. I could feel how the energy changed from therapeutic to non-helpful.

Sharing Intuitive Information

Some Reiki practitioners get intuitive information during Reiki sessions. This might be pictures, words or something else. There are several considerations in sharing information. First, be aware that no one is a completely accurate channel. What you get may or may not be accurate or helpful to the client. Also, do not turn the Reiki session into a psychic reading unless that is what the client booked. If you do share, say this is what you got and have her take it into her own guidance to see if it has meaning for her. For example, while sending Reiki back to the original cause of chronic sciatica pain, I got an image of a belt, a paddle and a switch. I asked the client if these had meaning for him. He told me that he and his brother were routinely punished with these items. By the end of his session, the pain had cleared and it didn’t return.

It is very important not to share hurtful information with a client. For example, if you see a car accident, a death or something similar, do not share it. These may be symbols representing something but the client may take them literally and become distraught. Also

watch your language. I once had a Reiki practitioner tell me that I was hemorrhaging energy from my right side. A better thing to say would have been she could feel energy clearing from my right side.

Setting Boundaries

Having good boundaries with the client contributes to creating a safe space and will reduce any potential problems. If you find yourself disliking a client—and this can happen—consider whether you might not have set a good boundary. For example, your client is consistently late so you go over on session time and then feel resentful later. Instead, after the first time it happens, the next time you can make it a point to tell your client that you will need to finish on time that day.

Handling Emotional Issues in Sessions

What do you do if your client starts to cry? Sadness or regret is often present in a session. Tell him that it is okay to cry and give him a tissue. Refrain from hugging, touching or holding your client as doing so can interfere with the client’s healing process. You can continue giving Reiki while he is crying.

Clients may also process strong emotions like anger, grief and frustration in a Reiki session. I had many sessions with a woman who was in an abusive marriage. As soon as I activated Reiki, she would start rocking so much on the table that I often worried she would fall off. She would also want to scream and although I would have liked to let her scream openly, my colleagues’ sessions would have been disrupted, so I gave her a pillow to scream into. I encouraged her to express her emotions and did my best to flow the Reiki energy while making sure she was safe on the table.

In counseling, we use a term called “normalizing the experience,” which means that you can understand why a client would feel the way she does based on her experience. It is often comforting to people to have their emotions accepted as normal because well-meaning family and friends will often encourage people to “just get over it.” You can say something simple such as, “I can understand why you would feel that way given your experience.”

Working with Clients with Mental Health Issues

According to statistics, one in every six adults over the age of 18 has a mental health disorder.² This means that you are likely to have clients in your practice with mental health issues whether you realize it or not.

Should you knowingly take clients with mental health issues and how should you handle them? Reiki can be so helpful with depression, anxiety and even more defined mental health issues like schizophrenia. Mental health problems are stressful and

¹ www.psychologytoday.com/blog/pieces-mind/201204/understanding-validation-way-communicate-acceptance.

² www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-mental-illness-among-us-adults.shtml.

Reiki reduces stress. Work with these clients the same as your other Reiki clients with a few considerations. Ask your client if there is anything she needs in order to feel safe and supported. For example, your client may fear crying in the session and you can say that it is perfectly fine to cry.

Likely because I am a counselor, I have attracted more Reiki clients with mental health problems. Occasionally clients have reported disturbing things, like hearing a voice other than her own that tells her she is worthless and should die. I once asked a psychiatrist how he could determine psychic from psychiatric issues. He told me if the voices in the head said positive things, they were likely psychic and if the voices said negative things, they were more likely psychotic. Even though I am a counselor, I have very little training and experience working with schizophrenia, which is subject to the presence of inner voices, because I prefer to work with other issues, so learning that distinction has been very important for me to know how to distinguish the two. I share this because I think that as Reiki practitioners, we *can* work successfully with clients who suffer from mental health issues.

Here is how I handled an example of this situation. I had a Reiki client who reported hearing disturbing voices in her head. I followed certain steps that helped me both normalize the session and help my client. In a reflection of that session, I offer an overview of what I did so that you can comfortably imagine being open in your practice to clients with mental health issues.

First, I asked the person if she or anyone in her family had any history of mental health problems. She answered yes, so I asked her for the name of the mental health diagnosis. I told her that I wanted to try following the Healing Spirit Attachments exercise for one to three sessions (as outlined in the *Holy Fire II Reiki Master Manual*) to see if that would help, but I also told her that if that didn't provide enough relief, she might want to consider seeing a mental health professional. We proceeded from there to do the sessions. On a practical note, it can be helpful for you to have a couple of therapist's names to refer to who are accepting of Reiki.

If anything about the above scenario feels scary, know that Holy Fire Reiki as a representation of Holy Spirit has dominion over all second heaven beings and can easily release the spirit with the client's permission. When I have worked with lower vibrational spirits, the energy felt dark but mostly weak and sad, not scary. One of my colleagues, Bryce Goebel, reported that since Holy Fire Reiki, she is attracting more people with spirit

attachments. She asked Jesus why this is and he told her that she now had the tools to help these people.

I have a client with schizophrenia who has negative images in her head and she feels that Holy Fire Reiki and work with Jesus have given her more relief than visits with a psychiatrist. I am happy to continue working with her as long as it seems as though she is benefitting from the sessions.

Finishing the Session

Give your client an idea of how often you suggest that she comes back for more Reiki depending on her issues. If she is coming for stress reduction and relaxation, once every two to four weeks may suffice. When a client is working on more specific issues, for example the results of a divorce or a chronic health concern, once a week may serve her better. Finally, offer her encouragement at the end of each session by thanking her for making a commitment to her healing work.

Conclusion

By choosing to grow our Reiki practices, we commit to expanding our understanding of how to best serve all the clients who seek us out. Educating ourselves about how to share intuitive information in a healing way and how to skillfully handle emotional and mental health issues that present in a session helps us to become better facilitators for our clients. 🌿

In "Part 2: Reiki Classes," I apply many of the ideas discussed in Part 1 to the art of teaching Reiki. I share ideas about validating the students and handling emotional and mental health issues in class, as well as new themes of how to handle talkative students and redirecting off-topic questions. These articles are designed to help you with skills you can apply right now in your sessions and classes. Look for Part 2 in the 2017 Winter Issue of this magazine.



Karen Harrison is a Co-Director of the Licensed Teacher Training Program for the ICRT and practices and teaches Reiki as a Holy Fire II Licensed Reiki Master Teacher for the ICRT in Leawood, Kansas. She is also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor. Karen can be contacted by email at Karen@karenharrison.net or through her website at www.karenharrison.net.